

ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION:  
A BIBLICAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY

by

James J. S. Harrichand, BA, MDiv

A dissertation submitted to  
the Faculty of McMaster Divinity College  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Christian Theology)

McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, Ontario  
2020

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(Christian Theology)

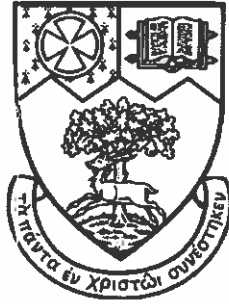
McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation:  
A Biblical and Pastoral Theology

AUTHOR: James J. S. Harrichand

SUPERVISORS: Dr. Mark J. Boda and Dr. Phil C. Zylla

NUMBER OF PAGES: viii + 512



## McMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

Upon the recommendation of an oral examining committee,

this dissertation by

**James J. S. Harrichand**

is hereby accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY)**

Primary Supervisor:  Digitally signed by Mark J. Boda  
Date: 2020.05.13 09:40:19 -04'00'

Mark J. Boda, PhD

Secondary Supervisor: Phil Zylla Digitally signed by Phil Zylla  
DN: cn=Phil Zylla, o=McMaster Divinity College,  
ou, email=zyllap@mcmaster.ca, c=CA  
Date: 2020.05.12 16:12:34 -04'00'

Phil C. Zylla, DTh

External Examiner: Rodney A. Werline Digitally signed by Rodney A.  
Werline  
Date: 2020.05.12 14:41:14 -04'00'

Rodney A. Werline, PhD

Vice President Academic Designate: Francis Pang Digitally signed by Francis Pang  
Date: 2020.05.12 09:11:52 -04'00'

Francis G. H. Pang, PhD

Date: May 12, 2020

## ABSTRACT

“Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation: A Biblical and Pastoral Theology”

James J. S. Harrichand  
McMaster Divinity College  
Hamilton, Ontario  
Doctor of Philosophy (Christian Theology), 2020

Recent years have seen a plethora of research accomplished with respect to OT *poetic prayers*, predominantly in relation to the Psalter, with at least one ramification being a lack of engagement with the full spectrum of expressions especially within OT *prosaic prayers*. In addition to this, contemporary pastoral literature continues to exhibit an underdevelopment with respect to the full anthropological spectrum of expressions amidst grief especially within *intercultural contexts*. Observing both lacunas in scholarship, this dissertation operationalizes a Revisionist Method of Mutual Critical Correlation as its metamethod while incorporating Renewed Form Criticism, Hermeneutical Phenomenology, and a Liberative Intercultural Praxis as it pursues a twofold objective: (1) an examination of the multivalent expressions (i.e., verbal, physical, and emotional) that leading Israelite pray-ers within the ancient context of OT *prosaic prayers* communicated to/before God while in the crux of disorientation; and (2) an investigation into the multivalent expressions (i.e., verbal, physical, and emotional) that leading contemporary Christian pray-ers within an intercultural context (i.e., among Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam), communicated to/before God amidst the phenomenon of grief. At the heart of attending to this twofold mission is the configuration of an expressive domain of anthropological expressive modalities of

disorientation communicated to/before God, along with their essence or meaning.

Sensitized to such an expressive domain with its multivalent significance, contemporary pastoral caregivers would thus be better equipped to foster compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care for intercultural Christian communities coping with grief.

## CONTENTS

SUMMARY PAGE .....	ii
SIGNATURE PAGE.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	vii
CHAPTER 1: DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC AND ITS IMPORTANCE.....	1
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGIES.....	7
CHAPTER 3: ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY .....	26
CHAPTER 4: ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY .....	68
CHAPTER 5: DIALECTIC CORRELATION OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION: BIBLICAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY.....	213
CHAPTER 6: COMPASSIONATE LIBERATIVE INTERCULTURAL PASTORAL CARE PRACTICES.....	256
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION .....	329
APPENDIX 1: CHART OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION FROM GENESIS TO ESTHER.....	338
APPENDIX 2: MREB CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE.....	428
APPENDIX 3: TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS: GUYANESE LEADERS.....	429
APPENDIX 4: TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS: VIETNAMESE LEADERS... ..	464
APPENDIX 5: QUALITATIVE DATA.....	483
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	492

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	Freedman, David Noel, ed. <i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BDB	Brown, Francis, et al. <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1907.
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CeTEAL	Center for Teaching Excellence to Advance Learning
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	Bromiley, Geoffrey William, ed. <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i> . 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–1995.
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>MJTM</i>	<i>McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

<i>NIDB</i>	Sakenfeld, Katherine Doob, et al., eds. <i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
NT	New Testament
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OT	Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
<i>TDOT</i>	Botterweck, G. Johannes, et al., eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley et al. 16 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2018.
<i>TWOT</i>	Harris, R. Laird, et al., eds. <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> . 2 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1980.
UBCS	Understanding the Bible Commentary Series
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>ZPEB</i>	Tenney, Merrill C., ed. <i>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i> . 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975



## CHAPTER 1: DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Betty R. Ferrell and Nessa Coyle proffer that, “silencing or stifling the voice of suffering serves only to intensify it.”<sup>1</sup> Where then does a contemporary Christian find appropriate language in the crucible of disorientation,<sup>2</sup> encompassing the four dimensions of physical pain, psychological anguish, social degradation, and spiritual despondency,<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ferrell and Coyle, *Nature*, 15. Balentine (*Prayer*, 272–95) avows that, “When the church encourages the practice of lament, it promotes an understanding of divine-human communication or partnership where radical dialogue is both normative and productive. . . . The point here is that covenant relationship, like human relationships, requires communication. The better the communication, the better the relationship, that is, the healthier it is and the more possibilities it has for growth and development. In the same way, restricted communication or, worse, silence reduces the possibilities within the relationship” (288). With regards to OT prayers, Brueggemann (*Prayers*, xi–xxx) observes that, “Israel’s prayer is a refusal to accept that [imposed] silence that is most often oppressive and that works to preclude human freedom and human well-being” (xxi).

<sup>2</sup> Boda (*Praying*, 1–18) maintains that, “If there is a supra-language which transcends linguistic barriers it must be the language of suffering, the discourse of disorientation” (1). Equating disorientation with that of lament psalms, Brueggemann (*Message*, 15–23) contends that, “Human life consists in anguished seasons of hurt, alienation, suffering, and death. These evoke rage, resentment, self-pity, and hatred. Matching this, we will consider ‘psalms of disorientation,’ poems and speech-forms that match the season in its ragged, painful disarray. This speech, the lament, has a recognizable shape that permits the extravagance, hyperbole, and abrasiveness needed for the experience” (19). It must be noted here, however, that while the term *lament* is the predominant nomenclature given to the largest category or genre (*Gattung*) of psalms found within the OT, the lament proper only submits the problem or the disorientation of the situation in life (*Sitz im Leben*) to the LORD, whereas the supplication or the petition for liberation is perhaps the most significant element of the psalm, or the axle of the entire prayer. The turning point of the lament psalms does not occur at the juncture of stating the lament proper; rather, the lament psalm hinges on God’s reception of the supplication. As Chiu (*Psalms*, 100–104) argues, “Gunkel prefers the term *lamentation* instead of *supplication*. However, *supplication* seems preferable since the lament (i.e., the evocation of the situation of distress) is not the dominant element. In fact, the psalmist recalls the past or the painful present not with resignation, but with the intent that God intervene. The supplication or petition is the dominant element” (100; emphasis original).

<sup>3</sup> The first three categories of physical pain, psychological anguish, and social degradation are further discussed in Weil, *Awaiting God*, 44 and Soelle, *Suffering*, 13–15. In recent years, the fourth category of spiritual despondency has been proposed and explored by and in Zylla, *Roots*, 58–59. For Zylla (*Roots*, 41–69), “the deeper reality of suffering is multivalent and may be better described by the unifying concept of ‘affliction.’ This contributes to a ‘thicker’ description of suffering that allows for the hidden dimensions to be brought into full view” (56). It is worth mentioning here, however, that both affliction and disorientation are multivalent experience-rich categories. See chapter 7 for a potential working definition of disorientation (p. 335).

and which also embraces the efficacy of comforting hope coupled with legitimacy in addressing God? Emanating from his rumination on the Davidic psalms, Ravi K.

Zacharias observed that, “although David described himself as one wounded and crying in his bed at night, this same David spoke of the happiness that came when he took that cry to the Lord.”<sup>4</sup> Generally referred to as the language of *lament*, and located in large measure within the Psalter—the prayer book and hymnal of the OT sinner-saints—such heart-wounded cry not only furnishes the contemporary Christian with reassuring hope, but also with the vernacular of unobjectionable speech directed at God, especially in prayer and song.<sup>5</sup> Small wonder that Denise Dombkowski Hopkins and Michael S. Koppel aver that, “The psalms of lament can help us give voice to our lived experience and the reality of our pain.”<sup>6</sup>

For decades, however, it appeared as if the Western church had given such considerable attention to *praise* that the language of *lament* was deemed unsuitable for appropriation within its worship setting. This situation precipitated the clarion call for the recovery of the *lost* language of lament (particularly from the Psalter), by a plethora

---

<sup>4</sup> Zacharias, *Cries*, xvi. Westermann (*Psalms*, 5–28) however, remarks that, “The superscription to the Psalms do not date to the time of their origin, but to the time when they were collected. . . . *all* psalms lived in the worshiping community for a long time—usually for a very long time—without any superscriptions. Hence conclusions can be drawn from the superscriptions only concerning the time of the compilation and the understanding the people had of the Psalms at this stage” (19–20; emphasis original). Westermann further avers, “The fact that a large portion of the Psalms is attributed to David is entirely understandable, and is in fact based on historical tradition. Actually, however, the Psalm arose anonymously, in keeping with their basic nature. The superscriptions arose later, at the time when what was traditional had to be attributed to a great personage in Israel’s history. . . . The fact that David was a singer and composer of songs cannot be denied. Whether any one of the psalms attributed to him (e.g. Psalm 18) actually goes back to him is something we cannot establish” (20). Despite that, Childs (*Introduction*, 511–21) avers that, “although the titles are a relatively late addition, they represent an important reflection of how the psalms as a collection of sacred literature were understood and how this secondary setting became authoritative for the canonical tradition” (520). All Scripture references in this dissertation are taken from the NASB, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>5</sup> Miller (*Interpreting*, 18–28) observes that, “in the Psalter we have a large collection of words uttered to God and about God, but not by or from God. In other words, the psalms give speech to human response and human existence before God (*coram Deo*, ‘in the presence of God’)” (19).

<sup>6</sup> Hopkins and Koppel, *Grounded*, 137. Adhering to such a view himself, Boda (*Praying*, 1–18) avers that, “Pain is part of the human journey and no one is insulated from its icy touch. . . . When humans discover a piece of literature which succinctly unveils the reality of pain they resonate immediately with that text because they identify with the content as well as the emotion” (1).

of scholars such as Walter Brueggemann, Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller, Kathleen D. Billman and Daniel L. Migliore, and others.<sup>7</sup> Harkening to this inspiring call, it appears as though the Western church is in the process of taking the necessary measures to respond appropriately, i.e., by employing lament in concert with praise within its worship context.<sup>8</sup> The upshot of this is an active engagement in fostering a healthy equilibrium between both its summer and winter voice of prayer and song within the Western church.<sup>9</sup>

### Central Theological Questions

Further reflection on the irrefragable universal theme of suffering, and more particularly the multiplex responses of Christians experiencing suffering, has nonetheless sparked two questions that loom large within this dissertation. Question number one is: within the context of OT prosaic prayers uttered in the life setting of disorientation,<sup>10</sup> does the potential exist for one to discover, in association with lament and praise, other modes of expression communicated to/before God (verbal, physical, and emotional) by faithful

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*; Boda, *After God's Own Heart*; Brown and Miller, *Reclaiming Lament*; Brueggemann, "Costly Loss of Lament"; Brueggemann, "Lament as Antidote to Silence"; Brueggemann, "Voice as Counter to Violence"; Campbell, "Lament"; Cohen, *Why O Lord?*; Ellington, *Risking Truth*; "Costly Loss of Testimony"; Harasta and Brock, eds., *Evoking Lament*; Harper and Barker, eds. *Lost Words*; Harrichand, "Recovering Lament"; LaNeel Tanner, "How Long!"; Leung Lai, "Costly Loss of Protest"; McCutchan, "Illuminating the Dark"; Ngien, *Fruit of the Soul*; Resner, "Lament"; Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*; Villanueva, "Preaching Lament"; *The Uncertainty of a Hearing*; Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed*; etc.

<sup>8</sup> Living in the current tension of the already and the not-yet, on the one hand Christians, by the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit, can express their joyful celebration to/before God the Father in light of the victorious work of Jesus Christ, God's *sui generis*, unique Son, over the law, sin, death, the grave, and even Satan, while on the other hand, they can convey their brokenness, scars, and wounds to this very God with the intention of receiving mercy and finding grace to help them in their time of need (Heb 4:16). As Morgenthaler (*Worship*, 96–126) maintains, "There is widespread, almost insatiable craving for vulnerability and *authenticity*. . . . It is no accident that lament and vulnerability go hand in hand. No one would want a whole service of it, but worship that is real makes room for all the colors of the emotional spectrum, not just those that are rapturous and effervescent" (110, 113; emphasis original). See also Brown, "Sermon"; Card, *Sorrow*; Schipp, *Psalms*; Ramshaw, "Lament within Praise"; Witvliet, "A Time to Weep"; Witvliet et al., *Psalms*.

<sup>9</sup> See Billman and Migliore, *Rachel's Cry*, 1.

<sup>10</sup> As opposed to the poetic prayers, prosaic prayers are those prayers located within the prose or narrative sections of the OT, and framed within Genesis and Esther.

Israelite pray-ers?<sup>11</sup> Inspired by the first question, question number two is: amidst grief, and in association with praise and lament, does the possibility exist for one to discover other modes of expression communicated to/before God (verbal, physical, and emotional) within a contemporary Western Christian context, yet through the lens of the experiences of principally Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam?<sup>12</sup> The rationale for selecting principally Guyanese and Vietnamese population is threefold:

- First, this selection stems from my affiliation with both cultural groups. Being of Guyanese heritage and serving within a Vietnamese congregation (up until the end of 2018 as the English Ministry Pastor) afforded me the opportunity of connecting easily with leaders from both cultural populations for this research.
- Second, this selection, though limited to the Guyanese and Vietnamese cultural groups, does not infer that other cultural groups (e.g., Aboriginals, African, Chinese, Indian, Korean, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, etc.) were completely removed from any consideration. Since there was little affinity with these groups

---

<sup>11</sup> This question stems from the observation that the academic field appears to be flooded with a paucity of research relative to OT *poetic* prayers of disorientation (especially from the Psalter) while little sustained theological attention has been given to OT *prosaic* prayers of disorientation. Interestingly, when asked by a Princeton University doctoral student, “What is there left in the world for original dissertation?” Albert Einstein retorted, “Find out about prayer. Someone must find out about prayer” (in Yancey, *Prayer*, 11). This dissertation will seek to fill the lacuna in scholarship regarding OT *prosaic* prayers, particularly those categorized by disorientation, rather than orientation or new orientation.

<sup>12</sup> The impetus for looking outside-yet-inside of the West also arises from observing that the majority-culture in North America are more stoic, formal, and less emotional in their expression of grief, as compared to their minority-culture counterparts. For example, Scazzero (*Spirituality*, 135–52) notes that, “Americans of British ancestry tend to value a ‘no muss, no fuss’ rationale of experiencing loss. Funerals, for example, are practical and pragmatic. As one sister said, explaining why she had not attended the funeral of her twin sister, ‘What would have been the point of spending money on the airfare to get there? She was already dead’” (138). The terms ‘majority-culture’ and ‘minority-culture’ are utilized to indicate power relationships, rather than numerical magnitude within a society. According to Irish (“Multiculturalism,” 1–10) in Canada and America, “the white majorities, have dominated, discriminated against, and even pursued genocidal practices toward their non-white minorities, the indigenous peoples, the ‘First Nations,’ and those who came to the New World as slaves” (2n1). This has resulted in “many minority peoples in the contemporary world to develop a heightened group consciousness by organizing themselves within and among their communities, seeking respect, equal participation in the larger national and world societies, and control over their own destinies” (2). For similar observations, see Perry, “Mourning and Funeral,” 51–65; Nelsen, “Journey,” 21–27. In lieu of using the terms *minority-culture* or *majority-culture*, it seems more appropriate to utilize *intercultural*.

aforementioned in brackets, however, the decision was made to consider them, as well as others, for future projects. Replicating this research among the excluded cultural groups after the completion of this dissertation is indispensable.

- Third, limiting my population to two cultural groups for now seemed sufficient for this dissertation. Additional cultural groups would complicate the data, especially since saturation had already been achieved (i.e., the data did not yield any new results) within the current cultural populations.

Observing that both questions afford a positive response,<sup>13</sup> the metamodel of this dissertation will be considered, but only after enunciating the thesis statement.

#### Thesis Statement

Bifocal in its objective, this dissertation will: (1) generate a domain of anthropological<sup>14</sup> expressive modalities of disorientation communicated to/before God, along with their essence or meaning from both the ancient Israelite context of OT prosaic prayers of disorientation and that of a contemporary Christian intercultural context (principally among Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam) amidst grief; and (2) Sensitize contemporary pastoral caregivers to such an expressive domain with its multivalent

---

<sup>13</sup> For examples of other expressions, see the discussion that follows in chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted here that by the use of the word *anthropological*, I am not referring to *anthropology* in the strict sense of the scientific study of human societies and cultures and their development. Rather, I simply employ the term *anthropological* in reference to humans in general and the ways in which they express themselves verbally, physical, and emotionally to/before God, especially in the midst of disorientation of which grief is a significant component.

significance, for the purpose of fostering compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care for intercultural Christian communities coping with grief.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Relying on the work of Crisp (“Compassion,” 233–46), Zylla (“Compassion,” 1–9) understands compassion as “a moral emotion that is also a pathocentric virtue. As such, compassion evokes deep feelings of pain and distress at the pain and distress of others. Compassion will result in a feeling of shared anguish, a desire to see the situation changed and actions that alleviate the root cause of the suffering observed” (2). Sharp (“Globalization,” 422–31) states that pastoral theologians and caregivers who employ the liberative intercultural praxis seek to liberate, resist, empower, heal, guide, sustain, reconcile, and nurture those who find themselves in life situations of suffering (426). Swinton and Mowat (*Practical*, 73–98) expect that such pastoral care responses “will enable the initial situation to be transformed into ways which are authentic and faithful” (97). Amidst grief, however, the bereaved especially seek sustainability (cf. Lartey, *Color*, 63–64).

## CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

### 2.1. Metamethod and Methodologies

#### 2.1.1. Revisionist Method of Mutual Critical Correlation

Achieving the foregoing thesis necessitates that one keep in mind the following central Christian theological task as espoused by David Tracy: “the dramatic confrontation, the mutual illuminations and corrections, the possible basic reconciliation between the principal values, cognitive claims, and existential faiths of both a reinterpreted post-modern consciousness and a reinterpreted Christianity.”<sup>1</sup> Such an undertaking, Tracy believes, is best accomplished by the *revisionist method of mutual critical correlation*,<sup>2</sup> which he defines as, “the philosophical reflection upon the meanings present in common human experience and language, and upon the meanings present in the Christian fact.”<sup>3</sup> This revisionist method of mutual critical correlation adheres to the ensuing five theses:

---

<sup>1</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 32, 43.

<sup>2</sup> It is ‘revisionist’ because Tracy revises Paul Tillich’s method of correlation, which correlates insights from Christian revelation in conjunction with the issues and questions raised by existential, philosophical, and psychological analysis. Whereas Tillich’s method of correlation is unidirectional wherein the Christian message furnishes the answers to the questions implied in human existence, Tracy’s revisionist method of critical correlation includes questions raised from within the Christian tradition with answers being furnished by human existence. This way, questions and answers flow in both directions, that is, between human existence and Christian tradition. In his own words, nevertheless, Tracy (*Blessed*, 22–42) states that, “The reasons for the label ‘revisionist’ are both historical and systematic. Historically, it seems clear that classical liberalism, classical orthodoxies, various kinds of neo-orthodoxy, and various radical alternatives are now legitimately judged inadequate models for the present theological task. . . . The principal reasons for the label ‘revisionist,’ however, are systematic ones” (32).

<sup>3</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 43.

1. The two principal sources for theology are Christian texts and common human experience and language.<sup>4</sup>
2. The theological task will involve a critical correlation of the results of the investigations of the two sources of theology.<sup>5</sup>
3. The principal method of investigation of the source ‘common human experience and language’ can be described as a phenomenology of the ‘religious dimension’ present in everyday and scientific experience and language.<sup>6</sup>
4. The principal method of investigation of the source ‘the Christian tradition’ can be described as an historical and hermeneutical investigation of classical Christian texts.<sup>7</sup>
5. To determine the truth-status of the results of one’s investigations into the meaning of both common human experience and Christian texts, the theologian should employ an explicitly transcendental or metaphysical mode of reflection.<sup>8</sup>

With regards to this dissertation, Tracy’s revisionist method of mutual critical correlation will be operationalized as its metamodel. Consequently, other significant sub-methodologies will also play an important role throughout this dissertation. These are as follows: the liberative intercultural praxis, a hermeneutical phenomenology, and renewed form criticism. Each of these sub-methodologies will be given adequate attention subsequent to an outline of the application of Tracy’s revisionist method of mutual critical correlation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 43–44.

<sup>5</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 45–46. Within this dissertation, the Christian texts and the human experience of grief will both inform and form our liberative intercultural pastoral care practices.

<sup>6</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 47–48.

<sup>7</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 49–52.

<sup>8</sup> Tracy, *Blessed*, 52–56.



Operationalizing Tracey's revisionist method of mutual critical correlation as its metamodel,<sup>9</sup> this dissertation will coordinate a dialectic correlation between the liberative intercultural praxis coupled with that of the hermeneutical phenomenology, and that of the renewed form criticism. It will begin with the *concrete life situation* of the phenomenon of grief experienced among contemporary Christians from the intercultural context of the West, i.e., among Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam.

Then by means of the coupling of the liberative intercultural praxis with that of the hermeneutic phenomenology, a *contextual analysis* will be executed by combining the social analytical mediation of Latin American liberation theology with the religious-cultural analysis of African and Asian liberation theology. Here, the qualitative approach of hermeneutical phenomenology, will aid us in a careful examination of the range of expressions communicated to/before God (verbal, physical, and emotional) amidst grief by immigrants of Guyanese and Vietnamese cultures. The intention here is to present a thick description<sup>10</sup> of a taxonomy of such expressive modalities of disorientation.

What follows next is a *theological analysis*, which involves the application of renewed form criticism to the Christian tradition of the ancient context of OT prosaic prayers uttered in the life context of disorientation. The aim here is that of generating a thick description of a taxonomy of expressive modalities of OT prosaic prayers

---

<sup>9</sup> According to Lynch ("Tested," 164–83) one way in which Tracy's revisionist method of mutual critical correlation can be exercised, is by means of following what has become known as the 'pastoral cycle' with its five broad steps, which is demonstrated here (178).

<sup>10</sup> Koch ("Story," 1182–90) speaks of a thick description of a phenomenon as capturing the essence of a phenomenon in a way that communicates it in all its fullness thus making it rich, vivid, and faithful (1183). Denzin ("Art," 500–515) states that, "A thin description simply reports facts, independent of intentions or circumstances. A thick description, in contrast, gives the context of an experience, states the intentions and meanings that organized the experience, and reveals the experience as a process" (505). Swinton (*Spirituality*, 93–134) adds that the implication of a thick description for the entire research process is that the process of writing, reflecting, and accurately interpreting the data is not simply epiphenomenal to data presentation and analysis, but rather that it is a crucial part of the process (101).

(sub)stages, together with their accompanying physical and emotional expressions, amidst the generic life situation of disorientation.

This is trailed by a *situational analysis of theology* which involves a dialectical correlation between the life situation of the grieving, the contemporary Christian intercultural expressions, and the Christian tradition expressions of OT prosaic prayers accompanied by physical and emotional expressions of disorientation. Here one explores how these three poles of knowledge can influence each other so as to produce new insights into the issue under examination, namely grief. Drawn out here are the implicit and explicit theological dimensions of the situation, with an eye toward sifting through the data, and exploring the ways in which they complement and challenge each other. It is worth stating here that while the primary emphasis is placed on the expressions located in the OT (Christian tradition), some expressions located in the NT will also play a key role in the dialectic correlation. This is because the Christian intercultural expressions also embrace a close(r) affinity to those expressions found within the NT. Behind this dialectical correlation is the sensitizing of contemporary pastoral caregivers to the multivalent significance of the verbal, physical, and emotional anthropological expressions communicated to/before God within an intercultural society.

In response to this, the chapter on *pastoral care action* will propose new and challenging forms of compassionate, liberative intercultural practice within a contemporary Canadian Christian intercultural locale. At the same time, each of these practices will be couched within rituals at the heart of which is the ordering of experience, thus reorienting the disoriented. The initial situation will thus be transformed or revised into ways that are authentic and faithful to the gospel of the triune God's redemptive mission to the world. Owing to its nature as a pastoral cycle, this dynamic

process never ceases, but renews by returning to the beginning and repeating the course all over again.

### ***2.1.2. Liberative Intercultural Praxis***

As noted earlier, for the objective of this dissertation to be accomplished, it is essential for the metamethod of the revisionist method of mutual critical correlation to incorporate the sub-methodology of the *liberative intercultural praxis*, pioneered by Emmanuel Y. Lartey. This praxis will enable the researcher to take seriously the experiences of grief among Christians marginalized and oppressed within the Western culture and church, some of whom belong to a Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian heritage.

Lartey contends that, “At the heart of the ‘hiddenness’ of pastoral care is love. . . . In Christian terms, ‘we love because God first loved us.’ (1 John 4:19) . . . Not only does it impel us into relationship with others, it also enables us to recognize injustice and to desire to do something about it.”<sup>11</sup> Lartey further asserts that, “The Christian teaching of incarnation, seeks to convey an ‘enfleshing’ of *agape* in a historic person—Jesus Christ—who becomes the icon and enabler of such love for and in his followers. Such self-giving love is at the heart of the Christian gospel and is the impelling force behind Christian action.”<sup>12</sup> What is more, “In intercultural pastoral care, love is both the motivation and the motive force. Recognizing the love of God as crucial and basic for and in the created world, intercultural pastoral caregivers seek to place themselves within this love and to become agents and conduits of it.”<sup>13</sup> Of key importance to this

---

<sup>11</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29; emphasis original.

<sup>13</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29–30.

intercultural pastoral care “is the realization that the love of God is for the whole world, created diverse and affirmed in its diversity by the creative energy of God. As such, all that is done must respect and uphold the diversity in which the whole of the world is created. All attempts to force uniformity upon a world created diverse are both heretical and damaging to the creation.”<sup>14</sup>

Lartey’s liberating intercultural praxis consequently “privileges situated, contextual experience and the analysis of that experience in its multi-layered and multi-factored reality.”<sup>15</sup> Put another way, it “presupposes a multicultural group of people committed to intercultural encounter, learning, and change.”<sup>16</sup> More than that, it seeks to “facilitate learning within a group of people from different countries and cultures, of different ages, men and women, lay and ordained, of different Christian backgrounds as well as other traditions, with varying degrees of commitment to and challenge of their various heritages. Their only commitment is to learning for the purpose of being reflective practitioners of pastoral care in one form or another.”<sup>17</sup> When this happens, more appropriate, compassionate, holistic, liberative, intercultural pastoral care techniques, otherwise referred to as pastoral theodical practices, are cultivated that: (i) deepen one’s understanding of the nature of the divine, the human, and the relationship between them, and (ii) facilitate the development of more pertinent forms of liberative intercultural healing care for persons-in-context as a result of the reflections on the divine nature.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Lartey, *Intercultural*, 89.

<sup>16</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 131. As such, Lartey (*Intercultural*, 121–50) declares that, “Interculturality stands for an attitude that rejects both extreme relativism and exclusive absolutism. It inhabits different cultures but also seeks to transcend their narrow limits” (124–25).

<sup>17</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 131.

<sup>18</sup> Lartey, *Intercultural*, 91.

Lartey's liberative intercultural praxis falls within phase two of the revisionist method of mutual critical correlation, that is, the contextual analysis. It is employed for the purpose of learning from some of the marginalized and oppressed Christians in the Western church, particularly those of Guyanese and Vietnamese cultures, as to the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions communicated to/before God amidst grief. The information collected from the use of this sub-method will then engage in a dialectic correlation, either as a complement or a challenge, to the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions communicated to/before God by leading Israelites amidst grief within the prosaic sections of the OT (Genesis to Esther). Ultimately, it is this sub-method that will lend its aid to the development of compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices that mitigate grief, sustain the bereaved, and are thus faithful to the triune God's redemptive mission to the world. Yet this sub-method is contingent upon a hermeneutical phenomenology.

### ***2.1.3. Hermeneutical Phenomenology***

The qualitative research method, *hermeneutical phenomenology*, will be employed with the intention of addressing the assortment of verbal, physical, and emotional responses that Christian leaders of Guyanese and Vietnamese heritage communicate to/before God amidst the phenomenon of grief. While the responses are of import to construct a taxonomy, an even more significant step in this entire process is that of the discovery of their *essence or meaning*, which lies at the heart of the phenomenological approach to qualitative research. Employing this method of hermeneutical phenomenology thus enables one to discover fresh insights into the experience of verbal, physical, and emotional responses to/before God amidst the phenomenon of grief, insights which will

definitely raise new and challenging questions for theology and practice. When used in the service of God, nonetheless, this type of qualitative research method holds much potential in its effort to develop faithful practices and transforming understandings, Christian communities, and even beyond.<sup>19</sup>

In much the same way that, “Pastoral theology is committed to reflection on lived experience and is rooted in the concreteness of life,” Zylla affirms that, “phenomenological research focuses on lived experience.”<sup>20</sup> While Merleau-Ponty avows that, “Phenomenology is the study of essences,”<sup>21</sup> it is important to note that this is not “some kind of mysterious entity or discovery, nor some ultimate core or residue of meaning. Rather, the term ‘essence’ may be understood as a linguistic construction, a description of a phenomenon.”<sup>22</sup> Max van Manen accordingly asserts that, “A good description that constitutes the essence of something is construed so that the structure of a lived experience is revealed to us in a fashion that we are now able to grasp the nature and significance of this experience in a hitherto unseen way.”<sup>23</sup> The objective therefore of phenomenology “is to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence—in such a way that the effect of the text is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful.”<sup>24</sup> Some of the defining features of phenomenological research, according to John W. Creswell, can be summarized as follows:

---

<sup>19</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical*, 131–32.

<sup>20</sup> Zylla, “Shades,” 764.

<sup>21</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, vii.

<sup>22</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 39.

<sup>23</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 39.

<sup>24</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 36.

- An emphasis on a phenomenon to be explored, which is phrased in terms of a single concept or idea, which, in the case of this dissertation, is the phenomenon of grief.
- The exploration of this phenomenon of grief with a group of individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon, which should be heterogeneous, which may vary in size from three to four individuals to ten to fifteen. In this dissertation, ten individuals will be chosen, five each of Guyanese and Vietnamese origins.
- The principle of bracketing of the researcher wherein the researcher or pastoral theologian is called upon to ‘bracket’ all speculative and constructive views of the phenomenon in order that there might be a disciplined ‘seeing,’ that is, an inhibition of the researcher or pastoral theologian’s tendency to interpret the phenomenon.<sup>25</sup> While this aspect of bracketing does not remove the researcher entirely from the study, it does serve to identify personal experiences with the phenomenon and to partly set them aside so that the researcher or pastoral theologian can focus on the experiences of the participants.
- A data collection procedure. While such a procedure typically involves the interviewing of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon, which in this case is grief, various other sources of data, such as blogs, journals, music, sermons, taped conversations, formally written responses, accounts of vicarious experiences of drama, films, poetry, and novels, etc., can be incorporated.

---

<sup>25</sup> Patton, *Ministry*, 37.

- Data analysis that can follow systematic procedures that move from the narrow units of analysis (e.g., significant statements), and on to broader units (e.g., meaning units), and on to detailed descriptions that summarize two elements, ‘what’ the individuals have experienced and ‘how’ they have experienced it.
- A phenomenology ends with a descriptive passage that discusses the *essence* of the experience for individuals incorporating ‘what’ they have experienced and ‘how’ they experienced it. The ‘essence’ is the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study.<sup>26</sup>

Furnishing the investigator or pastoral theologian with some guidance for the grounding of lived experience in phenomenology, van Manen states that the researcher should,

- Describe the experience without causal explanations.
- Describe the experience from the inside (feelings, moods, emotions).
- Focus on specific events—describe an incident.
- Focus on vivid experiences.
- Attend to the sensory: sights, sounds, smells, feelings.
- Avoid attempts to beautify your account with fancy phrases or terminology.<sup>27</sup>

Hermeneutical phenomenology, however, is not only research oriented toward the descriptive lived experience (phenomenon) in an attempt to enrich lived experience by mining its meaning, but also the interpretive study of the expressions and objectifications or texts of lived experience in an attempt to determine the meaning embodied in them (hermeneutics).<sup>28</sup> While van Manen does not approach hermeneutical

---

<sup>26</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 78–79. See also van Manen, *Experience*; Moustakas, *Phenomenological*.

<sup>27</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 64–65.

<sup>28</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 38.



phenomenology with any set of rules or methods, he offers the following dynamic interplay of research activities, summarized as follows: The researcher turns first to a phenomenon, which is an ‘abiding concern’ that is of serious interest to him/her, and in the process, s/he reflects on essential themes that are relative to what exactly constitutes the nature of this lived experience. Thereafter, the researcher writes a description of the phenomenon, maintaining a strong relation to the topic of inquiry, and balancing the part of the writing to the whole. Since it is a hermeneutical phenomenology, the researcher not only provides a description of the lived experience (phenomenon), but also an attempt to make an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experience (hermeneutics).<sup>29</sup> According to van Manen, “Lived experiences gather hermeneutic significance as we (reflectively) gather them by giving memory to them. Through meditations, day dreams, inspirations and other interpretative acts we assign meaning to the phenomenon of lived life.”<sup>30</sup>

Accomplishing a thick description of both the *taxonomy* and the *essence* or *meaning* of the Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian believers’ expressions to/before God (verbal, physical, and emotional) amidst the lived experience of grief, however, necessitated the submission of an application to the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB).<sup>31</sup> This was to ensure that ethical permission be approved prior to formal interviews among the ten interviewees.<sup>32</sup> The interviews were held in conducive locations to the interviewees. Several questions will be asked in relation to their

---

<sup>29</sup> See also Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 80–81.

<sup>30</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 39.

<sup>31</sup> Appendix 2 contains the MREB clearance certificate.

<sup>32</sup> Swinton and Mowat (*Practical*, 28–72) maintain that, “The interview process is a meaningful human encounter within which both parties [interviewer and interviewee] gain implicit and explicit knowledge about the other. It is a unique space for the creation and sharing of meaning” (64).

expressions of grief, as well as those relative to the intercultural context-sensitive responses, which offer hope and resolution to them amidst grief. These questions fell under the umbrella of sampling, which according to John Swinton and Harriet Mowat are of three types: (i) opportunistic, (ii) theoretical, and (iii) purposive. For this dissertation, a single-point purposive sampling was selected for the interview process, which suggests that, “all the interviewees are chosen at the time with specific criteria that are explicit and clarified in terms of the ability to answer the research questions.”<sup>33</sup> What follows is a sample of the single-point purposive questions that were asked during the interviews.

1. What is your understanding of the word grief?
2. What concrete examples of grief have you met with?
3. What range of expressions of grief (verbal, physical, and emotional) are normal responses within your culture?
4. Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?
5. Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this grief?
6. What are your culture’s traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?
7. What are your church’s traditional beliefs surrounding grief?
8. Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

---

<sup>33</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical*, 205. Opportunistic sampling “is the least satisfactory type of sampling and as the name implies suggests that the sample is comprised of people who were available. The opportunistic sample however is a reality in time-limited and resource-tight projects” (204). In theoretical sampling the “interviewees are chosen at a number of different points in the data collection period. The data is analyzed progressively and new recruits are sought as the data yields categories that need further investigation. The interviewees are chosen progressively for what they can add to the data set. Eventually the data analysis does not produce any new categories and saturation is achieved. This means that there comes a point when the interviews do not yield anything new in terms of insight and there is no need to interview further” (204).

9. What meaning do these coping mechanisms have in your life?<sup>34</sup>

These three responses (i.e., the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions amidst grief, along with their essence or meaning) were then recorded in a Word document prior to being analyzed (cf. APPENDIX 5 for the results).

Imperative to the interviewing process was that of *bracketing* the researcher's own personal experiences in order to engage in listening authentically to the voices of the interviewees, rather than the intrusion of the researcher's voice. As Creswell notes, "Bracketing is a process of setting aside one's own beliefs, feelings, and perceptions to be more faithful to the phenomenon."<sup>35</sup> It was therefore incumbent upon the researcher to transcend or suspend past knowledge and experience, so as to understand the phenomenon of grief at a deeper level as a means to attempt to approach the lived experience with a sense of newness to elicit rich and descriptive data.<sup>36</sup>

It is important to remember that the employment of a hermeneutical phenomenology is subsumed under the liberative intercultural praxis, which is part of phase two of the larger pastoral cycle of the revisionist method of mutual critical correlation, i.e., the *contextual analysis*. The contextual analysis combines these two sub-methods to generate a thick description of a taxonomy of the range of expressions (verbal, physical, and emotional) communicated to/before God amidst grief as well as their significance or meaning. Together, this information served to engage in a dialectic correlation, which will either complement or challenge the findings of the verbal,

---

<sup>34</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 115. I am also indebted to Kelvin Mutter for his initial thoughts in formulating these questions. Here I utilize the more user-friendly word *grief* rather than the broad and multivalent experience-rich term of *disorientation*. Alternatively stated, grief is to be understood as a dimension of psychological anguish.

<sup>35</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 331.

<sup>36</sup> See Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 331.

physical, and emotional expressions to/before God amidst disorientation by leading Israelites within in the prosaic sections of the OT (Genesis to Esther). Through this dialectic correlation one will become aware of those practices of the church that are faithful to the triune God's redemptive mission to the world.

#### ***2.1.4. Renewed Form Criticism***

Generating a taxonomy of expressive modalities of disorientation (sub)stages associated with praise and lament from within the ancient context of OT prosaic prayers of disorientation, necessitates the application of *Renewed Form Criticism*. By way of a general description, and in a manner analogous to Old and New Form Criticism, *Renewed Form Criticism* adheres to four fundamental steps in its analysis of the biblical text/unit. But whereas Old Form Criticism first identified the genre *prior to* seeking out the comparative life setting or *Sitz im Leben*, in *Renewed Form Criticism*, a generic life setting of orientation, disorientation, or new/reorientation is established *in advance of* pursuing the genre/type of the text/unit. By reversing steps two and three, this hermeneutical approach will once again undergo another modification, i.e., from Old Form Criticism to New Form Criticism and now to *Renewed Form Criticism*.<sup>37</sup> The four essential steps of this *Renewed Form Criticism* are thus:

1. Determine the unit—Nothing more or nothing less than the entire unit is required for the correct identification of the literary genre/type/stage.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Sweeney and Ben Zvi, eds., *Changing Face*. Gratitude to Boda for assisting me in formulating a name for this new criticism.

<sup>38</sup> Boadt (*Reading*, 51–68) calls this step “Defining the unit” (65), while Tucker (*Form*, 1–21) prefers “Analysis of the structure” (11), where structure refers to “the outline, the pattern or schema of a given piece of literature or a given genre” (12).

2. Describe its setting in life (*Sitz im Leben*)—The original oral social context is assumed to be either the generic life setting of orientation, disorientation, or new orientation. The original social context assumed in this dissertation, however, is that of the generic life situation of *disorientation*. Moreover, the answer to the question regarding the kind of thinking that gave rise to such an expression, as well as the possibility of knowing something about the people from the way they spoke and/or acted, is sought after.<sup>39</sup>
3. Decipher the literary genre (*Gattung*)—In this step of the dissertation, a robust taxonomy of the literary (sub)stages/types/categories (*Gattungen*) of OT prosaic prayers of disorientation will be generated based on the multivalent expressive modalities of disorientation (verbal, physical, and emotional).<sup>40</sup>
4. Discern its purpose—This final step seeks to address the function or purpose of the prosaic or poetic prayer, but in the case of this dissertation, refers to the OT prosaic prayer of disorientation in the original oral stage, in addition to its

---

<sup>39</sup> Boadt (*Reading*, 65). Tucker (*Form*, 1–21) prefers to call this step “Definition of the setting or settings” (11). It is worth mentioning here that New Form Criticism prefers to speak of an intended literary reception/readership rather than an intended oral original context (see e.g., Blum, “*Formgeschichte*” 45). This is something that I challenge here, for although we currently have in our possession the literary texts, according to Toffelmire (“Form,” 257–71) “it seems very likely that they had a significant oral life” (265); see also Tucker, *Form Criticism*, 6. This, in conjunction with my challenge to Old Form Criticism that holds to a rigid correspondence between genre and life setting, has given rise to *Renewed Form Criticism* that I am here espousing. Also, in choosing to speak of a generic life setting of disorientation rather than “hard, fixed realities,” I therefore concur with Sparks (“Form,” 111–13) that, “comparative taxonomies [are] created by readers” (113).

<sup>40</sup> Boadt (*Reading*, 51–68) calls this step “Naming the form used” (65), while Tucker (*Form*, 1–21) prefers “Describing the genre” (11). To prevent any further nebulosity regarding ‘form’ and ‘genre’ I have sought to rename this step “Decipher the literary genre (*Gattung*).” In doing so particularly with regards to this dissertation, Boda’s two-tier taxonomy (i.e., Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers and Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers) will be carried to another level. In seeking after a robust taxonomy of OT prosaic prayers of disorientation (sub)stages/types, however, it is not my intention to pursue an ideal genre/type, but rather a ‘diagnostic tool’ that will enable critics to correctly divide and analyze the word of God through a careful distinction of the assortment and mixture of the OT prosaic prayers of disorientation. At the same time, by moving from the generic life situation of disorientation prior to deciphering the genre, rather than vice versa, it is hoped that Bible students will avoid further literary nomenclature squabbles over identifying the genre of the prayer as either prayers of lament, complaint, protest, petitions, etc. In other words, the names given to the variety of disorientation prayers in this project will simply be as follows: *Disorientation Stage 1 through 6 Prayers*.

purpose it now serves within the larger work of which it is part (i.e., orality and literacy). Stated alternatively, it seeks to trace what changes took place in the OT saints by knowing how these two uses differ.<sup>41</sup>

Succinctly stated, we commence with a particular unit of the OT prosaic prayer of disorientation text, and in comparing the particular unit with other similar units, we isolate common elements and make note of significant differences. It thus becomes possible to offer legitimate grounds for comparison that are drawn from the text, while yet taking seriously the fact that the resulting (sub)stages are abstractions. But sandwiched between determining the particular unit of the OT prosaic prayer of disorientation text and deciphering its literary (sub)stages is the description of the life setting, which is herein primarily that of the generic life situation of disorientation. Subsequently, the use and function of a specific structure within a particular unit of text may be examined in light of both the abstracted (sub)stages and other instances of similar (sub)stages. In addition to this, we may also analyze the use and function of a particular text and its (sub)stages within the book or collection in which it is positioned, thus comparing the interplay between multivalent (sub)stages.<sup>42</sup>

Once more it is important to remember that the employment of renewed form criticism belongs to phase three of the revisionist method of mutual critical correlation, that is, the theological analysis. The aim is that of generating a thick description of a taxonomy of expressive modalities of OT prosaic prayers (sub)stages, together with their accompanying physical and emotional expressions, amidst the generic life situation of

---

<sup>41</sup> Boadt (*Reading*, 65) calls this step as “Identifying its purpose,” while Tucker (*Form*, 1–21) prefers “Statement of the intent, purpose, or function of the text” (11).

<sup>42</sup> This summary has been adapted from Toffelmire’s “Form,” 269–70. Toffelmire, however, uses ‘form’ and ‘genre’ analogously, something of which I have avoided throughout this dissertation.

disorientation. Particular attention is, however, given to those expressions that come to the fore amidst grief. This will allow for a dialectic correlation with the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions communicated to/before God amidst grief by leading Christians from a Guyanese and Vietnamese heritage. The end result is that of fostering compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices that will help in sustaining those in grief. Such practices work well when couched within rituals, to which we now give attention.

## 2.2. Summary and Structure

By way of summary, our previous discussion has centered on the metamethod (revisionist method of mutual critical correlation) and its sub-methods (liberative intercultural praxis, hermeneutical phenomenology, and renewed form criticism) employed within this dissertation, all of which are engaged for the purpose of generating compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices for the church. Couched within rituals, such practices are to be compassionate, and liberative intercultural, lending their aid to the mitigation of grief, and the sustainability of the bereaved, thus remaining faithful to the triune God's redemptive mission to the world.

In light of this, this chapter is brought to a close with a descriptive adumbration of the dissertation: It began with chapter 1, which furnished a general description of the anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation, the central theological questions, and the thesis statement. Following this, chapter 2 outlined the metamethod of the dissertation as well as discuss its various sub-methodologies employed. Chapter 3 will then attend to the situational analysis by surveying the current modes of expression within pastoral theology and its relationship to the human experience of disorientation,

particularly that of the phenomenon of grief, and thereafter generate a taxonomy of the anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation, from within a contemporary Christian intercultural context of Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam. Here, the essence or meaning of the various expressions will be pursued. A theological analysis will then be executed in chapter 4 wherein the current stages of OT prosaic prayers of disorientation will be explored, and thus further generate a taxonomy of (sub)stages of expressive modalities of disorientation from within the ancient context of the OT prosaic prayers of disorientation. Encompassed within chapter 5 will be a situational analysis of theology through the exploration of a dialectic correlation between the generic life situation of grief, the contemporary Christian intercultural expressive modalities of grief (i.e., verbal, physical, and emotional), and that of the Christian (on account of Christ the mediator and fulfillment of the OT) traditional expressions within OT prosaic prayers of disorientation (verbal, physical, and emotional). In chapter 6, compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices, couched within rituals, will be fostered thereby sensitizing pastoral caregivers to their multivalent significance within an intercultural society for the mitigation of grief and the sustainability of the bereaved. Chapter 7 will, in due course, bring the dissertation to its conclusion even as it recapitulates the foregoing research, and thereafter offer potential expansive work that can be accomplished in relation to expressive modalities of disorientation within the twin disciplines of biblical theology and pastoral theology.

Returning to the claim of this dissertation, I bring this chapter to a close by once again proffering the ensuing thesis statement: Bifocal in its objective, this dissertation will: (1) generate a domain of anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation communicated to/before God, along with their essence or meaning from both the ancient



Israelite context of OT prosaic prayers of disorientation and that of a contemporary Christian intercultural context (principally among Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam) amidst grief; and (2) Sensitize contemporary pastoral caregivers to such an expressive domain with its multivalent significance, the purpose of which is to foster compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care, couched within rituals, in the best interest of intercultural Christian communities coping with grief

## CHAPTER 3: ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

### 3.1. Recent Pastoral Theological Reflection on Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation

#### 3.1.1. Languages and Modes of Grief Expression

Grief studies conducted by Inge B. Corless et al., have yielded several expressive modalities of disorientation during the concrete life situation of bereavement.<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 below indicates the various languages/modes of grief expressions.<sup>2</sup>

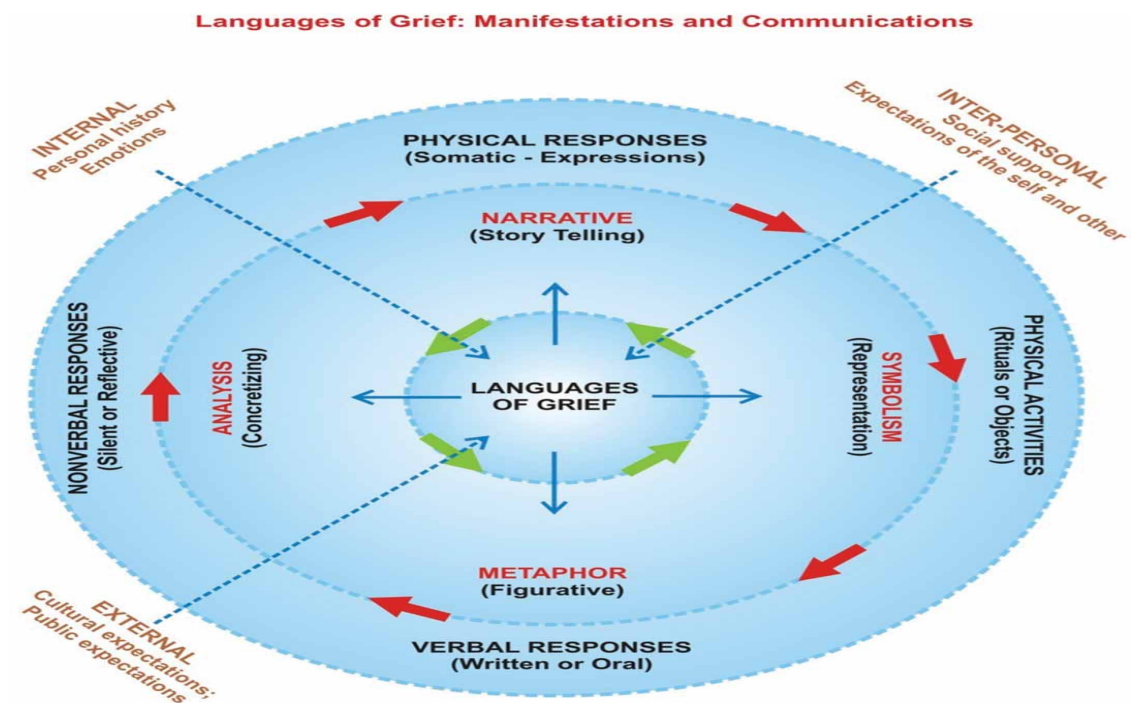


Figure 1.

<sup>1</sup> Corless et al., "Languages," 135. Other life settings of disorientation might include sickness, abuse of the self and others, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Corless et al., "Languages," 135.

Corless et al., observed that, “Modes of Expression and the Types of Language are influenced by various contingencies that affect the manifestation of the *Languages of Grief*.”<sup>3</sup> Their research further yielded the following modes of expression: verbal responses (written or oral); nonverbal responses (silent or reflective); physical responses (somatic or expressions); physical activities (rituals or objects).<sup>4</sup> Through the mode of verbal responses, “The bereaved may express their grief using different spoken languages and in some languages there may be no direct translation of the word grief such as in Portuguese where the term suffering encompasses the concept of grief. Nonetheless, the concept of grief is articulated verbally in sounds that can both be heard and comprehended by others familiar with the language.”<sup>5</sup> Nonverbal responses on the other hand are expressed through silence or reflection, that is, “ruminating on the experience of grief.”<sup>6</sup> Physical responses, says Corless et al., “are composed of physical signs, bodily expressions, and sensual aspects such as seeing and hearing. The manner in which the head is held (body language) is an example of a physical response, as is weeping. Sobbing, sighing, sudden, intense emotion, or other somatic, physical responses typically occur without intention.”<sup>7</sup> Expressions of physical activities “involve action or objects, such as attending the funerals, planning and holding memorial

---

<sup>3</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 134; emphasis original. The types of language used by the bereaved to express their grief consist of four subsets—Narrative (story telling), Symbolism (representation), Metaphor (figurative), and Analysis (concretizing) (136).

<sup>4</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 134.

<sup>5</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 135–36.

<sup>6</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 136.

<sup>7</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 136. Of import are the words of Kleinman (*Origins*, 51–70) who observed that, in China and many other societies, “somatization (the presentation of personal and interpersonal distress in an idiom of physical complaints . . .) [is] the predominant expression of difficulties in living” (51). In fact, he added that, “People experience serious personal and social problems but interpret and articulate them, and . . . come to experience and respond to them, through the medium of the body” (51).

services, or by *sitting Shiva* [a period of seven days when the bereaved are visited by guests] in the Jewish tradition, which can have both private and public components.”<sup>8</sup>

### ***3.1.2. Current Scholarship on Verbal, Physical, and Emotional Expressions of Grief***

Up until recently, it was assumed that affliction only constituted the three categories of physical pain, psychological anguish, and social degradation.<sup>9</sup> At present, however, affliction encompasses a fourth category termed “spiritual desolation,”<sup>10</sup> submitted by Phil C. Zylla. In addition to this, Zylla has ventured to develop a paradigmatic movement of affliction, referring to them as the three constructive movements for a pastoral theology of suffering: (i) the movement from silence to lament; (ii) the movement from indifference to compassion; and (iii) the movement from loneliness to community.<sup>11</sup> “Each of the movements begins by entering into the perspective of persons who are suffering. The starting point of a mature theology of suffering is to engage with those who are deeply embedded in the throes of an anguishing life situation.”<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 136; another physical expression can be the sudden selling of one’s house and moving far away to accommodate grief (136).

<sup>9</sup> See Weil, *Awaiting God*, 44; Soelle, *Suffering*, 13–15. In *Roots*, 41–70, Zylla presents a description of physical pain, psychological anguish, and social degradation. In terms of physical pain, Zylla states that, “It has its own night—the darkness of ache, the hurt of physical torment, and the throbbing physiological distress of injury and illness in the body” (58–59). Speaking of psychological anguish, Zylla notes that, “Suffering cuts us off from emotional freedom. It drives us to despair, disconsolation, and takes away our peace. . . . The anguish of psychological suffering is a severe experience of trauma to the human heart. The human capacity to hope is suffocated by the traumatic and blinding realities of psychological torment. Anxiety, fear, grief, and psychic numbness all take their toll on the capacity for a human being to bear under suffering” (59–62). Zylla also identifies three types of social suffering that are interrelated and which deepen the experiences of social degradation: “abandonment (the deep disappointment of the withdrawal of support of others), rejection (the alienation from the community where companionship of life is refused), and forsakenness (the anticipation of love and acceptance is fully disappointed and, in its place, one experiences scorn or forsakenness itself)” (62–63).

<sup>10</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 54–55, 63; spiritual desolation is, “the experience of the eclipse of hope itself, which leads to experience a growing distance from God” (63). Furthermore, “At the root of the spiritual experience of desolation is the feeling that God has abandoned us and that God inflicts the suffering itself. The full dimensions of suffering are complete when the language of desolation is disclosed. . . . This is the ultimate low point in the affliction” (64).

<sup>11</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 71–130.

<sup>12</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 68–69.

Expanding the scope of his research, Zylla has also categorized eight lament moods from the poems written by graduate students taking his course on the theology of suffering at McMaster Divinity College (MDC). These eight lament moods/categories are as follows:

- sympathy/recognition of suffering/compassion
- bewilderment/questioning
- accusation/resistance/protest
- anguish/identification/solidarity
- pining/sorrowful/how long?
- regret/loss
- sadness/gloom/greyness/resignation
- darkness/despair.<sup>13</sup>

Assessing Job's life context of grief, R. P. Belcher observed that, "Just as there are a variety of causes to suffering, so there are a variety of responses to suffering."<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, Job's unjust suffering (Job 2:3) yielded the following results: "Job's initial response to suffering is *submission*. After losing his children, his wealth (1:13–19) and his health (2:7–8), he responds with *worship*. He acknowledges the sovereignty of God (1:20–21), refuses to curse God, and is willing to accept both good and calamity (2:9–10)."<sup>15</sup> Yet Belcher acknowledges that although "Worship and submission are the right way to respond to suffering," there are many times when "such response comes at the end of a process of wrestling with God, which is described in the laments."<sup>16</sup> In such

---

<sup>13</sup> Zylla, "Shades," 763–76.

<sup>14</sup> Belcher, "Suffering," 777.

<sup>15</sup> Belcher, "Suffering," 777; emphasis mine.

<sup>16</sup> Belcher, "Suffering," 777.

cases, that is, “When God seems distant and unresponsive, it is natural for *questions* to arise.”<sup>17</sup> At this juncture, “A key question in the midst of suffering, is whether the sufferer will persevere in faith. . . . Job moves from a compliant, submissive response to a challenging, questioning one.”<sup>18</sup> But whereas Job undoubtedly gave no heed to his wife’s challenge to curse God and die (1:9), he still *curled* the day of his birth (3:1).<sup>19</sup>

Along these lines, Glen Pemberton proposes lament as the language necessary for readers “to restore a modicum of structure in times of disorientation.”<sup>20</sup> Upon coming to the realization that lament does not always lead to thanksgiving, however, particularly when God does not respond favorably to our lament cries, Pemberton explores the stage *after lament*. He indicates that, “Just as the Book of Psalms provided words we needed for lament, the Psalter also provides the guidance and language we need for negotiating the time after lament. . . . In other words, the laments set the agenda for what we do after lament—what we say and how we live.”<sup>21</sup> Pemberton subsequently offers the directions that lament points to: *trust* (Pss 11, 23, 121), *thanksgiving* (Pss 30, 92, 124), *new praise* (Pss 8, 100, 148), *rejoicing in the Lord* (Pss 65, 96, 126), *instruction* (Pss 73, 127, 133), and *broken hope* (Pss 39, 44, 88).<sup>22</sup> He nevertheless maintains that, “Wherever our lament may lead, it leaves us with stories of pain and scars, reminders of our wrestling with God; and it leaves us in hope—with much to work out with our God.”<sup>23</sup> At this juncture, we are nonetheless reminded of the fact that, “our

---

<sup>17</sup> Belcher, “Suffering,” 777; emphasis mine.

<sup>18</sup> Belcher, “Suffering,” 778.

<sup>19</sup> Belcher, “Suffering,” 778; emphasis mine.

<sup>20</sup> Pemberton, *Hurting*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> Pemberton, *Lament*, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Pemberton, *Lament*, 71–188.

<sup>23</sup> Pemberton, *Lament*, 27.

hope is not in finding a yes to every request. Our God promises grace sufficient to our need (2 Cor 12:8–10), and nothing less than life out of death, life *After Lament*.<sup>24</sup>

While it is not uncommon to verbalize one’s how longs? or even whys? amidst grief, according to J. Todd Billings, “The most potent questions, when one pushes deeply enough, are ultimately not about our experience but about the story of God made known in Jesus Christ.”<sup>25</sup> In conjunction with such an outlook, Billings’ meditation especially on the lament psalms enables him to insist that, “In and through and by Jesus Christ, with whom Christians have been united by the Holy Spirit, we can *praise, lament, petition*, and discover that the story of our loss is not the only, or most important, story that encloses our lives. We discover that this spacious place—of living in Christ—is wide and deep enough for us to *petition, rejoice*, and also join our *laments* to Jesus Christ, who intercedes on our behalf (see Rom. 8:24).<sup>26</sup> Acknowledging that our lives are not our own, Billings further contends that the stories of our lives have been incorporated into what he refers to as

the great drama of God’s gracious work in the world in Jesus Christ through the Spirit. As we come to sense our role in this drama, we find that it is a path of *lament and rejoicing, protest and praise*, rooted in *trust* in the Triune God, the central actor; we can walk on this path even while the fog is thick. For God is bigger than cancer. God is bigger than death. The God of Jesus Christ is the God of life, whose loving promises will be shown as true in the end. Until that time, we *wait* with the psalmist for the Lord and *hope* in his Word.<sup>27</sup>

Embracing such a robust perspective prompts Billings to both verbally and emotionally *rejoice in lament* during his life situation of disorientation. More than this, rather than have an apathetic spirit, he also suggests that yet another legitimate expression should be

---

<sup>24</sup> Pemberton, *Lament*, 199; emphasis original.

<sup>25</sup> Billings, *Lament*, x.

<sup>26</sup> Billings, *Lament*, 15; emphasis mine.

<sup>27</sup> Billings, *Lament*, 16; emphasis mine.

that of “giving up our life and energies for Christ, to act in *protest* and *witness* to the present and coming King.”<sup>28</sup> For Billings, this takes the physical expression of “*compassionate action*,” an example of which is that of working in a homeless shelter.<sup>29</sup>

Reminiscent of Billings, John C. Thomas and Gary R. Habermas also advocate for the need of physically reaching out to help others in compassion. Both Thomas and Habermas are convinced that,

The point of reaching out is not to avoid your own pain, but to take the inner turmoil you have experienced and connect it with someone else’s struggle. Psychologists have found that getting clients to see themselves as helpers and givers, rather than takers and receivers, produces healing. . . . However much we may have suffered, we can find meaning in it by transforming pain into compassion. . . . Helping hurting people see how God’s grace is sufficient speaks to your own unresolved questions and issues.<sup>30</sup>

Granting there exists a place for verbal theological and philosophical theodicies that attempt to justify God in the face of evil and suffering in hopes of encouraging unwavering belief in God, John Swinton prefers to engage in what he terms a *pastoral theodicy*. Extending the work of Stanley Hauerwas who calls upon Christians to build communities that absorb suffering and enable faithful living even in the midst of evil,<sup>31</sup> Swinton contends:

I maintain that theodicy should not be understood as a series of disembodied arguments designed to defend God’s love, goodness, and power. We require a different mode of understanding, a mode of theodicy that is embodied within the life and practices of the Christian community. Such a mode of theodicy does not seek primarily to explain evil and suffering, but rather presents ways in which evil and suffering can be resisted and transformed faithfully in the midst of unanswered questions as they await God’s redemption of the whole of creation. . . . Pastoral theodicy is a theodicy of action and resistance.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Billings, *Lament*, 90; emphasis mine.

<sup>29</sup> Billings, *Lament*, 81; emphasis mine.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas and Habermas, *Season*, 249.

<sup>31</sup> Hauerwas, *Naming*, 49.

<sup>32</sup> Swinton, *Compassion*, 4–5.



Alternatively referred to as practical theodicy, this mode of resistance addresses issues of evil and human suffering through engagement in particular verbal, physical, and emotional expressions of Christian practices that are performed both individually and communally, with a preference leaning to the latter. Theological and eschatological in shape and intention, practical theodicy seeks to mirror, embody, and participate in God's providential action in, to, and for the world. In a practical theodicy, God is the One who takes responsibility for the evil and suffering that has wracked and ruined God's good earth. Not necessarily implying culpability, it does however admit to God's pledge to be *with* and *for* the world in all of its conflicts even as it awaits transformation and redemption. Thus, Ray S. Anderson submits that,

God does not duck and dodge the reality of evil, attributing it to human sin and blaming it on the Devil. God is the author of the drama, in which pain and pleasure, suffering and joy, good and evil are part of the plot. . . . God takes full responsibility. . . . The biblical tradition has no view of evil as a problem outside the concept of God's providence. God's providence is expressed through his partnership with human persons in suffering, which is the divine power to be present as our advocate in the context of suffering and for the purpose of redeeming those who suffer. The providence of God is bound to his promise. This promise is a miracle and mystery of divine love. Suffering and injustice can produce a crisis of faith, leading us directly to God as the one who must ultimately take responsibility. In his taking responsibility through participation in the dilemma of evil, *God provides redemption from evil, not a solution to it as a problem.*<sup>33</sup>

From this perspective, “the ‘solution’ or perhaps better the response to the problem of evil lies within the forms of communal practice which actively engage with, resist, and seek to transform evil and suffering and struggle in solidarity to reveal love and hope to victims, survivors, and perpetrators of evil.”<sup>34</sup> Such expressions of communal practice are thus observed in the following five verbal, physical, and emotional actions of

---

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, *Wolves*, 105.

<sup>34</sup> Swinton, *Compassion*, 88.

embodied resistance presented by Swinton, which are thus: *listening to silence, lament, forgiveness, thoughtfulness, and hospitality*.<sup>35</sup> Swinton considers that such communal pastoral practices will

enable people to continue to love God in the face of evil and suffering and in so doing prevent tragic suffering from becoming evil. . . . These practices exist to enable healing and bring comfort, hope, and transformation to both church and world. In so doing, they point towards eschatological hope and new possibilities in the present.<sup>36</sup>

Below is a table illustrating Swinton's pastoral or practical theodicy.

### **Christian Practices: The Formation of a Unified Way of Life in the Spirit**

**Listening to Silence** (thoughtfulness, friendship, prayer, patience, perseverance, hope, love)

**Lament** (prayer, listening to silence, friendship, hope, patience, perseverance, eschatological imagination and hope, love)

**Forgiveness** (prayer, lament, faith, trust, hope, thoughtfulness, compassion, patience, perseverance, eschatological hope and imagination, love)

**Thoughtfulness** (hospitality, adoption, lament, listening to silence, forgiveness, eschatological imagination and hope, friendship, love)

**Hospitality** (friendship, thoughtfulness, compassion, faith, eschatological imagination and hope, perseverance, love)<sup>37</sup>

This section has explored some of current research pertaining to the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions of disorientation communicated to/before God amidst affliction within the discipline of pastoral theology. In the next section we will seek to address other modes of expression, particularly from within an intercultural Canadian context.

---

<sup>35</sup> Swinton, *Compassion*, 245.

<sup>36</sup> Swinton, *Compassion*, 85.

<sup>37</sup> Swinton, *Compassion*, 245.

### 3.2. Lacuna in Scholarship

The preceding discussion has still left one wondering about the potential of discovering other anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation to/before God (verbal, physical, and emotional) within a contemporary Christian *intercultural* context.<sup>38</sup> This enquiry is particularly significant since, as Elaine L. Graham stated, “the implications of ethnic, cultural and racial diversity are *underdeveloped* in contemporary pastoral literature.”<sup>39</sup> With a persistent rise in interculturalism in the West, especially in Canada, “A changing socioeconomic, political, cultural, and religious climate necessitates taking contexts outside of the West far more seriously than ever before.”<sup>40</sup>

Viewed from this perspective, Lartey’s definition of pastoral care becomes all the more significant. “Pastoral care,” insists Lartey, “consists of helping activities, participated in by people who recognize a transcendent dimension to human life, which, by the use of *verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication, aim at preventing, relieving or facilitating persons coping with anxieties.*”<sup>41</sup> What is more, “Pastoral care seeks to foster people’s growth as full human beings together with the development of ecologically and socio-politically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane lives.”<sup>42</sup> Therefore, by definition, one of the essential elements of pastoral care from an intercultural perspective is its

---

<sup>38</sup> Irish et al., eds. (*Ethnic*, 181–90) have suggested that, “When examining death and grief in a multi-cultural context, the myths, mysteries, and mores that characterize both the dominant and nondominant groups directly affect attitudes, beliefs, practices, and cross-cultural relationships” (187). Moreover, they have observed that, “lack of cultural understanding and sensitivity to cultural diversity in death and grief appear to have caused more problems than language barriers” (188).

<sup>39</sup> Graham, *Practice*, 47; emphasis mine.

<sup>40</sup> Lartey, *Intercultural*, 29.

<sup>41</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 30; emphasis mine.

<sup>42</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 30–31.

entailment of multivariate forms of communication.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, in as much as verbal communication is a very important way of conveying and receiving information, it is the nonverbal communication that is currently receiving an increasing recognition as a powerful mode of communication, perhaps of even greater significance than the verbal.<sup>44</sup> “In intercultural pastoral care, the forms of communication present in any given society are explored to ascertain their value within the society for caring interaction, especially since it is true that in many cultures, indirect forms of converse are very highly valued.”<sup>45</sup> In point of fact, it has been found that such modes of communication as, “Drama, poetry, and other forms of imaginative literature may convey or mediate pastoral care of the highest order.”<sup>46</sup>

Further to this, one should also note that, although largely overlooked, “The use of symbols, such as works of creative art and sculpture,” are assigned considerable attention especially since “some of the most inspiring and liberating forms of discourse emanating from the South and Central America are in symbolic art.”<sup>47</sup> While there is a tendency among those within and without the church to shrug their shoulders at the symbolic, as is evidenced in the all too common expression “merely symbolic,”<sup>48</sup> and more often than not, “seen as the poor alternatives to ‘literal’ or ‘objective,’”<sup>49</sup> symbols play a very significant role in communication. As Eugene E. Lemcio asserts,

Symbols are powerful means of communicating, especially evident when they are abused or defaced—as in the case of flag burning. Such violent treatment causes a flare-up of thoughts, emotions, and action. Head, heart, and feet are all

---

<sup>43</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29; other essential elements are: an expression of human concern through activities, the recognition of transcendence, the motive of love, and preventing distress while fostering growth (26–30).

<sup>44</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29.

<sup>45</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29.

<sup>46</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29.

<sup>47</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 29.

<sup>48</sup> As noted in Lemcio, “Conclusion,” 140.

<sup>49</sup> As noted in Lemcio, “Conclusion,” 140.

simultaneously affected. Word symbols, as well as object symbols, can produce a similar effect. When used as a form of communication, they can be even more powerful than narrative prose. Of course, the challenge is always to avoid treating the literal symbolically and the symbolic literally.<sup>50</sup>

It should be pointed out, however, that, “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language . . . mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several . . . disciplines, and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.”<sup>51</sup> But as Clifford Geertz maintains, “Whatever the infirmities of the concept of ‘culture’ there is nothing for it but to persist in spite of them.”<sup>52</sup> Not surprisingly, Gerald A. Arbuckle contends that, “There is simply no other word to take its place.”<sup>53</sup> In fact, Sherry Ortner avers that, “[The] issue is . . . one of reconfiguring this enormously productive concept for a changing world, a changing relationship between politics and academic life, and a changing landscape of theoretical possibilities. . . . the fate of ‘culture’ will depend on its uses.”<sup>54</sup> Agreeing with Ortner, Arbuckle thus “emphasizes that cultures are not fixed entities, but processes in which people struggle for meaning in a threatening environment.”<sup>55</sup> Arbuckle therefore proceeds to proffer a general working definition of culture as follows:

A culture is a pattern of meanings encased in a network of symbols, myths, narratives, and rituals, created by individuals and subdivisions, as they struggle to respond to the competitive pressures of power and limited resources in a rapidly globalizing and fragmenting world, and instructing its adherents about what is considered to be the correct way to feel, think, and behave.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Lemcio, “Conclusion,” 140.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, *Keywords*, 87.

<sup>52</sup> Geertz, *After the Fact*, 43.

<sup>53</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> Ortner, *Fate*, 8, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 17.

<sup>56</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 17.

Further to this, Matthew D. Kim has also observed that, “A common image to display cultural difference is the iceberg: a few aspects of culture are above the surface, and many others (perhaps 90 percent) lie hidden below.”<sup>57</sup> Patty Lane likewise insists that in each culture there are two types of cultural differences: objective and subjective. In keeping with the iceberg imagery, objective culture characterizes the visible portion, which might be inclusive of a culture’s language, food, clothing, and greeting mannerism, and to which one might incorporate anthropological expressions of disorientation. In terms of the iceberg imagery, lying for the most part below the surface of the water, is that of the subjective culture, which, according to Lane, “is the internal part of culture that drives or motivates the visible, objective culture.”<sup>58</sup> Subjective culture is therefore less detectable, and might be inclusive of a culture’s assumption, feeling, value, and motivation,<sup>59</sup> and in the case of this dissertation, encompass the essence or meaning lying behind or beneath each anthropological expression of disorientation. Objective culture is therefore fueled by subjective culture, both of which rest at the core of this dissertation.<sup>60</sup>

Pastoral care, with its multivariate forms of communication, consequently opens the door for the exploration and discovery of other anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation within a contemporary Christian intercultural context among Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam. Such an endeavor has as its purpose the

---

<sup>57</sup> Kim, *Cultural Intelligence*, 10.

<sup>58</sup> Lane, *Crossing Cultures*, 18–19.

<sup>59</sup> Lane, *Crossing Cultures*, 18.

<sup>60</sup> See also Kim, *Cultural Intelligence*, 10–12. As a way to assist preachers in the twenty-first century towards proclaiming sermons that are culturally intelligent, Kim defines culture as “a group’s way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving in the world, for which we need understanding and empathy to guide our listeners toward Christian maturity” (5). While the outcome of this dissertation is the sensitizing of pastoral caregivers to the multivalent anthropological expressions of disorientation, especially those related to coping with grief, coupled with their meaning, such sensitizing also fosters culturally intelligent pastoral caregivers.

development of a more comprehensive understanding of the implications and significance of ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity and similarity concerning the irrefragable universal theme of affliction, particularly that of grief, within society even as it fosters a compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.3. Expressive Domain of Contemporary Christian Intercultural Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation

#### ***3.3.1. Introduction to Intercultural Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation***

Gerald W. Peterman and Andrew J. Schmutzer believe that, “Communities of faith that are committed to addressing a fuller spectrum of suffering must intentionally name the real ills of real people living among them, then listen to the pained testimonies of these people’s suffering. Real words matter when facing real pain.”<sup>62</sup> In light of this, attention will be given to several of the verbalized, physical, and emotional anthropological expressions of disorientation communicated to/before God amidst the phenomenon of grief by Canadian Christian immigrants from both Guyana and Vietnam.<sup>63</sup> But before doing so, it is important to furnish a brief explanation of what I mean by Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian.

---

<sup>61</sup> Zacharias (*Cries*, xi–xvi) affirmed that, within our private world when nobody is watching us, “each of us also wrestles with some heart-consuming battle. . . . If anything unites our cultures today it is the unanswered questions we face that have a felt reality” (xiii). Here we might also include potential anthropological expressive modalities as: reclusion, silence, ruminations, groans, weeping, pessimism, lamentation, trust, penitence, praise, imprecation, clothes rending, triumphalism, etc. Cole (*Mourning*, 9–18) has also listed several feelings associated with grief: “shock, numbness, sadness, depression, anger, frustration, impatience, anxiety, fear, loneliness, vulnerability, helplessness, fatigue, exhaustion, hopelessness, regret, guilt, shame, ambivalence, apathy, relief, and a greater sense of connection to, and value and yearning for, what we no longer have as part of our lives. The feelings that come with grief may take a physical form, too” (11).

<sup>62</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Pain*, 28.

<sup>63</sup> See Appendixes 3 and 4 for a script of the interviews of the Guyanese-Canadians and the Vietnamese-Canadians respectively.

In this dissertation, the term Guyanese-Canadian refers to a person who was born in Guyana, but who immigrated to, and now resides in Canada as a citizen. Similarly, the term Vietnamese-Canadian refers to a person who was born in Vietnam, but who immigrated to, and currently resides in Canada as a citizen. With this in mind, we can now proceed to an examination of the verbal anthropological expressions among Guyanese-Canadian leaders.

### 3.3.1a. The Process of Data Collection and Analysis

Following van Manen's dynamic interplay, the phenomenon of grief was chosen as an abiding concern that was of interest to the researcher. Writing a description of the phenomenon of grief, however, necessitated an interview process comprised of participants who have experienced grief. Ten participants were involved in this research: five from a Guyanese-Canadian and five from a Vietnamese-Canadian. Contact was made directly over phone and/or email. Their contact information was furnished by either the public domain, or through a pastor (one from each cultural context). Through email, each participant was provided with a full description of the project, i.e., the Letter of Information-Consent Form, as well as the nine One-on-One Interview Questions, both of which were approved by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. Prior to the interview, however, each participant emailed me a signed copy of their consent forms. Each participant chose a location of their convenience for the interviews.

During the interview, each participant was afforded the freedom to either respond to, or refuse to answer any question that they deemed uncomfortable. Interviewed first were the five Guyanese-Canadians (five males), which was then followed by the five Vietnamese-Canadians (four males and one female). However, in



connection with the latter, owing to a re-emergence of the trauma experienced while in Vietnam, two participants withdrew from the interview process. After being contacted, two other Vietnamese-Canadian leaders willingly agreed to be part of the interview.

These latter two participants from the Vietnamese-Canadian context, read their responses to me during the interview. Which means that they had already taken the time to write out their answers on the One-on-One Interview Questions sheet. They also presented me with a copy of their answers to the questions. As such, I have made the decision to leave the words “groan inwardly” underlined, as indicated by VL4.

Of the five participants from the Guyanese-Canadian contexts, however, only one (VL5) did like their Vietnamese-Canadian counterparts in answering the questions prior to the interview. The others responded during the interview as the questions were asked. Nothing was specifically emphasized by GL5, such as was done by VL4.

The interviews were recorded on an Earhaus voice recorder, and thereafter transferred to a Word document, where it was analyzed. Particular attention was given to each of the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions, along with their significance or meaning, especially those that were helpful rather than hurtful in transforming or coping with grief from each culture. In the process, the researcher made an attempt to not only provide a description of the lived experience of the phenomenon of grief, but also an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experience. In doing so, however, care was taken to bracket out or suspend the researcher’s own presuppositions and theological assumptions, yet without the tendency to inhibit the interpretation of the phenomenon.<sup>64</sup> As van Manen notes,

---

<sup>64</sup> For this bracketing while inhibiting the tendency to interpret, see Patton, *Ministry*, 37.

If we simply try to forget or ignore what we already ‘know,’ we may find that the presuppositions persistently creep back into our reflections. It is better to make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories. We try to come to terms with our assumptions, not in order to forget them again, but rather to hold them deliberately at bay and even to turn this knowledge against itself, as it were, thereby exposing its shallow or concealing character.<sup>65</sup>

Which is to say that the researcher “hold[s] both the assumptions of their worldview at bay and open[s] themselves to the experience in front of them without judgment”<sup>66</sup> in an exercise of “absolute unmixed attention,”<sup>67</sup> which is not easy to sustain. For this reason, interviews were only conducted within a one hour timeframe wherein the researcher “deactivate[d] his/her habitual epistemic instruments in order to situate himself/herself in a pre-categorical hearing of the other . . . which is infused by the *ethic of delicacy*.”<sup>68</sup>

In the process of analyzing the transcription of each interviewee, van Manen’s three types of reading were executed:

- i. The Holistic Reading Approach: This involves attending to the text as a whole and asking, “What sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole?”
- ii. The Selective Reading Approach: This involves reading the text several times and asking, “What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described.
- iii. The Detailed Reading Approach: This involves reviewing the text with a focus on specific sentences or sentence clusters and asking, “What does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience described?”<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 47.

<sup>66</sup> Zylla, “Shades,” 765.

<sup>67</sup> Weil, *Gravity*, 170.

<sup>68</sup> Mortari, “Delicacy,” 10; emphasis original.

<sup>69</sup> van Manen, *Experience*, 93.

In each reading, elements that were distinctive to each of the two cultures examined were given significant attention. But while it is true that, “phenomenology invite[s] the use of language to express the ineffable,” it is “pastoral theology that intentionally brings God-talk and theological expression into view,”<sup>70</sup> along with the “subtle persistence of hope.”<sup>71</sup> And in so doing, “this articulation [is] translated into actions of compassion. Sensitive articulation reveals the path of mercy. We might say that knowing becomes being which is then transformed into doing. The cycle of pastoral imagination cannot stop short of compassion—rather, compassion is its goal and essence.”<sup>72</sup> For this reason, this dissertation will seek to develop liberative intercultural compassionate pastoral care actions that will help foster comfort and hope amidst the lived experience of grief, thus restoring the soul so that grief becomes bearable rather than unbearable as life continues for the bereaved.

Once more, Appendix 2 can be consulted for the full transcript of each of the five interviews conducted among the Guyanese-Canadians. For more information regarding the five interviews conducted among the Vietnamese-Canadians, kindly consult Appendix 3. At this juncture, however, we move into a closer look at the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions communicated to/before God within the lived experience or phenomenon of grief. Of import here is that some expressions are culturally neutral while others are culturally specific. Mention will be made as to distinguish between the two. The first context examined is that of the Guyanese-Canadian, which is then followed by the Vietnamese-Canadian.

---

<sup>70</sup> Zylla, “Shades,” 767.

<sup>71</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 54–55.

<sup>72</sup> Zylla, “Shades,” 775.

### ***3.3.1b. Verbal Anthropological Expressions among Guyanese-Canadian Leaders***

#### **3.3.1b.1. Lament Weeping/Wailing/Shouting/Screaming<sup>73</sup>**

GL3's understanding of grief is that of "An outward expression of an inward feeling."

This outward expression is realized in lament weeping, the significance of which can be heard in the following words of GL3: "The word grief means to me that you have a loss, and there is something to lament over that is beyond your control." GL3 further remarked that, "You lose a part of you, or a part of your relationship with loved ones and friends, and you cannot help them, so you grieve. . . . It's a loss that you lament over."

Sharing the example of the loss of a sister, GL3 stated that, "There is always an empty space, an empty chair there, and you lament over that." For GL3, grief in the form of lament means weeping or shedding of tears. To the accompaniment of weeping, GL1 added that, "Often accompanying wailing, which is a loud cry, some mourners scream and shout virtually at the top of their lungs . . . . It is not uncommon to hear loud wails from those stricken by grief," which, like fainting, "accentuates a deep sense of love for the deceased."

#### **3.3.1b.2. Praying Disorientation Prayers to God (Lament and Thanksgiving Praise)<sup>74</sup>**

With the appearance of grief, GL5 articulated the interrogative or lament questions of "Why me?", "Why this?". By the same token, and acknowledging that it is only human to inquire, GL2 added: "How do we pray?" and "Why did this have to happen?". For at least these two leaders, in asking such interrogative questions of God, they recognize

---

<sup>73</sup> Such expressions amidst grief are culturally neutral, meaning that they are also located within the Israelite OT context as well.

<sup>74</sup> Prayers of Lament and Thanksgiving amidst grief are also culturally neutral. Such prayers are also located within the Israelite OT context as well.

that when grief comes close to home, articulated prayers are hard to come by. Moreover, they both recognize that with the manifestation of death and grief, something is amiss in their world run and managed by God, the giver of life. Death, in other words, should *not* be a reality.

In lieu of trying to forget the grief, or wish it never approaches, GL4 affirmed that, “I take it to the Lord in prayer.” In preference to being “bogged down” or “impacted negatively” by grief, the significance of prayer is heard when GL4 asserted that it not only demonstrates a “dependency upon the Lord,” but more so, prayer reinforces GL4 with the divine potency to help “in going forward.” Putting it another way, for GL4, prayer unleashes “the strength and grace of God to go through the grief or distress.” Such an understanding for GL4 emanates from reading the words of Isa 43:1–3 KJV.

But now, thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

Along the same line of reasoning, GL3 turns to God as Father in prayer amidst grief, saying, “Dad, here is a problem, intervene.” With this simple petition for divine intervention, GL3 becomes the recipient of God’s “comfort and joy, a joy that money cannot pay for.” Thus, GL3 can persist in going to his heavenly Father with a daily expression of thanksgiving praise saying, “Good morning, Dad. It is such a joy to have you in my life.”

A former Hindu-believer-turned-Christian, GL3’s significance in praying to God the Father is buttressed by the assertion that, “In my strength I am limited and weak, but

with God in me, the One who called the world into existence, that God with His power and His presence in my heart, has established His kingdom and presence in the temple of my heart, and He is in full control.” Embracing such a robust theological perspective, GL3 further added that, “He puts all the pieces together. He gives all the solutions, all the answers.”

### ***3.3.1c. Physical Anthropological Expressions among Guyanese-Canadian Leaders***

#### ***3.3.1c.1. Avoiding Food and People<sup>75</sup>***

For GL5, with the arrival of grief, so also a desire to avoid food and others, to be alone in silence and solitude. “Grief consumes you and takes you so that you are not able to eat because the grief has filled you up so much. Food is not part of what you want to see because sometimes you just want to be by yourself and not be able to relate to others.”

The significance of grieving in silence and solitude while avoiding food, is that of helping GL5 to “ponder mostly upon what you have lost, and whom you have lost, and all the many things that happened in the past. And it all floods back into your memory and your soul, and it goes over in your head over and over.” What is more, it is during these moments of being alone and pondering these past memories of the lost loved one that leads GL5 to “start thinking about what you could have done, and what you should have done.”

---

<sup>75</sup> Amidst grief, such expressions appear to be culturally neutral, especially in light of the fact that men generally tend to express themselves as such (see Zylla, “Aspects” 837–54).

### 3.3.1c.2. Bearing the Cost of the Funeral<sup>76</sup>

While not commonplace among other people groups from a Guyanese context, in times of grief, those of an East Indian heritage tend to bear the cost of funerals especially their parents. GL1 remarked that, “Indian people feel that it is part of their duty to take care, especially of their parents. They feel that it is part of their obligation, and in many cases, their culture will teach them that if they don’t, they will have a curse on them. So they feel that if they don’t do their best for their parents, they’ll be bringing a curse upon their own family. So they gladly do it because that’s part of their culture, among the Indian people especially.” While it is not uncommon to have children pay for the funeral expenses of their parents as part of their familial or parental responsibility, GL1 also observed that, “Generally, among the Indian people more than anyone else, they will chip in to pay without being asked to pay for the funeral. They would be willing to join in and help to pay for the expenses. They would often come and ask, ‘Can I help?’ But you will find this almost among the Indians.”

### 3.3.1c.3. Beating Chest, Kissing the Dead, Lying Down on Grave, Fainting<sup>77</sup>

GL1 further remarked that, “Often accompanying wailing, which is a loud cry, some mourners scream and shout virtually at the top of their lungs all while beating their chest.” On top of that, GL1 also observed that, “Some have even moved to kissing the

---

<sup>76</sup> This expression might be distinct among East Indian Guyanese-Canadians and so will be developed in chapter 5.

<sup>77</sup> Beating one’s chest can be found within a context of mourning and/or repentance (cf. Isa 32:12; Nah 2:7; Luke 18:13; 23:48). Kissing the deceased might be analogous to Joseph’s falling on his father upon Jacob’s death (Gen 49:33) but bereft of fainting. Both beating one’s chest and kissing the deceased therefore appear to be culturally neutral.

dead, and when at the cemetery, some have even chosen to lie down on top of the grave.”

Having countless opportunities to officiate at funerals of Guyanese folks both in Guyana and Canada, GL1 further commented that it is not uncommon to see people weeping and to hear them wailing, and even fainting. The significance of such expressions lies in the statement that, “This is a way of telling their people that we love this person [the deceased].” As a corollary to this, if there is a lack of weeping, wailing, and fainting, the underlying assumption is that the expressionless griever(s) “does not love that person [the deceased].” Reviving the fainting person necessitates the application of “smelling salts or Limacol,” added GL5.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.3.1c.4. Keeping Wake and Sharing Stories of the Deceased<sup>79</sup>

According to GL1, not only at the funeral service, but even as a way of remembering the departed, it is conventional to eulogize the deceased in conversations that take place during the wake nights. Keeping wake usually takes place in the home of the departed. As noted by Clem Seecharan, “Death requires the public articulation of grief; the ‘wake’ or vigil, facilitates communal support for the bereaved, who reciprocate by providing a feast for the community.”<sup>80</sup>

What is more, even if the person may not have been one admired within society, something good is always said about him/her, both in casual speech and writing, among

---

<sup>78</sup> On the authority of the New Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation (New GPC Inc., “Limacol,” para. 1, 4), “Limacol is [said to be] a complex, liquid blend of aromatic compounds used to instantly refresh and reinvigorate. . . . It is splashed on especially liberally after any period of time in the heat, any exertion—such as after a game of football or cricket—or anytime one would need to ‘cool off’” (para. 1). By virtue of its refreshing and reinvigorating properties, “Limacol: the freshness of a breeze in a bottle,” continues to be its rejuvenating catchphrase (para. 4) .

<sup>79</sup> Common among many cultures is the wake (or viewing) and sharing stories of the deceased.

<sup>80</sup> Seecharan, “Guyana,” para. 30.



family members (immediate and extended) and friends. As said by GL1, the relatives and friends of the departed “might express [their stories of the deceased] by saying things relating to the past. They might repeat words told them by the deceased, and sometimes it could be really humorous, and you probably have to put your hand to your mouth.”

### 3.3.1c.5. Sharing a Meal, and Singing and Dancing to Upbeat Gospel Music<sup>81</sup>

GL5 indicated that, “During the wake, close relatives and friends bring coffee, crackers, and even food.” The purpose of these gestures serve “as a means of demonstrating to the immediate family members of the departed that they are there for them, and that they love and care about them.”

*Kweh-kweh* is usually understood as an African-Guyanese pre-wedding ritualistic celebration that finds its origin among African slaves and their descendants in British Guiana, which is now named the Republic of Guyana (abridged as Guyana). According to GL1, however, in recent years, together with pre-nuptial ceremonies and parties, there has been a steady increase in the adaptation of *Kweh-kweh* to that of a pre-funeral, as well as funeral and/or memorial services among Guyanese and Guyanese-Canadians.

The chief purpose of *Kweh-kweh*, however, is that of serving up the engaged couple with instructions on marriage. This is comprehended from the words of Gillian Richards-Greaves, who notes that, “While less frequently referred to as karkalay and mayan, *Kweh-kweh* emerged among African slaves in Guyana, South America, and

---

<sup>81</sup> Sharing a meal after a funeral is culturally neutral, as is singing gospel songs during the wake and funeral. What appears to be distinct here is that of dancing during the wake and funeral as part of the *Kweh-kweh* celebration of the life of the deceased.

historically functioned as a medium for matrimonial instruction for soon-to-be-married couples.”<sup>82</sup> What is more, Richards-Greaves comments that, “Kweh-kweh is celebrated on the eve of a wedding ceremony and has approximately six distinct segments or states, which include a procession from the groom’s residence to the bride’s home and the negotiation of the brideprice. Each ritual segment is executed with singing, dancing and gesticulations that allow attendees to advise and instruct the bride and groom and to comment on their respective nations (relatives, friends and representatives).”<sup>83</sup>

A celebration of *Kweh-kweh* is virtually piecemeal, however, without partaking in the essential meal. Customized for a pre/funeral service, *Kweh-kweh* festivities include the antiphonal singing of joyful songs, dancing, and the sharing in a meal of *cook-up rice*, the contents of which are mainly black-eyed peas and rice in addition to a choice of meat (either fried-chicken, beef, or pork). The significance of this modification can be heard in GL1’s elucidation that, “rather than mourn the death of the departed, all activities are designed to celebrate the life of the deceased.”

Further to this, according to GL1, “the songs sung are upbeat Christian hymns or gospel songs, such as, ‘When We All Get to Heaven’ and ‘Mansion Over the Hilltop.’” And as is typical of *Kweh-kweh* celebration, these upbeat songs (i.e., “When We All Get to Heaven” and “Mansion Over the Hilltop”) are never sung without being accompanied by dancing, as Richard-Greaves notes above. Dancing during the *Kweh-kweh* celebration is part of what is meant by having, as GL1 stated, “a real time expressing” themselves in celebration of the life of the deceased, and the ultimate reunion in heaven, i.e., in that mansion over the hilltop with their Lord Jesus Christ.

---

<sup>82</sup> Richards-Greaves, “[Re]Constructing,” 3.

<sup>83</sup> Richards-Greaves, “[Re]Constructing,” 3.

### 3.3.1c.6. Writing Letters of Comfort to the Bereaved<sup>84</sup>

When asked if there were any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with grief, it was GL5 who remarked that, “Some will write comforting letters to the family, which is very helpful.” According to Lidia Schapira, “A written letter of condolence is also an excellent way of conveying respect and support for the family. . . A thoughtful condolence letter offers tribute to the person who died and also provides comfort to the mourners in their time of loss.”<sup>85</sup>

### 3.3.1c.7. Eclectic Physical Expressions

Several other eclectic physical expressions and rituals, which can be found among Guyanese during their time of grief, were enumerated by GL5. These are as follows:

- If in Guyana, the village or bell crier, also referred to as the bellman, would walk the streets of the village ringing a bell announcing the death and burial of the deceased. In Canada, this news is broadcasted by family members, relatives, and friends of the deceased, in the local newspaper or on the television (Panorama TV on City TV channel 7) on Saturday mornings at 9:30 AM. Prior to the TV, telegrams were the conventional means of spreading the news of the deceased.
- Subsequent to attending a wake night or funeral service, attendees enter their homes walking backward rather than forward. The significance of this physical expression is founded upon the belief that the spirit of the dead trails the attendees home. To prevent the spirit of the dead from crossing the threshold of

---

<sup>84</sup> Perhaps with the rise of technology, hand-written letters of comfort to the bereaved are not as popular as before (e.g., Jer 29; Rev 2:8–11).

<sup>85</sup> Schapira, “Communication,” 54.

their homes with them, the attendees faceoff with the spirit of the dead symbolically communicating to the spirit that s/he is not allowed or welcomed here. It is the assumption of GL5 that this belief has its origin in East Indian/Hindu folklore.<sup>86</sup>

- As an alternative to going to the cemetery, the women usually remain with family members and friends at the home of the deceased so as to offer comfort to the bereaved.
- For some Guyanese, as a means of respecting the dead, no rank food, characterized as meat or fish, is consumed during the time of grief. Some Guyanese even avoid food altogether. Still, others clean their room, their clothes, and also their entire body after attending a funeral. Others even discard their clothing by burning it after returning home from a funeral. What is more, several even resolve to turn down or turn around the pictures that contain their deceased loved ones. In the year following the death of a loved one, celebrations that usually accompany special holidays like that of Christmas and Easter, are either not as extravagant, but toned down, or are deferred until the next year. All of these rituals are ways and means of expressing respect for the deceased loved one.
- If the deceased is of an East Indian descent, it is commonplace to sing bhajans at the wake and funeral. One of the most famous bhajans is “Yishu Ne Kaha: Jiwan Ki Roti,” which means, “Jesus said: I am the Bread of Life.”

---

<sup>86</sup> Seecharan (“Guyana,” para. 28) observes that, “African, Amerindian, and Indian traditional cultures have sustained folk practices that have penetrated Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. Obeah has its roots in African folk religion but influence Indians as well, and Indian spirit possession has affected African religious sensibility.”

### ***3.3.1d. Emotional Anthropological Expressions among Guyanese-Canadian Leaders***<sup>87</sup>

#### **3.3.1d.1. Sadness, Depression, Listlessness, Guilt, Regret**

While acknowledging that crying is the most common emotional expression, GL5 nevertheless asserted that, “Grief within your inner being makes you sad. It makes you depressed, listless, and all the things that go with it.” The essence or meaning lying behind such emotions can be heard in GL5’s clarification that, “On a personal level, grief is a sadness that you’re overcome with, an emotion that you’re going through that consumes you, and takes you, so that you’re not able to eat, because the grief has filled you so much.” What is more, moments of being alone and pondering past memories of the lost loved one leads GL5 to “start thinking about what you could have done, and what you should have done. All these things come back in grief, and you feel regret, and you feel guilty. These are the emotions that you pass through and you get depressed.”

Relying on the work of Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, Caitlin Vieira states that, “Bargaining encompasses a lot of ‘what ifs’, ‘if only’s’ and guilt. At the end of this stage is the realisation that what happened is not your fault and the beginning stages of acceptance of the situation.”<sup>88</sup> Vieira further remarks that, “The depression stage will feel never-ending. We will feel intense sadness and withdraw from others.”<sup>89</sup>

#### **3.3.1d.2. Anger**

While officiating at a funeral, GL5 noted that one of the immediate family members was requested to reduce his emotions. Such a demand, however, did not find acceptance by

---

<sup>87</sup> Amidst grief, the following emotive expressions appear to be culturally neutral.

<sup>88</sup> Vieira, “Grieving and Mental Health,” para. 8.

<sup>89</sup> Vieira, “Grieving and Mental Health,” para. 8.

the bereaved family member. As a result of this, “The angry relative began pushing others around him away from him so that he could grieve freely and unhindered.” Vieira remarks that, “Anger is a necessary state [in grieving] as it’s an essential emotion for pain and healing. Feeling angry has never been the problem, it’s how we choose to express it. There are healthy ways to express anger.”<sup>90</sup> Vieira then goes on to quote the philosopher Aristotle who asserts that, “Anyone can become angry, that is easy. But be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way — that is not easy.”<sup>91</sup>

3.3.1d.3. Sorrow, Stress, Getting Bugged Down, Mourning, Comfort, Joy, Happiness  
GL4 stated that, “The basic understanding of the word grief is that of sorrow, which I experienced when my father passed away on the 1st of July 1974.” However, as aforesaid, GL4 maintained that, “I currently do not allow the grief to stress me out or bog me down.”

Earlier, it was noted by GL5 that when the mourner prays in dependency upon God, “God never lets the believer down.” Here, GL5 specified that, on the contrary, “God brings comfort to the mourner through prayer. As Jesus said, ‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.’”<sup>92</sup> Such comfort, added GL5, is also found in the words of Paul who said that, “God comforts us in our affliction.”<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Vieira, “Grieving and Mental Health,” para. 7.

<sup>91</sup> Vieira, “Grieving and Mental Health,” para. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Matt 5:4.

<sup>93</sup> The locus of Paul’s complete statement is 2 Cor 1:3–4: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

GL3 avowed that, “I put my trust in God and rely on Him, having the confidence that He will take my grief, and give me comfort, and cheer me up, and make me happy.” As noted earlier, embracing such a positive perspective, GL3 can then go to God his heavenly Father saying, “Dad, here is a problem, intervene,” which is followed by the blessed reality that, “God takes my grief and gives me comfort and joy, a joy that money cannot pay for. I am helped; I am happy.” Such tremendous comfort, joy, and happiness have thus engendered GL3’s daily expression of praise to God the Father: “Good morning, Dad. It is such a joy to have you in my life.”

Perhaps the words of Lorraine Ince-Carvalho sums up the process of grief described above, especially in relation to the exertion of one’s emotional energy.

It is generally recognized that despite each individual’s grief taking its own pattern, there are stages that most people go through. These are firstly accepting the reality of the loss, secondly experiencing the pain of grief before adjusting to life without the person who has passed away and finally putting less emotional energy into grieving and moving on by choosing to focus energy into something new.<sup>94</sup>

Ince-Carvalho, however, does admit that these three stages “can overlap and become jumbled as griever try to find their way through and the duration of moving through the stages differs from person to person. . . . The thing to remember if you are grieving is that the feelings you are experiencing are normal.”<sup>95</sup>

Having come to the end of our survey of the anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation among the Guyanese-Canadian leaders, the next move is to execute the same survey, but this time, among the Vietnamese-Canadian leaders within the phenomenon of grief. The remainder of this chapter addresses, the verbal, physical,

---

<sup>94</sup> Ince-Carvalho, “The Unfortunate Reality of Grieving,” para. 7.

<sup>95</sup> Ince-Carvalho, “The Unfortunate Reality of Grieving,” para. 8.

and emotional anthropological expressions communicated to/before God by Vietnamese-Canadian leaders amidst the phenomenon of grief.

### ***3.3.1e. Verbal Anthropological Expressions among Vietnamese-Canadian Leaders***

#### ***3.3.1e.1. Vocalizing Loud Cries (Weeping Lament)<sup>96</sup>***

VL1 averred that within the Vietnamese culture it is customary for “grief to generally be expressed in sorrow and sadness and loud cries.” For this reason, it is hardly surprising to hear that upon catching wind of the news of the passing of VL1’s father in Vietnam, the verbal response was thus: “I just cried out.” VL1 even went further to specify that, “I grieved one week for my dad and I couldn’t even sleep.” Similarly, VL5 added that, “My understanding of grief is crying deeply.” As such, it is not surprising to hear the remark of VL5 that, “Family and relatives usually show deep grief by crying loudly.”

At this juncture we conclude our presentation of the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions communicated to/before God amidst grief among the Guyanese-Canadian leaders. Our next move is to present the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions communicated to/before God amidst grief among the Vietnamese-Canadian leaders. To reiterate, the purpose of this exercise is that of identifying those expressions that have proven helpful rather than hurtful, so as to foster compassionate, liberative, intercultural pastoral care practices that aid in the transformation of grief so that life might be lived abundantly rather than with unbearable grief.

---

<sup>96</sup> This is a culturally neutral expression amidst grief.



### 3.3.1e.2. Praying Disorientation Prayers (Lament, Cry for Comfort, and Thanksgiving)<sup>97</sup>

It was stated by VL1 that, “I lost two sisters, three nephews, and even a very dear female friend while crossing the seas by boat to find refuge in Canada.” Subsequent to these tragedies, VL1 posed the following question to God: “Why has this happened to me and my family?”

Though familiar with the fact of life that every person will die in one way or another, without the ability to prolong one’s life forever, upon the passing of VL2’s father in 1997, VL2 nevertheless acknowledged that, “I struggled with the idea of losing my father so soon.” Trying to find an answer while simultaneously engaging in this internal struggle, VL2 posed the following question to God: “Why did You create humankind in this way?” However, VL2 also acknowledged that, “At that time, I was not good at understanding the Bible. After much struggle with thoughts about life in my mind and tears in my eyes, I finally accepted the harsh reality of birth, aging, illness, suffering and death.”

Approaching grief from another angle, and with the language of lament nonetheless, rather than interrogate God, VL4 spoke of crying out to God for comfort in prayer in recognition of the fact that grief is heart-wrenching and overwhelming. “Father, you know that my heart is broken by this grief. This is too much for me to handle. Comfort me now, Father. Draw me closer to You. Shelter me from this stormy situation.” VL2 likewise remarked that, “We lament in silence, we pray together, and we ask the Holy Spirit to comfort us.”

---

<sup>97</sup> Amidst grief, such expressions are also culturally neutral.

At the sight of every hospital, memories of VL3's late father are regularly evoked. This, however, is not cause for sadness, but rather thanksgiving. On such occasions, "I take a deep breath and thank God for taking my dad home," the significance of which is, "knowing that he is now comfortable and free of pain." What is more, an added meaning lying behind such a prayer of thanksgiving from the heart of VL3 comes to the fore in the following words: "I thank God that He is there for us amidst the grief we go through."

### 3.3.1e.3. Composing Songs and Poems; Singing Hymns; Reading through the Bible<sup>98</sup>

It was noted by VL1 that amidst grief, it is helpful to "Compose songs and poems, since Vietnamese music is sad music," and "Sing hymns." For VL1, another activity to engage in is that of "Read[ing] through the Bible. Read[ing] Job, Psalms, Jesus' suffering, Isaiah 53, and Jeremiah. Read[ing] God's Word, because of the power of God's Word," which enabled VL1 to "get up from my grief and praise God."

### 3.3.1e.4. Talking about One's Suffering, Talking to/about the Deceased<sup>99</sup>

It was asserted by VL4 that, "People withdraw when they grieve. They would like to vent their pains or sorrows, but only to their trusted friends or relatives." VL4 further acknowledged that, "Some of us are still affected by our cultural values. They tend not to talk much about their sufferings. But thanks to the teachings of the Scriptures concerning pain and suffering, and thanks to small group ministry, people are freer to

---

<sup>98</sup> It is not uncommon for the bereaved to sing hymns and read their Bibles during their time of grief. What might be distinct here is that of composing one's personal sad songs and poems.

<sup>99</sup> These expressions are also culturally neutral amidst grief.

express their grief.” VL5 stated that grief is a time when Vietnamese people “Tell others of one’s suffering, and tell the loved one we just lost how much we loved him/her.” It was further remarked by VL5 that, “Vietnamese people spend most of their daily time at the cemetery talking to the dead.”

While being Westernized and still Vietnamese, VL3 acknowledged that, “My expression of grief verbally would be that I mention my dad from time to time with people.” The significance of this verbal expression from the lips of VL3 is twofold and rendered thus: “I want people to know who my dad was and it makes me happy talking about him. It brings back great memories of him.” Additionally, VL3 stated that, “I keep pictures of my father on my phone and talk to it as if talking to him.” Dieu-Hien T. Hoang remarks that three days following the funeral of his uncle to cancer in both the abdomen and liver, “We wept and cried and talked to uncle in private.”<sup>100</sup>

At the passing of VL2’s mother last year (2018), VL2 claimed that, “I gathered my brothers and sisters in the hallway of the hospital and reminded them of all the good things she had done and the good life she had lived, and encouraged one another to keep on with her legacy of love, dedication to the family, and faithfulness to God, which she adopted in her later years.” (VL2’s mother was for many years a pious Buddhist believer, but who finally came to Christ towards the latter years of her life.)

Hoang also notes that following the funeral of his uncle, “for the next 49 days the family held a memorial service every seven days. Again, they shared meals with close friends and relatives and reminisced about events of uncle’s passing as well as

---

<sup>100</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 17.

everything else in their lives.”<sup>101</sup> According to Hoang, “Each memorial forced the family to burden others with their sorrow so that they could grieve fully.”<sup>102</sup>

### 3.3.1e.5. Worshiping God through Meaningful Songs and Prayer, Encouraging the Bereaved through Comforting Words of Scripture, and Evangelizing the Unbelievers<sup>103</sup>

Following the death of a Vietnamese Christian, “We share to people who lose their loved one that whoever trusts in Jesus will be saved. Therefore they have a hope that they will see their loved one who died,” stated VL5.

In terms of a funeral service, VL2 specified that, “We commemorate the life of the deceased one who was devoted to God and one’s family and others, by conducting a solemn ceremony in the church or in the funeral home. During the funeral service, we worship God with meaningful songs, pray, witness to unbelievers, and strengthen our relationships.” During this solemn ceremony, and among the bereaved family and friends, “We lament in silence, we pray together, and we ask the Holy Spirit to comfort us,” remarked VL2. It was also noted by VL2 that even prior to the funeral service, “Ritual prayers for the comfort of the dead and also the bereaved family” are also said upon the death of a loved one.

### ***3.3.1f. Physical Anthropological Expressions among Vietnamese-Canadian Leaders***

#### 3.3.1f.1. Crying/Shedding Tears, Isolating Oneself, Embracing Dead Warm Body<sup>104</sup>

In the opinion of VL4, “Grieving is culturally acceptably, but not approvable, in our culture. Men are encouraged to show strength and courage in pain or sorrow. Although

---

<sup>101</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 18.

<sup>102</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 18.

<sup>103</sup> Amidst grief, such expressions appear to be culturally neutral.

<sup>104</sup> Such expressions are culturally neutral amidst grief.

people cry, women tend to cry more than men.” As a matter of fact, “The father never cries in front of the family, but alone. He tries to be strong,” stated VL1. Further to this, VL1 specified that, “Grief is often bottled-up for a long time rather than expressed.”

Though feeling free to question God about why He created humankind with the ability to die and without the ability to prolong life forever, VL2 declared that, “After much struggle with thoughts about life in my mind and tears in my eyes, I finally accepted the harsh reality of birth, aging, illness, suffering, and death.” Upon the death of a close relative, VL2 noted that it is traditional for “the bereaved, who had been closely bonded with the deceased, will lament the death for a long time, and will even relate their past experiences in tears.”

Consistent with this statement, upon the passing of VL2’s mother, VL2 indicated that “Since my younger sister was living with our mother for a long time, she was deeply attached to her. She was the one who mourned much. She cried out in loud tears, and even embraced her still warm body, as she expressed her love for our mother.”

In speaking of the death of his uncle to cancer that initiated in the liver, but which spread to the abdomen, Hoang remarks that, “When uncle took his last breath, the crying began gradually as reality started to sink in. All manners of grief were shown; from stoic solemnity to weeping, crying, sobbing and screaming. The only thing not acceptable would have been laughing. All the grandchildren were present and they all cried, even the eighteen month old baby.”<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 6.

### 3.3.1f.2 Deep Breath

VL3 states that when memories and sadness in relation to her father are conjured especially at the sight of every hospital, “Then I take a deep breath” or a sigh of relief. The significance of this physical expression rests in the confident “knowledge of the fact that my father is now with God, comfortable, and free from pain.”

### 3.3.1f.3. Lying Down on Casket, Hitting Oneself Hard<sup>106</sup>

In the midst of grief, and especially on the day of the funeral, there are times when “Someone will lie down on the casket, and hit him/herself hard, especially if s/he thought that s/he was the cause of the death of the loved one,” acknowledged VL5.

### 3.3.1f.4 Sitting Beside the Tomb, Visiting the Grave and Carrying Flowers, Keeping Memorabilia<sup>107</sup>

It was VL5 who remarked that, “Vietnamese people grieve for our loved one who passed away for a long period. Because of this long period of thinking about the loved one, Vietnamese people spend most of their daily time at the cemetery, sitting beside the tomb and talking to the dead.” Additionally, Vietnamese people “Visit the grave and carry flowers,” commented VL1. Also, VL3 stated that, “I keep pictures of my father on my phone and talk to it as if talking to him.”

Here we note the words of Hoang who remarks that, “Three days after the funeral, the support and intense grieving that they [the bereaved family] needed returned. The closest relatives and family went back to the cemetery to bring flowers and

---

<sup>106</sup> These also are culturally neutral expressions amidst grief.

<sup>107</sup> Such expressions appear to be culturally neutral amidst grief.

incense to the gravesite, say more prayers, and clean up the site. We wept and cried and talked to uncle in private.”<sup>108</sup>

### 3.3.1f.5. Wearing a White Band, and Celebrating the Life of the Deceased Annually with Lots of Food<sup>109</sup>

VL3 commented that, “There is a traditional Vietnamese way of dealing with grief. During the funeral service, whereas in Vietnam the immediate bereaved family wear all white, the mourners in Canada wear black clothing with a white band around their head and/or their arm.” Explaining the significance behind this ritual, VL3 further elucidated that, “This traditional white band is to be worn for an entire year as a sign of mourning and as a symbol of the loss of life or the ashes of the deceased.”

Also implied in such a year-long ritualistic expression is the silent truth that *grief* is not terminated upon the completion of the committal (burial or cremation) of the deceased. To state it another way, wearing the traditional white band throughout the rest of the year following the death of a close family member is to suggest the unspoken statement that even when the dead is long gone and no longer physically present, grief still persists.

This finds support in the words of Hoang who notes that, “After the funeral, family members wore a small piece of black or white fabric on their clothes every day to signify that they were in mourning.”<sup>110</sup> Hoang further remarks that this piece of fabric would usually be worn for two years. “On the second anniversary, these clothes would

---

<sup>108</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 17.

<sup>109</sup> Amidst grief, both expressions appear to be distinct among the Vietnamese-Canadians, although it might be analogous to the donning of widow’s clothes (Gen 38:14).

<sup>110</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 21.

be burned to signify that the mourning period was over.”<sup>111</sup> According to Hoang, “The burning of the mourning clothes signifies the incorporation of the bereaved into the normal course of life.”<sup>112</sup> Yet Hoang also states that, “The deceased’s memory is not erased and the family still observes the anniversary of the death each year.”<sup>113</sup>

In addition to this, it was VL1 who noted that the life of the deceased is celebrated “as a memorial annually with lots of food.” This expression should not be confused, however, with the offering of food to the deceased’s spirit prior to sharing the meal with the gathered family members at the memorial.<sup>114</sup>

### ***3.3.1g. Emotional Anthropological Expressions among Vietnamese-Canadian Leaders***<sup>115</sup>

#### 3.3.1g.1. Confusion and Depression,

Due to the lengthy period of grief among Vietnamese folks, such prolonged grief can have adverse emotional consequences. Thus, VL5 noted that, “Vietnamese people usually experience depression and mental problems. Some become confused, and even lose their memories.”

---

<sup>111</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 21.

<sup>112</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 22.

<sup>113</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 22.

<sup>114</sup> See Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 20. But see the article by an anonymous ucanews reporter, “Vietnamese Bishops Issue Guidelines on Ancestor Veneration,” for a Catholic perspective on ancestor worship, including the use of ancestor altars with candle, incense, flowers, fruits and the deceased’s pictures, which are allowed under the altars of God in their houses (para. 7). The article goes on to state that, “Catholic daughters-in-law, sons-in-law and their children should partake in ancestor rituals, present offerings on ancestor altars, and offer incense in front of ancestors’ pictures as a way to have good relationships with their non-Catholic relatives” (para. 8).

<sup>115</sup> Such emotive responses appear to be culturally neutral amidst grief.



### 3.3.1g.2. Anger, Heartbreak, Shock

The multiple losses among immediate and extended family members and friends—two sisters, three nephews, and an especially dear female friend—resulted in VL1’s elicitation of much anger on occasion. The manifestation of VL1’s unholy anger rose to the surface especially in the early years of marriage, which saw both spouse and children suffering the brunt of it.

Anger was also provoked toward God by father, mother, and VL3 following the brutal and unfortunate death of VL3’s brother at the tender age of fifteen. Although the bereaved family came to understand God and realized that He took VL3’s brother home for a reason, thus leaving him in His hand, VL3 averred that, “At first we did blame God.” Unable to explain VL3’s brother’s unfortunate death, VL3 remarked that, “We were still shocked and heartbroken and didn’t understand why.” To make matters even worse, their anger was compounded even further by the priest’s uncongenial attitude and lack of support toward the bereaved family. When asked to go to the cemetery “to give a final saying for my brother,” stated VL3, “the priest told my dad it was rainy so he would not go.” What is more, to add further insult to injury, “the priest told my dad that his job was done and he was not interested in doing anything extra.” Thus VL3 commented that, “My parents were shocked and angry.” Perhaps this is a case of insensitivity upon the part of the priest.

### 3.3.1g.3. Pain, Sadness, and Sorrow

VL4 asserted that, “People withdraw when they grieve. They would like to vent their pains or sorrows, but only to their trusted friends or relatives.” VL1 averred that within the Vietnamese culture it is customary for “grief to generally be expressed in sorrow and

sadness and loud cries.” For VL3, the sight of any hospital evokes memories of VL3’s dad, and with it, “sadness hits me.”

### 3.3.1g.4. Hope

VL5 noted that, “As Vietnamese Christians, we value our tradition as our heritage, especially in time of grief. But we rather trust the Bible than our tradition about the afterlife. We sorrow with hope.”

Interestingly, according to Lam, prior to their death, some Vietnamese believers experience a pre-resurrection, which provides ample proof of their belief in the afterlife. As Lam puts it: “One thing confirms that God’s miracles are still effective, and that is the resurrection of followers of Christ before their death.”<sup>116</sup> In this way, Vietnamese believers can sorrow with hope.

### 3.4. Expressive Domain of Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation in Pastoral Theology

- *Verbal Anthropological Expressions* (Loud Cries / Lament Wailing / Screaming/Shouting; Praying Disorientation Prayers [Lament, Cry for Comfort, and Thanksgiving Praise]; Sharing Stories of and/or Talking to/about the Deceased; Talking of One’s Grief; Worshiping God through Meaningful Songs and/or Singing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual songs to the Lord [such as Upbeat Gospel Songs and Bhajans]).
- *Physical Anthropological Expressions* (Avoiding Food and People; Bearing the Cost of the Funeral; Beating One’s Chest/Hitting Oneself Hard; Celebrating the

---

<sup>116</sup> Lam, *God’s Miracles*, 199.

Life of the Deceased Annually with Lots of Food; Composing Sad Songs and Poems; Deep Breath; Embracing the Deceased's Body; Encouraging the Bereaved through Comforting Words from the Scripture; Fainting; Keeping Memorabilia; Keeping Wake; Kissing the Dead; Lying Down on a Casket and/or Grave; Proclaiming an Evangelistic Message of Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ alone/Evangelizing the Unbelievers; Reading through the Bible; Sharing a Meal; Sitting beside the Tomb; Thinking about the Lost Loved One; Visiting the Grave and Carrying Flowers; Wearing a White Band on Head and/or Arm; and Writing Letters to Comfort the Bereaved).

- *Emotional Anthropological Expressions* (Anger/Heartbreak/Shock; Confusion/Depression; Pain/Sadness/Sorrow/Listlessness/Guilt/Regret; Stress/Getting Bugged Down/Mourning; Hope/Comfort/Joy/Happiness).

These verbal, physical, and emotional anthropological expressions communicated to/before God will subsequently engage in a dialectic correlation with the verbal, physical and emotional anthropological expressions communicated to/before God within the context of prosaic prayers in the life setting of disorientation in the OT (Genesis to Esther). Through this dialectic correlation, it is hoped that compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices will be fostered in an attempt to transform grief making it manageable, rather than destructive, for the bereaved. For this reason, the next chapter will generate the verbal, physical, and emotional anthropological expressions collected within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, that is, within the OT prosaic context of prayers of disorientation.

## CHAPTER 4: ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

### 4.1. Recent Scholarship on Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation in OT Prosaic Prayers

The multivalent expressions corresponding to the human experience of disorientation as examined and engendered in the preceding chapter are not only witnessed within a Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian intercultural context. One also equally observes a fascinating number of multivalent expressions (verbal, physical, and emotional) and their attentiveness to the ancient human experience of disorientation within the prosaic sections of the OT (i.e., Genesis to Esther). Such expressions, interestingly enough, are detected in both non-death-related contexts (i.e., individual and communal prayers of disorientation) and also death-related contexts.<sup>1</sup> As Saul M. Olyan perceives, “the texts narrating the mourning rites of penitents, humiliated individuals, and persons seeking a divine revelation, among others, do not use a different vocabulary to describe their behaviour; rather, they utilize the vocabulary of mourning the dead.”<sup>2</sup> The fact that such expressions are recorded in both non-death-related and death-related contexts allows the researcher to better explore a dialectic correlation with the expressions examined amidst grief within the intercultural contexts of Guyanese-

---

<sup>1</sup> Rather than prayers of disorientation, Olyan (*Mourning*, 1–27) prefers petitionary mourning, that is, “mourning rites employed by individual and communal supplicants in time of need” (5).

<sup>2</sup> Olyan, *Mourning*, 19.

Canadians and Vietnamese-Canadians. It therefore seems worth proffering a brief overview of prayer, especially prayers of disorientation, alongside which other expressions (i.e., physical and emotional) communicated to/before God are recorded in the prosaic sections of the OT prior to any explication and generation of a taxonomy of these multivalent expressions.

#### 4.2. Description and Definition of Prayer

In this section I endeavor to establish a description or a working definition of prayer as understood within the OT. But as will become clear, such an endeavor is very complex, as there seems to be an enigmatic side to prayer. Mysterious as it may be, however, it seems important to attempt a definition or description of prayer. Such an effort is twofold: (i) first, it will aid in the process of identifying prayers within the prosaic sections of the OT, and (ii) second, it will serve the greater purpose of helping in the categorization of such prayers, especially those uttered within a context of disorientation.

It is not unusual to hear prayer defined or understood as dialogical, or conversational in its very nature. Terence E. Fretheim, for example, asserts that, “Prayer is communication between believers and their God within a relationship of consequence.”<sup>3</sup> Even more explicit is Walter C. Kaiser who avers that prayer is “conversation with God.”<sup>4</sup> This definition, however, begs the following question: Does

---

<sup>3</sup> Fretheim, *Creation*, 124. Grenz (*Prayer*, 8–30) states that, “Prayer is direct communication with God. . . . At its heart, prayer entails communion with God. . . . prayer is the activity of communicating with the God in whose presence we exist. This activity presupposes a standing-over-against Another, a relationship of the pray-er to the one addressed in prayer. Understood as communication with God, prayer moves in two directions. It includes both the human person speaking to God and God speaking to the human person” (27). Similarly, Bloesch (*Prayer*, 50–66) defines prayer as “a two-way communication between the Creator and the creature” (50).

<sup>4</sup> Kaiser, *Eyes*, 4.

Adam and Eve’s conversation with God in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:9–13) meet the requirement for prayer? Should one also assume that Cain’s conversation with God (4:9–15) also qualifies as prayer? J. Gary Millar claims that, “prayer is taken to refer to the deliberative activity when human beings call on God *when he is not immediately present*.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, prayer “*asks God to deliver on his covenantal promises*.”<sup>6</sup> But what about prayers of thanksgiving and praise? Do they ask God or do they thank and praise God for being faithful to His covenant promises, hence His deliverance?

Samuel E. Balentine understands prayer as “address to God in the second person, which is initiated by humans, intentional in design, and introduced by prayer terminology (e.g., *hitpallēl*, ‘to pray’; *qārā’ bešem*, ‘to call on the name’).”<sup>7</sup> P. W. Ferris observes that,

The more common terms used in the OT for ‘prayer’ are *tevilla* (77x; 17x in the Prophetic Books [e.g., Is 5:15]) and the cognate verb *pll* Hithpael (e.g., Jer 29:12), ‘to advocate, intercede.’ . . . Other terms include: ‘*atar*, ‘to plead, entreat’ (e.g., Is 19:22); *hanan*, ‘to implore compassion’ (e.g., Hos 12:4 [12:5]; cf. Is 33:2); *qara’*, ‘to call’ upon God (e.g., 2 Sam 22:7); *za’aq*, ‘to cry out’ (e.g., Ezek 11:13); *šw’ Piel*, ‘to call for help’ (e.g., Is 58:9); *daraš*, ‘to seek’ God (e.g., Amos 5:4); and *ša’al*, ‘to inquire, beg’ (Jon 4:7).<sup>8</sup>

Yet, as we will see from our discussion on the prayers uttered within a context of disorientation within the prosaic scope of the OT, prayer is also present when none of these terms are made explicit within the text.

Judith H. Newman affirms that prayer is “address to God that is initiated by humans; it is not conversational in nature; and it includes address to God in the second person, although it can include third person description of God.”<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Newman

<sup>5</sup> Millar, *Name*, 19n1; emphasis original.

<sup>6</sup> Millar, *Name*, 18; emphasis original.

<sup>7</sup> Balentine, *Prayer*, 31.

<sup>8</sup> Ferris, “Prayer,” 583–87.

<sup>9</sup> Newman, *Praying*, 6–7.

avers that, “Prayer can be understood broadly to comprehend human communication to God, which may include words and related ritual acts.”<sup>10</sup> This will be shown to be true as we attend to the auxiliary ritual expressions (e.g., donning sackcloth and pouring dirt) that accompany OT prosaic prayers of disorientation.

Miller, nonetheless, offers a more panoramic view on prayer as found within the Bible. Miller suggests that prayer may (i) involve a vocabulary that suggests its character as a *conversation or dialogue with God*, (ii) be associated with formal places and situations of worship, (iii) be identified by a specific set of terms that all have to do with ‘crying out’ or ‘calling out’ for help, and (iv) involve vocabulary that has to do with seeking direction or instruction from God.<sup>11</sup>

Mindful of such an extensive and yet what appears to be an inconclusive understanding of prayer, one can give more careful attention to Mark J. Boda’s observation that, “there are occasions when third-person speech is employed and when prayer vocabulary is absent, and yet the composition appears to be prayer.”<sup>12</sup> All things being equal, Boda therefore affirms that, “This is a needed reminder that identifying prayer is often more of an *art* than a *science*.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, prayer can either be *bidirectional* or *unidirectional*, encompass both second and third-persons, as well as the presence and absence of prayer vocabulary. Whether or not God responds is only a matter of secondary importance, though it is assumed that the pray-er would earnestly

---

<sup>10</sup> Newman, “Prayer,” 4:579.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, *Lord*, 46–48; emphasis original.

<sup>12</sup> Boda, “Prayer,” 806.

<sup>13</sup> Boda, “Prayer,” 806; emphasis mine.

desire that God would reply, and do so favorably.<sup>14</sup> Otherwise, there seems to be no purpose in prayer.

In sum, in this section I have attempted to give a brief overview and definition of prayer for the purpose of identifying prayers, especially prayers of disorientation, within the contexts of the prosaic sections of the OT.

#### 4.3. Synopsis of Scholarship on OT Prosaic Prayers

This brings us to a synopsis of scholarship with respect to prayers recorded in the prosaic sections of the OT, which will subsequently aid the researcher in identifying prayers of disorientation along with their auxiliary expressions as recorded in such a context. For the purposes of this dissertation, attention is given primarily to prosaic rather than poetic prayers of the OT. Here I take the term *prosaic* prayers to refer to prayers referenced within the prose or narrative sections of the OT, that is, within the limits of Genesis and Esther.<sup>15</sup> It is worth acknowledging here, however, that there are prose sections in the OT, especially the prophetic books, and also that prayers can be identified in those sections as well (e.g., Isa 38). Additionally, though many prosaic prayers are actually largely poetic, the key here in my decision-making process is that of the context as prosaic, rather than independent or poetic.

The impetus for this endeavor is threefold: (i) a plethora of work in recent years has been completed within the poetic prayers of the OT, to the virtual neglect of the

---

<sup>14</sup> Even in prayers of thanksgiving and praise, which one might think does not necessarily warrant it, one of God's favorable responses can be that of inhabiting the praises of His people. God is the one enthroned upon both the descriptive and the declarative praises of Israel (Ps 22:4 [3]). More will be said on these two types of praises later.

<sup>15</sup> While Esther is part of the prosaic or narrative section of the OT, it is important to note that no prayer category is yielded therein.



prosaic prayers, (ii) in comparison to the poetic prayers, the prosaic prayers of the OT yield a greater variety of prayer categories, especially those uttered within a context of disorientation, and (iii) with the actual context of disorientation furnished by the text itself, *conjecturing* the *Sitz im Leben* or life situation of the prayer category no longer becomes a necessity.

Contained within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, prosaic prayers are generally believed to move from a place of orientation to disorientation and then to new orientation. But while it is claimed by the likes of Boda, Brueggemann, etc., that prayers located within the context of disorientation are either that of the categories of lament, confidence, or penitence,<sup>16</sup> this section will highlight the *inadequacy* of such a proposal. As will become clearer, categories such as vow and thanksgiving praise are *also* uttered within a context of disorientation. The remainder of this dissertation will therefore illustrate the development of other categories or stages of prayers uttered amidst a context of disorientation, thus filling a great lacuna within scholarship executed on the prosaic prayers of the OT, that is, between the borders of Genesis and Esther.

---

<sup>16</sup> Boda, "Transition," 187–90; Boda, "Prayer," 806–11; Boda, "Varied," 61–82.

### 4.3.1. *Development of Prayers*

Westermann avows that within the OT, prayer appears to have had an historical development in relation to its form.<sup>17</sup> Prayer therefore seems to have evolved from its early simple prosaic forms, to the more complex poetic forms (as found within the Psalter), and then to the extremely complex forms (as witnessed in such passages of 1 Kgs 8; Ezra 9; Neh 1, 9; Dan 9).<sup>18</sup> The impression here is that during the pre-exilic period, a strong emphasis was placed on protest and complaint while confession of sin was virtually nonexistent. During the postexilic period, however, the complaint essentially vanished and in its place there is found a preponderance of confession of sin accompanied by petitions for forgiveness. As such, “This move from protest to penitence is in keeping with the historical trauma of exile, in the aftermath of which any protest of innocence would seem to have lost its foundation.”<sup>19</sup>

### 4.3.2. *Levels of Prosaic Prayers*

Objecting to such an historical development, however, Moshe Greenberg contends that within the OT, one can discover three levels of prosaic prayers all running concurrently with each other. These are: patterned prose prayer speech, ritual prayers (psalms), and

---

<sup>17</sup> Although ‘form’ and ‘genre’ have been used analogously, Tucker (*Form*, 1–21) maintains that, “If the term *form* is used in reference to genre or *Gattung*, it should be made clear that the word has taken on a secondary connotation” (12). In this dissertation, however, ‘form’ will be used distinctly from ‘genre.’ Sweeney (“Form Criticism,” 227–41) asserts that, “‘Form’ (German, *Form*) refers to the unique formulation of an individual text or communication, whereas ‘genre’ (German, *Gattung*) refers to the typical conventions of expression or language that appear within a text. Genre does not constitute form; it functions within form” (227). Campbell (“Form Criticism’s Future,” 15–31) differentiates ‘genre’ from ‘form’ as follows: literary genre or type is equivalent to the typical, a matrix for the text [German: *Gattung*], while literary form or structure is equivalent to the text itself and all its individuality [German: *Form*] (24–25). Perhaps it would be helpful for form critics to compare ‘form’ to the proverbial ‘forest’ (the entire unit) and ‘type’ to the proverbial ‘trees’ (the distinctive varieties within the entire unit), to avoid the repeated discombobulation of the forest for the trees and likewise the trees for the forest.

<sup>18</sup> Westermann, *Praise*, 165–213. See also, Boda, “Prayer,” 806.

<sup>19</sup> Balentine, *Prayer*, 28. Boda (“Prayer,” 806–11) adds that, “this development occurred not only on the stylistic level, but also on the theological level, as can be discerned in the shift from lament to penitence for communal supplication forms” (806).

the totally unconventional and artless or extemporaneous speech.<sup>20</sup> Greenberg further adds that, “These three levels of praying were *coeval*, and one and the same biblical character is attested as praying on more than one of them (e.g., Hannah [1 Sam 1:12 and 1 Sam 2:10]; Samson [Judg 15:18 and 16:28]).”<sup>21</sup> In other words, “All three levels were available throughout the period of biblical literature, and narrators might choose to place their character on any level according to circumstances.”<sup>22</sup>

#### ***4.3.3. Prayers of Orientation, Disorientation, and New Orientation***

Miller categorizes prayers into prayers for help, doxology and trust, confession and penitence, others, and blessing and curse.<sup>23</sup> Yet it is Brueggemann’s work on prayer types, i.e., orientation, disorientation, and new orientation, which, according to Boda, has been most beneficial with its grounding of each form of prayer “more firmly in human experience.”<sup>24</sup> Citing 1 Chron 16:4–6 as warrant for each of these three types of prayers articulated by Brueggemann, Boda further notes that, “the Chronicler presents David’s commission to the Asaphites to ‘minister before the ark of the Lord, to make petition [prayers of disorientation], to give thanks [prayers of reorientation], and to praise [prayers of orientation] the LORD, the God of Israel.’”<sup>25</sup> Alternatively stated, a panoramic viewpoint captures OT prosaic prayers as moving from seasons of orientation (a life situation deprived of affliction), to disorientation (a life situation encompassing

---

<sup>20</sup> Greenberg, *Prayer*, 45.

<sup>21</sup> Greenberg, *Prayer*, 46.

<sup>22</sup> Greenberg, *Prayer*, 46.

<sup>23</sup> Miller, *Lord*, 55–133, 244–99.

<sup>24</sup> Boda, “Prayer,” 806.

<sup>25</sup> Boda, “Prayer,” 807. Of import here is that the NASB renders the Hebrew *lehazkir* “to celebrate.” While a precise translation remains ambiguous, McComiskey (“זָכַר,” 241–43) submits that it might be better to translate it as, “to invoke the name of the LORD in relation to Pss 38 and 70” (242), which might very well explain Boda’s translation “to make petition.”

affliction), and then to new/reorientation (a life situation after affliction).<sup>26</sup> Approaching them from this standpoint, the prosaic prayers of the OT can thus be associated with human experience, which is a better alternative to locating its specific liturgical contexts.

#### 4.3.4. *Stages of Disorientation Prayers*

Although such a diversity exists with regards to prayer types located throughout the OT,<sup>27</sup> particular attention is given here to the prosaic prayers of disorientation. Such prayers, says Boda, “arise from an experience of difficulty in which the supplicant or community is in need of God’s rescue, and they often include physical rites such as fasting, sackcloth, ashes, loud wailing and crying, and various postures (lying, sitting, standing).”<sup>28</sup> By challenging Brueggemann’s one-dimensional understanding of disorientation prayers,<sup>29</sup> however, and in consideration of what he calls *Ausblick aufs Lebens*, that is, ‘the outlook/perspective on life,’<sup>30</sup> Boda recently developed a two-tier taxonomy of disorientation prose prayers based on the level of protest in the OT. These are as follows: (i) Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers (i.e., those prayers that are prayed

---

<sup>26</sup> Brueggemann, *Message*, 19–23; cf. Brueggemann and Miller, *Life*, 8–15. Brueggemann adapts the three Ricoeurian categories of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Pemberton (*Hurting*, 61–75) comments, “In a liminal state, we are caught by circumstances in an in-between time or space of ambiguity, and as a result we feel displaced, confused, frustrated, or even angry. . . . Our challenge is not only how to live faithfully in a season of disorientation but also how to negotiate the liminal space as we move into a season of disorientation. The concept of liminal space and seasons of disorientation are both helpful ways to describe and so talk about the difficult times we encounter” (63–64).

<sup>27</sup> Examples of prayers of orientation are 1 Chron 29:20; 2 Chron 5:13; Ezra 3:10–11. Examples of prayers of new orientation are 1 Sam 2:1–10; 1 Kgs 3:6–9; Neh 12:27.

<sup>28</sup> Boda, “Prayer,” 807. Ferris (“Prayer,” 583–87) has proffered the following auxiliary expressions of prayer: (i) Body language, such as, kneeling before the God (Dan 6:10), or falling on their faces (Ezek 9:8; 11:13), and imploringly raise their hands (Jer 4:31; Lam 1:17). (ii) Fasting, which is accompanied by sackcloth and ashes (Dan 9:2–4; Joel 1:1–4; Jon 3:4–6) (586). Miller (*Lord*, 32–54) adds Ezra’s tearing of clothes, pulling of hair from his beard, sitting down, along with fasting and falling on his knees before the Lord with his hands to the LORD his God (Ezra 9:3–5), and that of Elijah stretching himself out upon a sick child as he prayed for healing (1 Kgs 17:21) (50–54).

<sup>29</sup> One-dimensional means disorientation prayers as *purely* lament without other possible (sub)stages/types/categories, inclusive of which are confidence or even penitence, as Boda has commenced taxonomizing.

<sup>30</sup> Boda, “Transition,” 181–92; Boda, “Varied,” 61–82.

within a period of distress, expressing despair and longing for salvation; the tone of this type of prayer is noted by the stinging questions to God of “why?” and “how long?”<sup>31</sup> and (ii) Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers (i.e., those prayers that arise within a context of distress, but with a different tone: on the one hand, they express confidence in God’s salvific work,<sup>32</sup> or on the other hand, they express contrition before God’s discipline and do not question God’s action or inaction, that is, they possess a sense of penitence that God will forgive).<sup>33</sup> Corresponding to Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers is the “vow” form, which according to Boda, “requests something from God and provides a motivation in a human response following the divine intervention (Judg 11:30; 1 Sam 1:11).”<sup>34</sup> Of interest here is that Boda’s sub-division of disorientation prayers finds close association with that of Gunkel’s sub-genres of communal lament prayers especially within the psalmic corpus: (i) Confession of Innocence (i.e., lament prayers wherein the supplicants protest their innocence and try to persuade God to recognize it as well,<sup>35</sup> and (ii) Penitential Prayers (i.e., lament prayers wherein the supplicants confess their sins to God and request His forgiveness).<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> E.g., Josh 7:6–9; Judg 21:2–4; 1 Kgs 17:20–21; described in Judg 2:4; 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:6; 1 Sam 1:10–18, 27; 8:18; 9:16; Esth 4:1–3.

<sup>32</sup> E.g., Josh 10:12; Judg 13:8; 2 Sam 15:30–31; 1 Kgs 3:6–9/2 Chron 1:8–10; 1 Kgs 8:22–53/2 Chron 6:14–22; 1 Kgs 8:55–61; 18:36–38; 2 Kgs 6:17–20; 19:14–19; 20:2–3; 1 Chron 4:10; 29:10–19; 2 Chron 14:9–11; 20:4–19; Ezra 8:21–23; Neh 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29, 30; described in 1 Sam 6:8; 2 Kgs 19:4; 1 Chron 5:20; 2 Chron 15:4; Ezra 6:10; Neh 2:4; 4:9.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Judg 10:10, 15; 1 Sam 6:6; 12:10, 19; 2 Sam 24:10/1 Chron 21:8; 2 Sam 24:17/1 Chron 21:16–17; 2 Chron 30:19; Ezra 9:1–10:1; Neh 1:4–11; 9:5–37; described in Neh 9:1–5; Ezra 10:6; 2 Chron 33:12–13.

<sup>34</sup> Boda, “Transition,” 187–90; Boda, “Prayer,” 806–11; Boda, “Varied,” 61–82.

<sup>35</sup> Gunkel, *Psalms*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> Gunkel, *Psalms*, 35–36. See also Fretheim (*Creation*, 123–47) for this distinction within the individual lament psalms wherein he proffers Ps 51 as a psalm of a penitent heart, and Ps 13 as a psalm of an innocent sufferer (139).

#### 4.3.5. *Prayers of Disorientation*

This recent research prompts further analysis. *First*, Boda's two-tier taxonomy of disorientation prose prayers encourage the potential of discovering other (sub)stages/types/categories of prayers uttered in the setting of disorientation within the context of the prosaic prayers of the OT (Genesis to Esther).<sup>37</sup> *Second*, and in conjunction with the first observation, although Ferris and Miller have offered a few auxiliary expressions that accompany OT prose prayer, further exploration will enable one to discover other anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation that *complement* the OT prosaic prayers of disorientation (sub)stages/types/categories, thus augmenting Boda's two-tier taxonomy. While all three levels of prayer (patterned prose, ritual, and extemporaneous) were coeval, as Greenberg has duly noted, and since scholars tend to disagree on classifying such disorientation prayers either as complaint, lament, protest, etc., it seems better in light of what will follow, to retain Boda's nomenclature.

In as much as research executed on the prosaic prayers of disorientation within the OT and its attention to ancient human experience has generated some result, an existing lacuna in scholarship still persists. This is particularly in regard to the (sub)stages/types/categories of disorientation OT prosaic prayers that are often accompanied by other multivalent modes of expression of disorientation (physical and emotional).

---

<sup>37</sup> This effort is an attempt to expand the work of Boda in "Transition," 181–92; Boda, "Prayer," 806–11; Boda, "Varied," 61–82.

#### 4.4. Anthropological Expressive Modalities of Disorientation Prayers and Their Auxiliary Expressions in the OT

##### *4.4.1. Expressions of Suffering within the OT*

Peterman and Schmutzer avow that, “within a distinctly theological worldview, the Old Testament affirms that any description of suffering and evil must factor God into the equation. Without a *theocentric* worldview, neither suffering nor evil necessarily calls the *meaning* of suffering into question.”<sup>38</sup> The two have further observed that, “Expressions of suffering in the Old Testament range from dire human experiences to a cacophony of sounds expressing the suffering of men and women. The OT registry is pervasive, indicating the ongoing dilemma of humankind.”<sup>39</sup> With God therefore at the center of their theological worldview, one finds an intriguing number of verbal as well as physical and emotional anthropological expressions that the Israelite saints of the OT communicated to/before God during their prosaic prayers of disorientation.

#### 4.5. Prayers of Disorientation

##### *4.5.1. Categorization of Disorientation Prayers: Verbal Typology*

The aim of this dissertation is to expand and carry forward the categories or stages of disorientation prayers or prayers uttered in the context of disorientation commenced by Boda, which are: *Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers* and *Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers*, thus adding other (sub)stages to the classification, as will be presented below. The rationale for further classification stems from the fact that there appears to be other important elements within disorientation prayers that have gone unnoticed under the

---

<sup>38</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Pain*, 28. See also Balentine, “Suffering,” 390.

<sup>39</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Pain*, 24.

radar of genre categorization. As we make our way through our genre recategorization, we will continue by looking more closely at the verbal expressions that leaders from within the ancient Israelite community of faith of the OT communicated to/before God in the midst of a life situation of disorientation. Here we will address what I would like to refer to by nomenclature as: *Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers or DS1 Lament Prayers*, *Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers or DS2 Imprecatory Prayers*, *Disorientation Stage 3 Prayers or DS3 Vow Prayers*, *Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers or DS4 Penitential Prayers*, *Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers or DS5 Confidence Prayers*, and *Disorientation Stage 6 Prayers or DS6 Thanksgiving Praise Prayers*. Each of these categories or stages of prayers uttered within a context of disorientation will be developed below.

#### 4.5.1.1. Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers or DS1 Lament Prayers

As is evident from Appendix 1, the majority of disorientation prayers contained within the bounds of Genesis and Esther are that of the category *Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers or DS1 Lament Prayers*. Oddly, however, the first lament is heard *metaphorically* from one who was slain by his own brother: “The voice of Abel’s blood cries out to the LORD from the ground” (Gen 4:10). The final lament is heard from the lips of Nehemiah as he petitions God, saying, “But now, O God, strengthen my hands” (Neh 6:9), as Sanballat and Geshem conspire to harm him. Sandwiched between these two laments are those of the patriarchs and matriarchs: Abraham who prays for an heir amidst Sarah’s barrenness (Gen 15:2); Hagar who intercedes for the life of her son Ishmael (Gen 21:16b); Ishmael who cries out to God amidst malnutrition (Gen 21:17); Isaac who intercedes on behalf of his barren wife Rebekah (Gen 25:21); Rebekah who inquires of the LORD concerning the squabble between her twin sons within her



stomach (Gen 25:22); Leah who prays to God for another child (Gen 30:17); and Jacob who asks God for deliverance from his brother Esau (32:9–12).

Further to this, the children of Israel groan under the weight of their oppression (Exod 2:23; 3:7, 9); Moses laments his inability to lead the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage under Pharaoh (3:11; 4:1). Joshua, Moses' successor, also questions God concerning the serious blow he experienced owing to Achan's covetousness (Josh 7:7–10). During the days of the judges, the children of Israel repeatedly cry out to God for deliverance (Judg 10:10, 15). Even the judges bring their laments to God: Gideon asks the angels of the LORD whether or not the LORD is really with His people (Judg 6:13); Samson asks the LORD if He would allow him to die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised (13:18).

Also conveying their lament to the LORD are the prophets: Samuel cries out to the LORD for Israel after they asked for a king like that of the surrounding nations (1 Sam 7:9); Elijah intercedes on behalf of the son of the widow at Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:21); Elisha also intercedes for the life of the son of the Shunammite woman to be restored to him (2 Kgs 4:33); Isaiah intercedes on behalf of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:11); Ezra seeks God for protection for himself and all those who returned to Jerusalem (8:21, 23); and Nehemiah prays to God after hearing of the condition of Jerusalem (2:4).

The kings also approach the throne of God with their laments: Saul inquires of the LORD concerning his battle against the Philistines (1 Sam 28:6); David inquires of the LORD concerning the life of the child to be born through his adulterous affair with Uriah's wife Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:16); Hezekiah asks the LORD for healing from his illness (2 Kgs 20:3); through the prophetess Huldah, Josiah inquires of the LORD for himself, the people, and all Judah concerning the words of the book of the law (2 Kgs

22:13–14); and Manasseh entreats the LORD while in captivity (2 Chron 33:12). This is just a sample of the plethora of laments, both individual and communal, located within the parameters of Genesis and Esther.

As noted earlier, in his two-tier taxonomy, Boda divides prayers uttered amidst disorientation into Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers and Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers. Commenting on the former, Boda notes that such laments are prayed within a period of distress, expressing despair and longing for salvation; the tone of this type of prayer is noted by the stinging questions to God of “why?” and “how long?”<sup>40</sup> Describing the latter, Boda avows that such prayers arise within the context of distress, but on the one hand, with a tone of confidence in God’s salvific work, and on the other hand, contrition before God’s discipline without questioning God’s action or inaction, that is, they possess a sense of penitence that God will forgive.<sup>41</sup>

For the purpose of this dissertation, however, Boda’s Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers are reorganized as such: Penitential prayers are recategorized as *Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers* or *DS4 Penitential Prayers*, and confidence prayers are recategorized as *Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers* or *DS5 Confidence Prayers*.

Westermann moreover observes that, “The texts in the O.T. show that throughout its history (that is, both in the Psalms and its earlier and later development) lamentation is a phenomenon characterized by three dominant elements: the one who laments, God, and the others, i.e., that circle of people among whom or against whom the one who laments stands with a complaint.”<sup>42</sup> To whom is the lament directly addressed? The One

---

<sup>40</sup> As Boda (“Precious,” 83–99) notes, these two questions are “typical of the lament tradition in the OT,” the why interrogative being “a bolder question that challenges the intention behind the present circumstances” (85).

<sup>41</sup> Boda, “Transition,” 187–90; Boda, “Prayer,” 806–11; Boda, “Varied,” 61–82.

<sup>42</sup> Westermann, *Praise*, 169.

who alone can bring deliverance, namely God. God, in other words, is the savior, the deliverer, the problem-solver. As Longman remarks, “when in great distress he has nowhere to turn but to God.”<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, *DSI lament prayers*, according to Allen P. Ross, “are cries to God in times of need, whether sickness, affliction, slander, war, or some other crisis. In ancient Israel, the worshiper could cry out to God anytime, anywhere; but if possible, he would normally go to the sanctuary to offer the petition, and in many cases the officiating priest might offer the prayer on his behalf. Laments form the starting point of the prayer and praise cycle.”<sup>44</sup> Which is to say that prayers begin with lament and end with praise, though not always *after* or outside a crisis situation; praise can erupt even *amidst* distress.

Although not the norm, there are times when the brunt of the anguish found within the lament is directed toward God. Which is to say that the one responsible for the problem at hand is not a human (non)covenant partner, but rather *God*. So, for example, when Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel worship the LORD in the wilderness, Moses runs to God and interrogates Him, saying, “O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all” (Exod 5:22–23; cf. 32:11–13; Num 11:11–15; 11:21–22; 16:22; Josh 7:7–9; Judg 6:13). Nevertheless, there is no one the lamenter can turn to but God Himself, for deliverance is found in none other.<sup>45</sup> Even in times of disorientation through no fault of the LORD, but rather a member either within or without His covenant

---

<sup>43</sup> Longman, *Psalms*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> Ross, *Psalms*, 1:111.

<sup>45</sup> Longman, *Psalms*, 27.

community (e.g., Pharaoh, the Philistines, etc.), even then, the appeal is still made to the LORD for His mighty deliverance.<sup>46</sup> That is, “When Yahweh is not to be blamed, he is nonetheless regarded as the only one who can intervene in a decisive and helpful way.”<sup>47</sup>

DS1 lament prayers can therefore be described as those prayers that arise out of a situation of disorientation, the plea of supplicant indicative of the fact that s/he can be helpless, in despair, and thus yearns for God’s deliverance. Even on occasion when God appears to be the enemy, God is nonetheless the only deliverer that the supplicant mightily clings to. While DS1 lament prayers ask the stinging questions of “Why?” or “How long?”, when words are difficult to come by, groans,<sup>48</sup> which are deep inarticulate and mournful sounds that are evoked in response to disorientation, as well as bitter weeping,<sup>49</sup> make their way to the throne of the omniscient God.

#### 4.5.1.2. Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers or DS2 Imprecatory Prayers

The first two occurrences of imprecation or curse within the prosaic bounds of Genesis and Esther arise from the lips of Moses, and are found in the book of Numbers. In Num 10:35, Moses prays to the LORD, saying, “Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.” Skipping over to Num 16:15, Moses once again prays to the LORD on behalf of Dathan and Abiram, saying, “Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them.”

---

<sup>46</sup> Brueggemann, *Message*, 88.

<sup>47</sup> Brueggemann, *Message*, 89.

<sup>48</sup> See also Judg 10:8–9; 1 Sam 5:12; 15:11; 2 Sam 22:7; cf. Pss 18:7 [6]; 34:16 [15]; 39:13 [12]; 40:2 [1]; 102:2 [1]; 145:20 [19]; Jer 8:19; Lam 3:56; Acts 7:34; Rom 8:26.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 1:10–11.

Two imprecations are also heard coming from the lips of Samson amidst being captured by the Philistines. The first one is recorded in Judg 16:28 wherein we read, “O Lord GOD please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.” Two verses later, Samson prays, “Let me die with the Philistines” (16:30a).

David prays three imprecations, two of which are related to the death of Abner. In 2 Sam 3:28–29, David declares, “I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. May it fall on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and may there not fail from the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or who is a leper, or who takes hold of a distaff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread.” Then a few verses later, David states, “May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil” (3:39). The third reference to imprecation is found in 15:31, which reads, “O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness,” after David learns that Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.

The prophet Elisha employs imprecation when he prays to the LORD, saying, “Strike this people [the Arameans] with blindness” (2 Kgs 6:18). Another example is found on the lips of king Jehoshaphat in 2 Chron 20:5–12 which is restated below.

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court, and he said, ‘O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You. Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to their descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying, ‘Should evil come upon us, the sword, *or* judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver us.’ Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), see *how* they are rewarding us by coming to

drive us out from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance. *O our God, will You not judge them?* For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.’ (emphasis mine)

Though an explicit cry for divine judgment to be righteously executed upon the sons of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, Jehoshaphat, however, does not specify the manner in which he desires his enemies to be destroyed. Rather, he leaves that up to the LORD, tacitly understood as the righteous Judge in heaven and on earth. From the remainder of the passage the reader discovers that it is divine judgment in the form of *supernatural extermination*. “When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying *them* completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another” (20:22–23).

The prophet Nehemiah furnishes the reader with the final three occurrences of an imprecation prayer of disorientation primarily against Sanballat and Tobiah. In the first incident, Sanballat and Tobiah are responsible for stirring up trouble and mocking the Jews who were engaged in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. So with this in mind, Nehemiah goes to God in prayer, saying, “Hear, O our God, how we are despised. Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders” (4:4–5).<sup>50</sup> Two chapters later, Nehemiah returns to the LORD with a cry that intimates vengeance against Sanballat, Tobiah, and Noadiah,

---

<sup>50</sup> Note the contrast in Neh 13:14 where the prophet asks the LORD not to blot out his loyal deeds performed for the house of God and its services.

all of whom make an earnest attempt to frighten him. Nehemiah petitions God, saying, “Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were trying to frighten me” (6:14).<sup>51</sup> The final episode reveals Nehemiah entreating God against some of the Jews who were guilty of engaging in intermarriage, thus defiling themselves, rather than being holy as God is holy (cf. Lev 11:44–45). “Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites” (13:29). While Nehemiah’s cries for divine remembrance in the latter two prayers do not explicitly state a curse against his opponents, the tone appears to be aimed at divine judgment, the content of which appears to be that of the nature of exile and divine unforgiveness. The fact that he also drives one of his own Jewish counterparts away from him also appears to indicate something unpleasant in Nehemiah’s supplication for God to remember those who have defiled the priesthood.<sup>52</sup>

From the examples listed above, it is a rarity to find an imprecation against oneself; only Samson (Judg 16:30) entreats the LORD as such. More often than not, the object of imprecation is that of one’s enemy (Judg 16:28); and even here, the enemy can be one within (Num 16:15; Neh 13:29), or without the covenant community (2 Kgs 6:18; Neh 4:4–5; 6:14). By submitting their imprecation to the LORD, the supplicants—

---

<sup>51</sup> Whenever Nehemiah asks God to remember him, it is always for his good (13:14; 22). Contrast this with Nehemiah’s cry to God to remember his opponents such as Sanballat, Tobiah, Noadiah, and Noadiah, and even those who defiled the priesthood (6:14; 13:29).

<sup>52</sup> Nehemiah’s cry for divine remembrance with an implicit cry for divine imprecation in 6:14, appears to bear a modicum of semblance to that of Ps 137, wherein the psalmist’s cried out to God: “Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom” (v. 7; cf. 83:6), even while sitting by the rivers of Babylon, weeping, and remembering Zion (v. 1). See McCann, “Prayer,” 118–19 for his comments on Ps 137 and the importance of remembrance/memory by the psalmist’s in relation to Zion/Jerusalem. He notes that while it is not explicit, “this submission of anger to God obviates the need for actual revenge on the enemy” (119). Alternatively stated, should God forget it, evil will be allowed to prevail and perpetuate its unimaginable and ineffable horrors. When God remembers it, however, evil is brought to justice by God the righteous Judge, thus allowing for the perpetuity of justice rather than evil on God’s good earth.

Moses, Samson, David, Elisha, Jehoshaphat, and Nehemiah—thus avert the fatal error of both revenge and vengeance (Lev 19:18), the latter of which, according to Scripture, is the sole prerogative of the LORD the righteous Judge (Deut 32:35; Ps 94:1; Isa 35:4; Nah 1:2; cf. Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30).

Miller asserts that, “The corollary of blessing is curse. . . . While such curse prayers, or imprecation, as they are sometimes called, do not seem to be as numerous as the blessings, they are present, most noticeably within the Psalms.”<sup>53</sup> He goes on to affirm that, “In form they are similar to the blessings. That is, the curses are a prayer-wish, usually jussive in form, ‘May the Lord do . . .’ The content, however, is a prayer for disaster of some sort to fall upon another individual or group. . . . As with the blessings, the Lord is not always mentioned in the curse, but the divine agency is to be assumed and frequently made explicit.”<sup>54</sup>

Contended here is that such prayers of imprecation were indeed prayed to God within a prosaic context of disorientation.<sup>55</sup> By inference, the subcategory of DS2 imprecatory prayers acknowledges before God that the predicament at hand from which the supplicant seeks divine deliverance, has been instigated by the supplicant’s enemy who the supplicant believes is deserving of divine punishment. Such imprecatory

---

<sup>53</sup> Miller, *Cried*, 299–300. While the majority of imprecatory invocations are positioned within the Psalter (e.g., Pss 5, 6, 11, 12, 35, 40, 52, 54, 56, 58, 69, 79, 83, 89, 109, 137, 139, and 143), with a minimal number scattered throughout the prophetic corpus (e.g., Hos 10:14–15; Mic 7:16–17; Jer 8:21–22), smaller amounts can also be detected within the prosaic sections of the OT (e.g., Num 10:35; 11:11–15; 16:15, 35; Judg 16:28, 30; 2 Sam 3:29; 15:31; 2 Kgs 6:18; 2 Chron 20:6–12; Neh 4:4–5; 6:14; 13:29).

<sup>54</sup> Miller, *Lord*, 300.

<sup>55</sup> There are scholars who contend both for and against the employment of imprecation among followers of Jesus Christ, especially in light of his call to pray and bless, rather than curse those who curse us (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:28; Rom 12:14; 1 Cor 4:12). For some of those who argue against its employment, see Miller, “Heaven’s Prisoners”; Westermann, *Psalms*; and Wright, “Preaching and Teaching from the Psalms.” For some of those who argue in favor of its employment, see Byassee, *Praise Seeking Understanding*; Bonhoeffer, *Psalms*; Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms*; deClaisse-Walford, “Imprecatory Psalms”; Lewis, *Reflections*; Merrill, *Praying*; Nehrbass, *Praying Curses*; Sherbino, *Re:Connect*; Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*; Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*; Zenger, *A God of Vengeance?*



prayers of disorientation do not simply state one's complaint before God and also confidently petition Him for liberation and/or divine favor. From the data gathered, it is observed that DS2 imprecatory prayers even periodically venture to take the bold step of faith to explicate the manner in which God should unleash His judgment or curse upon the enemy of the supplicant.<sup>56</sup> This is not to say that God necessarily responded to such a degree as that of the supplicant's every entreaty for divine imprecation upon their enemy. But it nevertheless allows for God's human covenant and righteous prayer partners to beseech Him with such detailed intensity without ever being censured by Him. In that way, God seemingly sanctioned their supplications for divine imprecation to be inflicted upon their enemy, be it that of a person of Gentilic and/or Israelite stock. Said otherwise, in DS2 imprecatory prayers, with a verdict of guilty having been reached by the righteous supplicant, justice must be meted out in vengeance against the one who has acted in an unrighteous manner toward the LORD's righteous servant, and that by the righteous Judge of all the earth. Which is to say that, "The appeal is not to the enemy that the enemy should desist, for that is a hopeless plea. The appeal is that Yahweh should intervene to right the situation and punish the destabiliser."<sup>57</sup>

DS2 imprecatory prayers can therefore be defined as those prayers that arise out of a situation of disorientation whose contents are that of either an implicit or explicit cry for divine judgment or curse to be inflicted upon one's enemy. In DS2 prayers, the source of the emergency at hand is the enemy whose identity can be either one within or one without the covenant community. DS2 imprecatory prayers call on God to right the wrong that has been done, and in His perfect justice, execute His righteous judgment

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 3:29; 15:31; 2 Kgs 6:18; Neh 4:4-5.

<sup>57</sup> Brueggemann, *Message*, 88.

upon the offender with the objective of reversing instability, and resuming peaceful relations within a human-human dynamic.

#### 4.5.1.3. Disorientation Stage 3 Prayers or DS3 Vow Prayers

Four occurrences of a vow appear within the bounds of Genesis and Esther. The locus of the first is that of Num 21:2 wherein we read of Israel saying to the LORD, “If You will deliver this people [the Canaanites] into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.” The second vow comes from the lips of Jephthah who says to the LORD, “If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering” (Judg 11:30–31). Sadly, the text says that, “At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did to her according to the vow which he made” (11:39a). Our third vow is detected on the lips of Hannah who prays to the LORD, saying, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give You maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head” (1 Sam 1:10–11). The final vow can be heard coming from Absalom who *apparently* prays to the LORD, saying, “If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD” (2 Sam 15:7–8).<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup> The word *apparently* is employed here because it is not certain whether Absalom actually said this vow to the LORD. In light of the succeeding verses, it would appear that he told his father David about this vow so that he could go to Hebron and conspire with his followers against his father so as to usurp David’s throne. Nevertheless, the vow is included here as it is a vow found within a context of disorientation.

As specified by Boda, the vow form usually accompanies his Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers, and “requests something from God and provides a motivation in a human response following the divine intervention.”<sup>59</sup> In the four examples listed above, however, the *vow* category stands *alone*, that is, it neither accompanies prayers of penitence nor prayers of confidence. The presence of the word “if” within vow prayers appear to indicate an *absence*, rather than a presence of confidence. Which is to say that there is no assurance on the part of the supplicant that God will answer favorably. Nevertheless, the supplicant brings his/her vow before God in hopes that God’s response will be in favor of the supplicant. DS3 vow prayers then be described as those prayers that begin with the conditional clause, and ending with a promise to do something that the supplicant deems approving to God. This promise acts as the motivating factor for the divine favorable response.

Within the prayers of disorientation, it is commonplace to find the vow following on the heels of the petition, while either accompanying or preceding praise. Small wonder that Westermann referred to the vow as “a vow of praise.”<sup>60</sup> But as noted in our four examples (i.e., the utter destruction of cities of the Canaanites, sacrificing one’s own daughter, giving one’s son to the LORD for full-time service, and serving the LORD), there is no vow of praise to the LORD inherent to the vow prayer. In each of these situations, praise does not accompany the vow, but rather occurs sometime *after* God responds favorably (e.g., Hannah’s praise comes at least nine months later). Moreover, should one understand the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter as a sacrifice of praise to the LORD? That seems unreasonable. Also, does the vow precede the intention

---

<sup>59</sup> Boda, “Transition,” 187–90; Boda, “Prayer,” 806–11; Boda, “Varied,” 61–82.

<sup>60</sup> Westermann, *Praise*, 77.

to praise? In Absalom's vow prayer, that would appear to be the case. But from reading 2 Sam 15:9–11, we learn that Absalom deceived his father. He gained his chance to go to Hebron, but not for the purpose of serving the LORD. Rather, it was with the intention of usurping the throne of his father David. And as we will observe soon in our examination of DS6 prayer, vow prayer does not only precede thanksgiving praise prayer. Alternatively stated, thanksgiving praise prayer does not only follow the vow prayer, but can be found on its own, that is, it has its own merit.

To reiterate, DS3 vow prayers can be described as those prayers that arise from within a context of disorientation, wherein the supplicant presents a conditional petition to God, which is accompanied by a promise to do something in favor of God (If . . . then . . .), should God deliver the supplicant. Upon obtaining God's deliverance, the supplicant then proceeds to honor their part of the vow to the LORD.

#### 4.5.1.4. Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers or DS4 Penitential Prayers

Several prayers within the parameters of Genesis and Esther can be categorized as DS4 prayers because of the presence of a confession of sin on the part of the penitent. Exodus 32:31–32 appears to be the first recorded penitential prayer. Here Moses petitions God, saying, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written." The locus of the last recorded penitential prayer is believed to be Neh 9:5–38, wherein the penitent words, "Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness, do not let the hardship seem insignificant before You, which has come upon us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers and on Your

people, from the day of the kings of Assyria to this day. However, You are just in all that has come upon us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly” (9:32–33) shine through. In the middle one can find the prophet Moses constantly interceding on behalf of the children of Israel who made it a habit of offending the LORD, and thus kindling His anger. So for example, when the children of Israel grumble against Moses and Aaron, even desiring to return to Egypt, thus kindling the LORD’s anger, it is Moses who steps in and pleads for their forgiveness (Num 14:13–19). When the LORD sends fiery serpents to unleash their venom into their bodies, killing some of them, Moses acknowledges their sin and begs God to pardon them (21:7). Balaam finally came to his senses and confessed his sin to God after his donkey spoke to him (22:34).

In Judg 10:10, the sons of Israel cry out to God, saying, “We have sinned against You, for indeed, we have forsaken our God and served the Baals.” After realizing their sin in asking the prophet Samuel for a king like that of the nations around them, Samuel and all Israel pray to the LORD, saying, “We have sinned against the LORD” (1 Sam 4:6). Approached by Samuel for failing to utterly destroy everything belonging to the Amalekites, Saul confesses, “I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. Now please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD” (15:24–25; cf. 15:30). When Nathan rebuked him for his adultery with Bathsheba, and murder of Uriah, David confessed his sin to Nathan, saying, “I have sinned against the LORD” (2 Sam 12:13). David also confesses his sin to the LORD for taking the census of Israel and Judah, saying, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted foolishly” (24:20; cf. 24:14, 17). Recognizing the danger of partaking in the Passover meal without being purified,

Hezekiah prays for the unholy multitude of people, saying, “May the good LORD pardon everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary” (2 Chron 30:18–19). And finally Ezra 9:1—10:1 contains the penultimate penitential prayer wherein Ezra confesses to the LORD that His people, the people of Israel, have engaged in unlawful intermarriage with the peoples of the land—the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites.

From the few examples presented here, penitential prayers can be understood as those prayers containing a confession of sin and a plea for forgiveness, either directly from God, or through the mediation of one of God’s prophets. Whereas in most disorientation prayers “blame for a lamentable condition is attached to enemies or to sickness” (e.g., DS1, DS2, DS3), penitential prayers tend to be “introspective before God.”<sup>61</sup> Further to this, the awareness of sin appears to be prompted either “by circumstances or the inner conscience instructed by God.”<sup>62</sup> Within DS4 prayers, the penitent pray-er realizes that his/her disoriented life is a result of his/her own sin and/or that of the covenant community of which s/he is part and parcel. Thus, resting on the foundation of God’s grace, compassion, slow anger, and forgiving nature (cf. Exod 34:6–7),<sup>63</sup> the penitent pray-er appeals to God to forgive him/her, and with that, restore the ruptured relationship. The forgiveness of sin and the restoration of the divine-human relationship then is based on the repentance of the penitent pray-er,<sup>64</sup> but only, first and foremost, on account of God’s forgiving character. Because it is inherent in His

---

<sup>61</sup> Broyles, *Psalms*, 226.

<sup>62</sup> Broyles, *Psalms*, 226.

<sup>63</sup> One might even contend that Exod 34:6–7 is the heartbeat of the entire Bible, that is, both the Old and New Testaments (see also Boda’s *Heartbeat*).

<sup>64</sup> Longman, *Psalms*, 219.

character to forgive, God will never despise a heart that comes broken and contrite before Him (cf. Ps 51:17 [16]; Isa 66:2).

Accordingly, DS4 penitential prayers can be described as those prayers that arise amidst a situation of disorientation wherein the pray-er, through introspection, comes to the realization that s/he has committed a serious crime against God, which has resulted in a rupture within the divine-human relationship. Accordingly, for restoration to occur, the penitent pray-er sincerely repents of his/her sin(s) and/or that of the covenant community, and receives God's amazing forgiveness, which is entirely predicated upon God, whose inherent nature it is to forgive all who are humble and contrite of spirit, and who tremble at God's word.

#### 4.5.1.5. Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers or DS5 Confidence Prayers

Four prayers of confidence amidst a situation of disorientation come to the fore between Genesis and Esther. In the first instance, Abraham intercedes for God's healing upon Abimelech, and especially his wife and maids whose wombs the LORD has closed fast (Gen 20:17), because Abimelech had taken Sarah as his wife, even while she was Abraham's wife, not his sister. The other three occurrences of confidence prayers can be found amidst three of the plagues that the LORD unleashed against the Egyptians. In Exod 8:12, Moses cries to the LORD concerning the removal of the frogs. Then in 8:30, Moses supplicates the LORD concerning the removal of the swarm of flies. Finally, in 10:18, Moses entreats the LORD for the shifting of the wind from the east to the west, and with it, the locusts. Confidence is the category assigned to each of these three cries because in each case, the supplicant is certain that God will hear and answer.

Prayers of confidence or trust lie somewhere between the prayers of lament (DS1) and the prayers of thanksgiving praise (DS6). Such prayers, according to Mark D. Futato, “lack the anguish and the structural elements that characterize the laments.”<sup>65</sup> Rather, they express a sense of confidence in “God’s power to save,”<sup>66</sup> even while God’s salvation is yet to be realized. Which is to say that while the supplicant has moved from a place of deep anguish expressed in his/her lament to/before God, s/he still anticipates the day when a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s salvation can erupt in the assembly of God’s people.<sup>67</sup>

DS5 confidence prayers can therefore be described as those prayers that arise out of a context of disorientation, the pray-er confident of God’s ever-abiding and comforting presence, as well as His forthcoming favorable answer. Which is to contend that owing to its positive outlook on life, DS5 confidence prayers lack the discomfort of lament, because it is absolutely certain that God’s mighty deliverance will prevail.

#### 4.5.1.6. Disorientation Stage 6 Prayers or DS6 Thanksgiving Praise Prayers

Within the limits of Genesis to Esther, only one occurrence of thanksgiving praise came to the fore, the locus of which is that of the disorientation context of a strife (enemy warfare). The sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some of the Meunites together endeavor to make war against Jehoshaphat king of Judah. Second Chronicles 20:21–22, however, reads thus: “When he [Jehoshaphat] had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who *praised Him* in holy attire, as

---

<sup>65</sup> Futato, *Psalms*, 160. One might also include the anguish of the imprecations and the sorrow of penitence alongside laments. Such prayers also go beyond the vow, which begins with “If,” and which expresses an uncertainty in its tone.

<sup>66</sup> Futato, *Psalms*, 161.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Bullock, *Encountering*, 170.



they went out before the army and said, ‘Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.’ When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come up against Judah; so they were routed.”<sup>68</sup> Jacob Myers suggests that, “Apparently the writer viewed the whole expedition as a holy war, since the cultic personnel accompanied the army and played a major role in the campaign.”<sup>69</sup> But whereas, “In most battles a battle cry is heard,” John A. Thompson avers that, “Here it is replaced by singing and praise.”<sup>70</sup> In contradistinction to Thompson, Louis C. Jonker posits that, “The Chronicler conducts this battle with the liturgy of a holy war: the vanguard is to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness. *Their battle cry is, Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever (20:21).*”<sup>71</sup> It is therefore not surprising to hear Raymond B. Dillard remark that, “one must not forget the role of music in warfare. . . Particularly within Israel’s tradition of holy war, music has been assigned an important function (13:11–12; Josh 6:4–20; Judg 7:18–20; Job 39:24–25); music accompanies the appearance of the divine warrior to execute judgment.”<sup>72</sup> Which is exactly what we view in 2 Chron 20:21–23.

It is worth mentioning here, however, that from his reading of the OT, Westermann arrives at the following conclusion:

In the Old Testament . . . there is as yet no verb that means only ‘to thank.’ *Hōdāh*, which is usually translated as ‘to thank,’ is not used in the Old Testament a single time for an expression of thanks between men. Thus it is clear from the

---

<sup>68</sup> It is noted here that 2 Chron 20:18–19 also speaks of Jehoshaphat, all Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and also the Korahites, worship and praise the LORD with a loud voice. Within the context of 2 Chron 20, it appears as though that the content of such worshipful praise is nothing short of thanksgiving praise to the LORD as observed within v. 21.

<sup>69</sup> Myers, *2 Chronicles*, 116.

<sup>70</sup> Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 295.

<sup>71</sup> Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 231; emphasis mine.

<sup>72</sup> Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 158.

start that this *hōdāh* cannot be equated with our ‘to thank,’ which can directed equally to God and to man. In those places in the O.T. where our ‘thank’ as something taking place between men is most clearly found, the verb used is *bērēk*, which does not have the primary meaning of ‘praise’ but means ‘bless.’ In view of these facts, it is clear that the O.T. does not have our independent concept of thanks. The expression of thanks to God is included in praise, *it is a way of praising*.<sup>73</sup>

Opposing any endeavor to constrain one Hebrew word into one German word, Frank Crüsemann challenged Westermann’s assertion by demonstrating that, “הודה does not refer to a public confession in the third person (about Yahweh), because it is often used in the language of direct address of praise to God in the second person.”<sup>74</sup> Crüsemann thus proffered two possibilities for הודה: *loben/preisen* and *danken*. “Danken (to thank) is the traditional translation, but Westermann had argued that there is no such concept in Hebrew thought, suggesting that *loben/preisen* as more suitable.”<sup>75</sup> In contradistinction to Westermann, Crüsemann contended that, “when הודה is used it looks to a recent deliverance by God. *Loben/preisen* is used to translate הלל and ברך (both Pi‘el), which are used differently from הודה. He contradicted Westermann by affirming the traditional translation of ‘danken.’”<sup>76</sup> *Thanksgiving*, or more precisely *thanksgiving praise*, will thus be regarded as a distinct category (DS6 thanksgiving praise prayers) within the spectrum of disorientation prayers.

Further to this, though Westermann avers that, “while the so-called song of thanks praise God for a specific deed, which the one who has been delivered recounts or reports in his song (declarative praise; it could also be called confessional praise),”<sup>77</sup> it is of import to note here that in the aforementioned Scripture passage, no such deliverance

---

<sup>73</sup> Westermann, *Praise*, 27; emphasis original.

<sup>74</sup> As noted by Boda, “Words,” 282.

<sup>75</sup> Boda, “Words,” 282.

<sup>76</sup> Boda, “Words,” 282.

<sup>77</sup> Westermann, *Praise*, 31.

has yet occurred. Thanksgiving praise erupts to the LORD in advance of any deliverance, and even in the midst of a situation of disorientation, *not new/reorientation*.

What is worth mentioning here, however, is that prayers of thanksgiving, according to Brueggemann, surface only within a context of new orientation. For Brueggemann, the most obvious prayer of new orientation is that of the category of thanksgiving. It is in thanksgiving that the speaker is believed to be on the other side of a lament or complaint, that is, on the other side of disorientation. The occasion for such thanksgiving prayer is that, “the speaker has complained to God and God has acted in response to the lament. The result of God’s intervention is that the old issue has been overcome. The speech concerns a rescue, intervention, or inversion of a quite concrete situation of distress which is still fresh in the mind of the speaker.”<sup>78</sup> Likewise, Futato avers that such prayers of thanksgiving “functioned as one key component of grateful worship that celebrated the goodness of God in delivering people from trouble in this life.”<sup>79</sup> Consequently, such prayers of thanksgiving, he argues, “are sequels to the laments.”<sup>80</sup> Even Longman avers that prayers of thanksgiving are “a response to answered lament,” a “praise to God for answered prayer,” and which is “most easily identified by a *restatement of the lament* which is now answered.”<sup>81</sup>

In 2 Chron 20:21–22, the context of the situation at hand is nevertheless that of disorientation, for God is yet to act on behalf of the supplicant(s) with the intention of effecting divine deliverance. Nonetheless, the supplicant(s), amidst disorientation, explodes in doxological thanksgiving praise to the LORD. Which is to say that the

---

<sup>78</sup> Brueggemann, *Message*, 126.

<sup>79</sup> Futato, *Psalms*, 158.

<sup>80</sup> Futato, *Psalms*, 158.

<sup>81</sup> Longman, *Psalms*, 30–31; emphasis original.

situation is still one of distress wherein God's salvific intervention is yet forthcoming. In other words, it is not on the other side of, but rather *inside* of disorientation that such jubilant thanksgiving praise explodes from the lips of God's disoriented people. Even if there is an oracle of salvation from, for example, a priestly voice such as Jahaziel (20:14–17), God has not yet fully and favorably answered the supplicant in DS6 thanksgiving praise prayers; the prayer is yet to be answered completely on the battlefield when God effects deliverance on behalf of His people.

DS6 thanksgiving praise prayers can thus be described as those prayers that arise out of a situation of disorientation, the content of which is thanksgiving praise, even in anticipation of the actualization of God's deliverance in favor of His disoriented people. Located not within a context of orientation nor new/reorientation, as is typically the case, but rather amidst a context of disorientation, DS6 thanksgiving praise prayers might be followed by a priestly word of encouragement, yet it awaits a visibly manifested favorable answer from God. Owing to its positive outlook on life or even an encouraging word of comfort, DS6 thanksgiving praise prayers thus lift an extolling voice of thanksgiving praise to the LORD, even in the intermission of an oracle of salvation and its subsequent fulfillment, which is still nonetheless, a context of disorientation.

#### 4.5.2. Summary

By way of recapitulation, in this section, a lacuna in prayers of disorientation within the prosaic sections of the OT, that is, from Genesis to Esther, was addressed. Whereas in previous scholarship on prayers of disorientation only two stages were said to be extant, this section has demonstrated the possibility of other stages. As a result of this, the

proposition has therefore been made to include six subcategories of prosaic prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and bearing the following nomenclatures: *Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers or DS1 Lament Prayers, Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers or DS2 Imprecatory Prayers, Disorientation Stage 3 Prayers or DS3 Vow Prayers, Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers or DS4 Penitential Prayers, Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers or DS5 Confidence Prayers, and Disorientation Stage 6 Prayers or DS6 Thanksgiving Praise Prayers.*

These six subcategories of disorientation prayers range from *lament*, (consisting of either words, or at times, groans, and wailing or weeping), to *thanksgiving praise*. Whereas *thanksgiving praise* was said to be located only within a context of new orientation, that is, after God's intervention and deliverance, here it was observed *also* within a context of disorientation. Interestingly, *imprecation* was never considered before as a subcategory of prayer uttered within a context of disorientation. At the same time, whereas the *vow* was associated with *penitence*, here it appears to have no such relation.

DS1	DS2	DS3	DS4	DS5	DS6
Negative / Sorrowful				Positive / Joyful	

Considered along a continuum, disorientation prayers move from a language of negativity (sorrowful) to a language of positivity (joyful). This movement appears to depend on the outlook or perspective of the disoriented supplicant, a key player being that of a priestly or prophetic word of salvation from the LORD when it comes to disorientation language located to the right of the continuum. At the two ends of the continuum, one finds the first language of disorientation, DS1 lament, positioned at the

negative end, and the final language of disorientation, DS6 thanksgiving praise, positioned at the positive end of the continuum. Following closely behind DS1 lament, is the second language of disorientation, DS2 imprecation, which encompasses both explicit and implicit vocabulary for divine judgment. The third language of disorientation, DS3 vow, comprises a vow to God aimed at motivating His favorable answer. In DS1 lament, DS2 imprecation, and DS3 vow, the disorientation lies outside of the disoriented supplicant. However, with the introduction of the fourth language of disorientation, DS4 penitence, positioned in the middle of the continuum, a shift appears to take place in that the disoriented supplicant recognizes that the disorientation falls *within* him/her, and God is thus petitioned for deliverance in the form of forgiveness. The sequence then continues with the fifth language of disorientation, DS5 confidence, which is then followed by the sixth and final language of disorientation, DS6 thanksgiving praise. But whereas the fifth language of disorientation, DS5 confidence, only anticipates God's forthcoming deliverance, the sixth and final language of disorientation, DS6 thanksgiving praise, anticipates *and* celebrates God's character and deliverance even *prior to* the realization of God's favorable answer, owing to a joyful outlook mediated through a prophet or a priest, who delivers God's word, which will not return void.

It is worth mentioning here, however, that this continuum is not constructed to prove that the order of the languages of disorientation *always* moves from DS1 lament to DS6 thanksgiving praise. At the same time, the order of the languages of disorientation from DS1 lament to DS6 thanksgiving praise in no way accentuates any on the continuum as being less or more important. Rather, this continuum simply serves to demonstrate that there are at the very least, six languages of disorientation, in lieu of

two, as was previously proposed. Even further to this, room is left for the likelihood of any of these six languages of disorientation to occur coevally. Any attempt to fit the six languages of disorientation into a *rigid* movement from DS1 lament to DS6 thanksgiving praise without leaving room for other movements, should thus be avoided.

#### 4.5.3. Other Verbal Expressions Communicated to/before God and Humans

Having concluded our examination on the development of these subcategories of anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation prosaic prayers of the OT (Genesis to Esther), we will now attempt a survey of other verbal expressions communicated to/before God and humans amidst disorientation. Particular attention is given here to verbal expressions amidst the death of a leading Israelite. The importance of including such verbal expressions can be heard once more in Olyan's words:

Biblical representations of mourning the dead employ a distinct and particular vocabulary of mourning which is also used by other biblical texts to describe the ritual activity of petitioners and others who do not mourn the dead. In other words, the texts narrating the mourning rites of penitents, humiliated individuals, and persons seeking a divine revelation, among others, do not use a different vocabulary to describe their behaviour; rather, they utilize the vocabulary of mourning the dead.<sup>82</sup>

This thus necessitates viewing the vocabulary employed in death-related verbal expressions of disorientation as the prototypical vocabulary employed for non-death-related verbal expressions of disorientation to/before God and humans. Put differently,

---

<sup>82</sup> Olyan, *Mourning*, 19. Owing to the fact that it is not assumed by an Israelite, *looking heavenward* while praying is a posture located within the OT that is not considered. According to Dan 4, Nebuchadnezzar suffered from a temporary divine judgment of insanity (possibly lycanthropy) owing to his egotistic superciliousness. At the end of seven years, however, and *while* still dwelling like a beast of the field, Nebuchadnezzar raised his eyes toward heaven, and his reason returned to him; after which he blessed the Most High and praised Him who lives forever (4:34). It might not be farfetched to say that had he not raised his eyes toward heaven in an act of humility and dependence upon the sovereign Lord, his insanity might not have been reversed. Psalm 123:1[2] declares, "To You I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens!" (see also Ps 141:9 [8]; cf. 121:2 [1])

“Mourning the dead is, in other words, the model for other types of mourning.”<sup>83</sup> In view of this, attention is now given to such death-related verbal expressions, not only because of the need to examine to full spectrum of expressions verbal amidst disorientation, but also because of the key role such verbal expressions will play in the dialectic correlation with other death-related vocabulary garnered from within both a Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian culture.

#### ***4.5.3.1. Contrition and/or Confession***

Observing his sister Miriam’s skin breaking out in leprosy owing to her displeasure over Moses’ Cushite wife (Num 12:1–10), Aaron intercedes on her behalf before Moses, saying, “Oh my lord, I beg you, do not account this sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother’s womb!” (12:11–12). Hearing this cry, Moses goes before God and intercedes for his older sister, saying, “O God, heal her, I pray!” (12:13). Such a DS1 lament prayer, however, is met by, “But the LORD said to Moses, ‘If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her but shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again’” (12:14). “So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again” (12:15).

The second occurrence of contrition can be heard from the mouth of Achan, who said to Joshua, “Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred

---

<sup>83</sup> Olyan, *Mourning*, 24.



shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it” (Josh 7:20–21). On account of his public confession, Achan indeed tells the truth and glorifies God.<sup>84</sup> Achan’s confession is nevertheless offered in the context of Joshua’s DS1 lament prayer (7:7–9).

#### 4.5.3.2. *Curse*

Only at the battle of Ai, during which Israel endured the casualties of thirty-six of their soldiers, did Joshua and the children of Israel discover Achan’s sin, the very grounds for the deaths of the soldiers. Upon realizing Achan’s sin of coveting several items from the spoils of Jericho, items that were considered under the ban (חָרָם; Josh 7:1), things that were to be returned to the LORD on account of the fact that they belonged Him,<sup>85</sup> Joshua pronounced a curse on Achan, saying, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day” (7:25a).<sup>86</sup> Joshua’s enquiry posed to Achan, according to David M. Howard, “is turned on its head by his next statement, an assertion that the Lord would bring trouble on Achan. Joshua used the same word for ‘bringing trouble’ here (*'kr*) that he had earlier used in warning the people against taking the devoted items, since doing so would bring trouble (*'kr*) on the entire camp (6:18).”<sup>87</sup> This curse was in keeping with the words of the LORD spoken earlier to Joshua: “It shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all

---

<sup>84</sup> Howard, *Joshua*, 197.

<sup>85</sup> Hess, “Joshua,” 36.

<sup>86</sup> Among these coveted and stolen items were a beautiful mantle from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, which Achan concealed in the earth of his tent with the silver underneath it (Josh 7:20).

<sup>87</sup> Howard, *Joshua*, 198; “Ironically—and tragically—for Achan, God allowed the Israelites to take booty in the next victory, at the second battle of Ai (8:2). He could have had anything he wanted if he had only waited on God” (198).

that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel” (7:15). Of import here is the fact that Joshua’s curse upon Achan was pronounced in the context of Joshua’s DS1 lament prayer to God (7:7–9).

That Joshua curses Achan, however, should not be taken as “vindictiveness. Joshua acts in keeping with the divine command (v. 15); and God, the God of the covenant, acts in keeping with the covenant (cf. Ezek 16:59). A violation of the covenant causes covenant retribution. Physical death as punishment for sin was given prominence in OT times. This shows God’s displeasure with sin.”<sup>88</sup> Knowing then that the spoils of war were considered holy to God and were thus to be wholly devoted to God (Josh 6:19), it is important to note that, “Their holiness contaminates man. If they are brought into the camp they contaminate the entire camp, so that it must be sanctified, made holy (7:13). Anyone who had come into contact with the goods was contaminated and had to be removed from that community to protect the community.”<sup>89</sup> Achan and his family were thus removed from the community of God’s covenant people who were called to be holy as He is holy (cf. Exod 19:5–6; Lev 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7, 26).

Part of Achan’s trouble from the LORD thus involved the employment of Joshua and all Israel as His judicial instruments for exacting punishment upon Achan and all that belonged to him, including the things devoted to the LORD, after which they stoned and burned them, at a place they named the valley of Achor (7:25b–26). Robert L. Hubbard perceives that, “Even at the time the author wrote (‘to this day’), people still called the spot ‘Trouble Valley.’ But Joshua’s wordplay (v. 25) makes this particular

---

<sup>88</sup> Woudstra, *Joshua*, 131.

<sup>89</sup> Butler, *Joshua*, 85; see also Boling, *Joshua*, 228.

heap a monument to ‘double trouble’—the trouble of Achan caused Israel (i.e., defeat at Ai), and the trouble that Yahweh caused him (i.e., his execution).”<sup>90</sup> Put another way, “the stone heap at Trouble Valley forewarns ‘potential Achans’ within Israel’s ranks to practice the fear of God by doing what he commands.”<sup>91</sup>

#### ***4.5.3.3. Lament (Weeping and Elegy)***

At the death of his first wife, Abraham wept for Sarah (Gen 23:2). On the occasion of Jacob/Israel’s death, Joseph and the Egyptians wept seventy days (Gen 50:1, 3). What is more, as the corpse of Jacob/Israel was being transported from Egypt to Israel, the funeral cortege (i.e. Joseph, all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and the elders of the land of Egypt), paused for seven days at the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, where they lamented with a very great and sorrowful lamentation, and also mourned for Jacob/Israel (50:10). So great was this mourning that the Canaanites said, “This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians,” for which reason the place is called Abel-mizraim (50:11). The longest recorded period of weeping in the OT is on behalf of the patriarch Jacob/Israel.

Moving to the priest, when Aaron died, the house of Israel wept thirty days for him (Num 20:29). Similarly, there was also a thirty-day period of weeping among the sons of Israel for the prophet Moses in the plains of Moab (Deut 34:8). And finally, we are told that at his death, David and the people with him wept for Abner (2 Sam 3:32).

According to Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, “The announcement of death was followed by lamentation. . . . In addition to family members, professional

---

<sup>90</sup> Hubbard, *Joshua*, 229.

<sup>91</sup> Hubbard, *Joshua*, 230.

mourners, generally women, were paid to lament during a funeral.”<sup>92</sup> This is particularly observed in the words of Jeremiah: “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Consider and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for the wailing women, that they may come’” (9:17).

Laments, however, do not only constitute wailing and weeping, but can also include elegies, i.e., mournful songs. Five elegiac laments come to the fore within the bounds of Genesis and Esther amidst grief: three from David, one from an old prophet living in Bethel, and one from Jeremiah.

With regards to David’s elegiac laments, the first one and longest is sung on the occasion of the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:19–27), the lyrics of which are as follows:

Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen! Tell *it* not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult. O mountains of Gilboa, let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in life, and in their death they were not parted; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Titled “The Song of the Bow,” and written in the book of Jashar, this elegy was to be taught to the sons of Judah (1:17–18).

David’s second elegy was occasioned by the death of Abner, cousin of Saul and commander-in-chief of Saul’s army. Their lyrics are as follows: “Should Abner die as a

---

<sup>92</sup> King and Stager, *Life*, 372–73.

fool dies? Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters; as one falls before the wicked, you have fallen” (3:33–34).

The third of David’s elegies was occasioned by the death of his son Absalom, the lyrics of which are as follows: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son! (18:33). This elegy is echoed once more in the words, “O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son! (19:4).

In 1 Kgs 13:29–30 we are told that, an old prophet living in Bethel buried the man of God from Judah in his own grave, and while mourning his death, expressed his sorrow through the following elegiac lament: “Alas, my brother!”

On the occasion of Josiah’s death, Jeremiah chanted an elegiac lament. Also noted here is the fact that, together with Jeremiah, all the male and female singers speak and write about Josiah in their lamentations (2 Chron 35:25). Unfortunately, this elegy is lost to the reader.

Milton C. Fisher avers that, “Immediately following a death in a home the entire neighborhood was alerted to the sad event by the wail that was suddenly raised.”<sup>93</sup> Which is to say, as J. B. Payne remarks, that, “Death was announced by a shrill cry, followed by a tumult of lamentation (2 Sam 1:12; 18:33; cf. Mark 5:38).”<sup>94</sup> Whereas the wives of the deceased mourned by themselves (Zech 12:12–14), it was the professional mourners, consisting mainly of women (Jer 9:17), who “occupied a prominent place”<sup>95</sup> during mourning, being “professional mourners to lamentation” (Amos 5:16). Payne further avers that, “Weeping, so natural in itself (Jer. 9:18), was supplemented by cries

---

<sup>93</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 386.

<sup>94</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 556.

<sup>95</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 557.

of ‘Alas, alas’ (Amos 5:16), ‘Alas, my brother’ (1 Kgs 13:30; cf. Jer 22:18; 34:5), and similar phrases, until self-control vanished.”<sup>96</sup> Not surprisingly, Douglas J. Miller notes that, “In ancient Israel, groups of paid mourners emerged who could wail on ritual cue. Much of the funeral services centered around these professional mourners who sang psalms and delivered elaborate eulogies for the dead (2 Chron 35:25; Jer 9:17–22).”<sup>97</sup>

***4.5.3.4. Instructions (Assassination; Burying; Embalming; Holiness; For a Woman on Returning Home and Remarrying; and Transporting Cadaver for Burial)***

3.6.3.4a. Instruction on Assassination

In 2 Sam 4, one reads of the assassination of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul at the hands of Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite (vv. 5–7). Thinking that they were doing something good in bringing the head of Ish-bosheth to him (v. 8), David said to them,

As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress, when one told me, saying, ‘Behold, Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for *his* news. How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood from your hand and destroy you from the earth?

Such rhetorical questions are then followed by David’s instruction to assassinate Rechab and Baanah. “Then David commanded the young men and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hung them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron (4:12). Tsumura notes that,

---

<sup>96</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 557.

<sup>97</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

“Unlike the case of Joab, there is no problem with executing the killers of Ishbosheth.”<sup>98</sup>

Bergen, however, adds that,

David had rendered his judgment on Recab and Baanah; now it was time to act. To express the fact that Recab and Baanah died under divine curse (cf. Deut 21:22–23), David has his men ‘cut off their hands and feet’ and then hang ‘the bodies by the pool in Hebron.’ By contrast, David showed respect for his murdered brother-in-law by burying Ish-Bosheth’s head ‘in Abner’s tomb in Hebron.’<sup>99</sup>

While Ish-bosheth is given a proper burial, a burial of dignity, the cadavers of Rechab and Baanah are left publicly exposed and unburied, and thus viewed as one of humanity's worst indignities.<sup>100</sup>

#### 4.5.3.4b. Instructions on Burying

In 1 Kgs 13:31–32 the words of the prophet to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his [the man of God from Judah] bones.” In giving such an instruction to his sons, DeVries posits that, “The apparent reason is that he wishes to be sanctified in his death through contact with one who has proven to be holy”<sup>101</sup> However, Paul R. House states that, in giving such an instruction to his sons, “It is as if the old prophet has been on a quest to find a real word from God or as if he set out to be the personal tester of the man of God. Whatever his motives, and it is impossible to know them for sure, the old man is a mixture of curiosity, dishonesty, accuracy, and conviction.”<sup>102</sup> For Mordechai Coogan, however,

---

<sup>98</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 92.

<sup>99</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 318.

<sup>100</sup> Fisher, “Funeral Customs, 821.

<sup>101</sup> DeVries, *1 Kings*, 171.

<sup>102</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 189.

such a burial instruction would mean that, “it would be impossible to distinguish bone from bone.”<sup>103</sup>

Whether or not the old Bethelite prophet’s wish came true, however, is not exactly known to the reader. From our reading of 2 Kgs 23:17, we learn that when Josiah enquired about a monument in Bethel, he was told by the men of the city that, “It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah.” The fact that the men of the city make no mention of the Bethelite prophet might indicate that the sons of the prophet had perhaps buried their father elsewhere. Otherwise, the bones of the Bethelite prophet and those belonging to the man of Judah have become indistinguishable so that both are spared desecration. As August H. Konkell points out, “The bones of the prophet are spared, along with those of the old prophet from Bethel, described here as from the territory of Samaria.”<sup>104</sup>

#### 4.5.3.4c. Instructions on Embalming

Concerning an embalming instruction, we are told that upon the death of his father Jacob/Israel, “Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father” (Gen 50:2). While there was no such instruction for himself, Joseph was also embalmed in Egypt (50:26). Apart from Jacob/Israel and Joseph, no other OT Israelite was embalmed. Within the ancient Near East, embalming thus appears to have been an Egyptian practice. As specified by Fisher, “Embalming was not a usual practice in

---

<sup>103</sup> Coogan, *1 Kings*, 372.

<sup>104</sup> Konkell, *1 & 2 Kings*, 637.



Israel, Egyptian treatment for Jacob and Joseph being the exception rather than the rule.”<sup>105</sup> Fisher goes on to state that,

According to Herodotus, the Egyptians commenced embalming procedures by removing the brain from the cranium through the nasal apertures piecemeal, using a long curved hook. When this had been done, the cranial cavity was rinsed out with a mixture of resins and spices. The corpse was eviscerated, and the entrails were placed in four canopic jars. The body was soaked in a solution of natron for a period of from 40 to 80 days, depending on the cost of the burial.<sup>106</sup>

Further to this, when it came time for burial or interment, “the corpse was wrapped in strips of fine linen cloth from head to foot and put in an anthropoid coffin. The canopic jars were placed in the tomb along with the body, symbolizing the reuniting of the personality and its survival after death.”<sup>107</sup> Theological speaking, “Embalming served to preserve the body of the deceased, but in Egypt the reason for doing so involved a lot of theology. They preserved the body so that it could be reinhabited by the spirit (*ka*) in the afterlife.”<sup>108</sup> John H. Walton nevertheless remarks that, “Nothing in the text suggests that Joseph or his family had adopted the complex afterlife theology of ancient Egypt with its emphasis on rituals, spells, and other sorts of magic.”<sup>109</sup>

#### 4.5.3.4d. Instructions on Holiness

Offering strange fire before the LORD resulted in an immediate death for Nadab and Abihu by the consuming fire of the LORD (Lev 10:12). “On the very first day of Aaron’s high-priestly ministry his two eldest sons died for infringing God’s law.”<sup>110</sup> Yet, as Gordon J. Wenham points out, “It may be assumed that they had the right to offer

---

<sup>105</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 388.

<sup>106</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 388.

<sup>107</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 388.

<sup>108</sup> Walton, “Genesis,” 137.

<sup>109</sup> Walton, “Genesis,” 137.

<sup>110</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 153.

incense.”<sup>111</sup> The production of incense occurs “by mixing aromatic spices together, which was then vaporized by putting them in a censer containing glowing lumps of charcoal, i.e., fire. According to Lev 16:12, these coals had to be taken from the altar.”<sup>112</sup> While Wenham avers that, “The reader would dearly love to know the precise nature of their sin,” he also acknowledges that, “What really mattered is stated next: it was fire *which he had not commanded them.*”<sup>113</sup>

Jacob Milgrom, however, posits that,

The nature of Nadab and Abihu’s sin is contained in the words ‘unauthorized coals’ (*’ēš zārâ*). The adjective *zārâ* ‘unauthorized’ provides the clue. In contrast to Koran’s incense offering, which was rejected because he was an *’iš zār* ‘an unauthorized person’ (Num 17:5), Nadab and Abihu’s incense offering was rejected because they utilized *’ēš zārâ* ‘unauthorized coals.’<sup>114</sup>

Milgrom further avers that, “just as *qēṭōret zārâ* ‘unauthorized incense’ (Exod 30:9, 39) means a composition other than that prescribed (Exod 30:34–36), so *’ēš zārâ* ‘unauthorized coals’ implies that they were not the right kind.” And according to Milgrom, “This can only mean that instead of deriving from the outer altar (e.g., Lev 16:12; Num 17:11), the coals came from a source that was profane, or from outside, such as an oven.”<sup>115</sup> Whatever the source may have been, however, the unauthorized coals, ignited a strange fire, “which He had not commanded them” (Lev 10:1), thus resulting in the incineration of Nadab and Abihu.

Commenting on this tragic incident, Moses informs Aaron, “It is what the LORD spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored’” (Lev 10:3). In other words, as Wenham points out, “Holiness

---

<sup>111</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 154.

<sup>112</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 155.

<sup>113</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 155; emphasis original.

<sup>114</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 598; see also Wenham, *Leviticus*, 155.

<sup>115</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, 598.

(*qdsh*) is one of the great themes of Leviticus. The whole nation was called to be holy, but how much more responsibility rested on the priests whose duty was to perform the sanctifying rituals and to teach the people the way of holiness.”<sup>116</sup> Nadab and Abihu’s offering of strange fire unauthorized by God was thus an act of absolute defiance to their holy God. As priests of the LORD, Nadab and Abihu should have known better than to administer their priestly duties before God whose eyes are “too pure to approve evil” (Hab 1:13). In God’s holy presence, sin is not to be tolerated (Pss 5:5 [4]; 101:3–8; Isa 6:1–5; Hos 9:15).

Moses then instructs Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, “Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. . . . You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the LORD’s anointing oil is upon you” (Lev 10:6–7). Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar are thus proscribed from joining “the customary rites of mourning.”<sup>117</sup> While it is true that, “This rule normally applied just to the high priest (Lev 21:10); here it is extended to his sons as well. It is not explained why Eleazar and Ithamar could not join in mourning their brothers’ deaths.”<sup>118</sup> Wenham, however, conjectures that, “Perhaps it was because Nadab and Abihu had not suffered a natural death, but a direct judgment from God. The surviving priests, even though they were brothers, had to identify themselves entirely with God’s viewpoint and not arouse any suspicion that they condoned their brothers’ sins.”<sup>119</sup> Wenham also suggests that, “Had they joined in the traditional customs of tearing their clothes, they might have been

---

<sup>116</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 155–56

<sup>117</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 157.

<sup>118</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 157.

<sup>119</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 157.

tempted in their grief to blame God for their brothers' deaths." Indeed, as Wenham observes, "Rare are men like Job, who can mourn the loss of relatives and praise God at one and the same time (Job 1:20–21)."<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, Moses commands Aaron,

Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die—it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses (Lev 10:8–11).

Doubtless this would have been very difficult for these three priests, which explains why they could not even eat (though the food had already been consumed by the fire of the LORD). Yet, obediently, they remained silent at their post and continued to perform their priestly duties. Otherwise, they too would have been the objects of the wrath of God's consuming fire.

Interestingly enough, one also observes a similar prohibition from God to Ezekiel upon the death of his wife: "Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not mourn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come. Groan silently; make no mourning for the dead" (24:16–17). In this case, his actions were to serve as a sign of what was to come from the LORD upon the house of Israel (24:24). But as a priest himself (1:3), Ezekiel, as well as Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar, were acquainted with God's instructions for His appointed priests who served before Him. As long as the anointing oil was poured upon their heads and they were clothed in consecrated garments, they were proscribed from uncovering their heads, tearing their clothes, and approaching any dead person. Any such actions would only serve to defile them, and even worse, profane the God's holy sanctuary (Lev 21:10–12).

---

<sup>120</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 157.

Since God was holy, His sanctuary, was to be treated as holy (21:3, 6). This meant that any contact with and mourning for the dead while still wearing the anointed oil and priestly garments, meant that they were to be considered unclean and thus deserving of God's consuming fire. To avoid the thought of viewing God as sadistic, however, outside of performing their priestly duties without the anointing oil and priestly garments, mourning and defilement of themselves for their relatives was most certainly *allowed* (21:1–2), though not for the high priest.<sup>121</sup>

Further to the verbal expression of instruction on holiness, in Num 16:36–38, we are told that Moses instructed Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, to scatter the burning coals abroad, but to take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and hammer them into sheets for a plating of the altar, so that they might serve as a sign to the sons of Israel. The context of such an instruction comes in the wake of the consuming fire that devoured some two hundred and fifty rebellious men of Israel who opposed Moses the man of God. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had risen up against Moses and said to him, “You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so what do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” (16:1–3). In humility, Moses falls on his face to the ground and then speaks to Korah and his company of men, saying, “take censers for yourselves, . . . and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the one who is holy” (16:6–7). The next morning the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up all the men who belonged to Korah with their families and possessions (16:31–33). Korah's sons would

---

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 388.

survive the earthquake and supernatural burial (26:6). Next came fire from the LORD, which consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense (16:35). Milgrom observes that while, “Nadab and Abihu, died a similar death, when they also offered incense (Lev 10:1–2), their sins were nonetheless different. They were legitimate priests who offered illegitimate incense (strange fire). The 250 chieftains were illegitimate aspirants for the priesthood whose offering was legitimate.”<sup>122</sup>

Eleazar was then tasked with the responsibility of taking up the censers out of the midst of the blaze and charred bodies, for they were holy to the LORD. Then he was to scatter the burning coals abroad (16:36–37). “The coals from the collected censers were scattered outside the camp so as to not render others impure by contact with the remnants of the dead.”<sup>123</sup> The censers were then to be hammered out as a plating for the altar as a constant reminder that no lay person was allowed to burn incense before the LORD (16:40). Which means that, “Each of the 250 censers were hammered into thin sheets of bronze and then molded by hammer to the shape of the altar.”<sup>124</sup>

#### 4.5.3.4e. Instructions for a Woman on Returning Home and Remarrying

The first instruction of a woman to return home is recorded in Gen 38 and occurs between Tamar and her father-in-law Judah. This instruction comes on the heels of the deaths of Tamar’s first and second husbands. On account of their rebellious act before God, both of her husbands die rapidly. In other words, their tragic deaths were as a result of their sin against Tamar, but more so, God. “Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law

---

<sup>122</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 138.

<sup>123</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 271.

<sup>124</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 270.

Tamar, ‘Remain a widow in your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up’” (38:11a). The impetus behind such an instruction from Judah to Tamar can be heard in the following words: “for he [Judah] thought, ‘I am afraid that he [Shelah] too may die like his brothers.’” In light of his statement, Victor P. Hamilton avers that, “Judah’s concern is not with Tamar but with his surviving son (v. 11b). Perhaps, thinks Judah, the fate of Era and Onan will overcome Shelah as well.”<sup>125</sup> Which implies that, “Judah is in danger of becoming like Er his firstborn—married, but with no male descendants. Judah does what he thinks is necessary to prevent the possibility. He declares Shelah ineligible, and he dismisses Tamar.”<sup>126</sup>

Heeding her father-in-law’s comforting instruction, “Tamar went and lived in her father’s house” (38:11b). By complying with her father-in-law’s instruction, “It remains in the balance whether Tamar will get her right; this seems to depend on Judah as hitherto it is he alone who has made all the decisions as father of the family,”<sup>127</sup> as Westermann remarks. As the rest of the narrative continues, we discover that after Tamar realizes that she has been duped by her father-in-law Judah, she returns the favor and dupes Judah (38:12–26). “The real action begins with Tamar seizing the initiative; she herself procures her right to have a son from her husband’s family (vv. 12–23).” In coming to this realization, however, “Judah concedes the justice of her headstrong conduct (vv. 24–26).”<sup>128</sup> Otherwise stated, “Ironically, in trying to cover a small disgrace he was unaware that a much greater disgrace was being exposed his disregard of levirate marriage [Deut 25:5–10]. Tamar thwarted Judah’s attempt to pay his small

---

<sup>125</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 437.

<sup>126</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 437.

<sup>127</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 52.

<sup>128</sup> Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 52.

pledge because she had been thwarted by his failure to keep his pledge of marriage to his youngest son.”<sup>129</sup>

The second instruction of returning home comes from the mouth of Naomi to her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah: “Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband” (Ruth 1:8–9). That Naomi instructs her two daughters-in-law to return to their mother’s house “is surprising since widows normally returned to their ‘father’s house’ (Tamar, Gen 38:11; cf. Lev 22:12; Num 30:17; Deut 22:21; Judg 19:2, 3).”<sup>130</sup> Observing that the phrase “occurs in contexts having to do with love and marriage,” Hubbard avows that, “It seems likely, then, that Naomi here referred to some custom according to which the ‘mother’s house’—probably her bedroom, not a separate building—was the place where marriages were arranged.”<sup>131</sup> Being young widows, Naomi therefore wishes both of her daughters-in-law well, that is, that they would remarry and be taken care of by their potentially new husbands in Moab.

More than this, “Naomi specifically sought *hesed* for Orpah and Ruth from Yahweh. . . . In this context, the kindness toward Naomi probably refers to their actions since their husbands died (v. 5). Though those deaths severed their social ties with Naomi, Orpah and Ruth had voluntarily stayed with her, indeed, even choosing to leave their own country to care for her in hers.”<sup>132</sup> What is more, “As for their kindness to the

---

<sup>129</sup> Hartley, *Genesis*, 317.

<sup>130</sup> Hubbard, *Ruth*, 102. The phrase of “mother’s house” in lieu of father’s house, has led LaCocque (*Ruth*, 43–51) to the view the book of Ruth (along with Song of Songs) as being penned by a woman (44).

<sup>131</sup> Hubbard, *Ruth*, 102–3.

<sup>132</sup> Hubbard, *Ruth*, 104.



dead, Naomi probably meant that their kindness to her in some unspecified way benefitted the dead; that is, loyalty to her was loyalty to the dead and vice versa. . . . In this case, human kindness has earned the possibility (even likelihood) of a God-given reward.”<sup>133</sup>

Interestingly, while nothing else is known of Orpah who returns to Moab, supposedly to her mother’s house, and even to her people and gods (1:15), Ruth travels to Bethlehem with Naomi, where she finds another Israelite man, Boaz, whom she remarries. Boaz then becomes the father of Obed, who fathers Jesse, who fathers David, who thus becomes the paragon forbear of God in human form, the Lord Jesus Christ (4:1–21; cf. Matt 1:5–17).

#### 4.5.3.4f. Instructions on Transporting Cadaver for Burial

In regard to instructions on transporting the body of the deceased for burial, the first example comes from the mouth of Jacob/Israel to his sons while in Egypt. Recorded in Gen 49:29–30, we read, “I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site.” Hamilton observes that, “Jacob is as sharp on his control of family history (vv. 29–32) as he is on his control of his family prophecy (vv. 1–28). He is clear both about the distant future of his family and its descendants (vv. 1–28), and his own immediate future (vv. 28–33). In particular, Jacob’s mention of the land of Canaan (v. 30) is significant.”<sup>134</sup> What is this

---

<sup>133</sup> Hubbard, *Ruth*, 104.

<sup>134</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 689.

significance? “By now in the Joseph story this expression has become ‘the trump card of the narrator, who uses this card to impress on his readers that Israel really has to settle in the land of Canaan and in no other country.’”<sup>135</sup>

A chapter later, just prior to his death, Joseph instructed his brothers, saying, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land [Egypt] which He promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob. . . . and you shall carry my bones up from here” (50:24, 25). Then subsequent to the death of Nadab and Abihu by God, Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and says to them, “Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp” (Lev 10:4).

#### ***4.5.3.5. Interrogation and Rejoinder***

For these two verbal expressions, interrogation and rejoinder, we return to Lev 10:1–20. The context is the death of Nabab and Abihu by means of the consuming fire of the LORD owing to their offering of strange fire before Him (10:1–2). Upon inquiring about the goat of the sin offering that Eleazar and Ithamar were commanded to eat, Moses’ anger was evoked upon learning that it was not ingested (10:16–18). This sin offering, however, is not to be confused with the sin offering of the people (9:15), of which the priests were forbidden to eat (4:13–21). Here, however, the goat of the sin offering could be eaten by the priests. At the same time, while Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar were allowed to eat the goat of the sin offering, this should not be considered a meal that is

---

<sup>135</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 689; internal quote taken from Lemche, *Canaanites*, 112.

usually consumed during mourning (Jer 16:7; Hos 9:4). This goat of the sin offering was part of the sacrificial meal that the priests were allowed to eat (cf. Lev 6:26).

Moses thus questioned Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, “Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD. Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside, into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded” (10:16–17). As a rejoinder, Aaron speaks to Moses on behalf of himself and his sons, saying, “Behold, this very day they [Eleazar and Ithamar] presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the LORD?” (10:19). Wenham remarks that, “Given the circumstances, Aaron’s fear of eating ‘most holy’ things such as the meat of the purification offering was understandable.”<sup>136</sup>

Upon hearing this response from Aaron, Moses expressed a sense of satisfaction, as “it seemed good in his sight” (10:20). Which is to say that, “perhaps, God is more gracious to those who make mistakes because they fear him than those who carelessly and impudently enter his presence, as Nadab and Abihu did (cf. vv. 1–3).”<sup>137</sup> But while the sin offering was not eaten by Eleazar and Ithamar, it was nevertheless consumed in the fire (Lev 10:16), most likely by the fire of the LORD that consumed their brothers Nadab and Abihu (10:2). After all, the offerings presented to the LORD by fire were designated God’s food (21:6).

---

<sup>136</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 160.

<sup>137</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 160.

Upon the death of his unnamed son, “David arose from the ground, washed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate” (2 Sam 12:20). Bewildered at such actions, David’s servants asked, “What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food” (12:21). To which David replied, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who know, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (12:22–23). In furnishing such a rejoinder to his interrogators, “we may catch a glimpse of the fact that David was a *realistic* monotheist, trusting on the only God for his mercy.”<sup>138</sup> Which is another way of saying that, “David, whose life found its focus and fundamental motivations in God, explained his actions theologically.”<sup>139</sup> By implication,

The child’s death did not mean that God was unjust or unloving; on the contrary, it meant that the divine word spoken through the prophet [Nathan] was trustworthy (cf. v. 14)—a fact that must have provided a measure of comfort to the king. The Lord’s word had not changed, and the Lord himself had not changed; divine grace was just as real after the death as it had been before. Therefore, now that the child was gone David could and must get on with his life. Though David was now bereft of his son, the separation would be only temporary. There is to be heard a note of consolation in David’s words ‘I will go to him.’<sup>140</sup>

In life and in death, the LORD God who gives and takes away, can be trusted and blessed, that is, worshiped (Job 1:21; 2 Sam 12:20).

---

<sup>138</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 198; emphasis original.

<sup>139</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

<sup>140</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

Perhaps a bit more detail should be included here in light of the ongoing debate with regards to David's reactions. On the one hand, there are some readers who view David's countercultural reactions, as David A. Bosworth observes, "as wise, pious, and exemplary," while on the other hand, there are some readers who "find in this passage evidence of David's callous indifference to others and narcissistic concern for himself."<sup>141</sup> According to Bill T. Arnold, "The episode of the child's death and David's reversal of conventional mourning customs leaves interpreters perplexed (12:15–23)."<sup>142</sup> This is due to the fact that in OT Israelite mourning custom, "The normal period of mourning lasted seven days (1 Sam 31:13; cf. Gen 50:10). . . . Since David assumes an attitude of mourning while he prays for the sick boy, he has already fulfilled the customary period of mourning proleptically."<sup>143</sup> Which therefore suggests that, "David's cheerfulness is not as heartless as it might seem to contemporary readers,"<sup>144</sup> as remarked by Mary J. Evans. Reasoning from this, David is no longer obligated to mourn another seven days following the death of his unnamed son. A. A. Anderson, nevertheless, avers that, "It is equally unlikely that David mourned for the child proleptically."<sup>145</sup>

David's reversal of conventional mourning customs, however, is indicative of David having left his state of mourning and either returning to a state of normalcy, or even to a state of joy. This is made clear from Gary A. Anderson's statement that, "This joyous state meant that the mourner had to bathe, put on fresh clothes and scented oil,

---

<sup>141</sup> Bosworth, "Faith and Resilience," 692.

<sup>142</sup> Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 537.

<sup>143</sup> Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 537.

<sup>144</sup> Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 190.

<sup>145</sup> Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 164.

eat and drink, and even (according to some) resume sexual relations.”<sup>146</sup> By doing each of these (see 2 Sam 12:13–25), David’s mourning had thus turned into joy.

Observing that, “Grief looks different in different people, and people cope with grief in many ways,” Bosworth avers that, “some coping strategies prove better than others: locating supportive people is preferable to abusing drugs and alcohol.”<sup>147</sup> Citing the work of George A. Bonanno et al., he goes on to state that whereas there is considerable variation in individual behavior, researchers have observed four grief trajectories:

- i. Resilience (which involves little or no loss of function in work, relationships, and practical tasks of living).
- ii. Recovery (which involves some loss of function for a period of time followed by a gradual recovery).
- iii. Prolonged grief (which involves extended loss of function and lack of recovery).
- iv. Delayed grief (which involves little or no loss of function initially, but symptoms of grief later, and then followed by a prolonged or recovery trajectory).<sup>148</sup>

On the basis of this research, Bosworth therefore proposes that, “While one may read David as cold hearted, the recognition of resilience opens another possibility: David may experience a resilient grief trajectory that does not reflect monstrous callousness or unconcern for his baby.”<sup>149</sup> Which is to say that, “David continues to exhibit a capacity

---

<sup>146</sup> Anderson, *Time*, 50.

<sup>147</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 118.

<sup>148</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 118; cf., Bonanno et al., “Trajectories of Grieving,” 287–307.

<sup>149</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119.

to continue with his life more or less as normal in spite of trauma, loss, or other adversity that might be expected to result in significant dysfunction.”<sup>150</sup>

Bosworth further specifies that since resilience is best understood as the result of a process rather than an innate trait, one could speak of David’s pathways to resilience:

- i. David’s external pathways (which includes the cause of death, David’s large family, and his place in an ancient society with high infant mortality).
- ii. David’s internal pathways (which includes David’s sense of personal agency and trust in God).<sup>151</sup>

Although David’s external pathways doubtless play a significant role in his resilience amidst grief, it is more so his internal pathways, primarily that of his faith in the LORD his God, that makes him resilient in times of adversity.<sup>152</sup>

So, while it is acknowledged here that there is an ongoing debate over the normativity of David’s attitude toward grief following the death of his unnamed son with Bathsheba, here I follow Bosworth in contending that David’s countercultural behavior should be viewed as one of *resilience*. That is, David’s reactions exhibit “the human capacity to deal with, overcome, learn from, or even be transformed by the inevitable adversities of life.”<sup>153</sup> For this reason, “David need not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative model to bereaved parents. The description of David’s behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn.”<sup>154</sup> This argument is maintained throughout this dissertation as I continue to reflect on each of David’s countercultural, yet resilient, grief reactions.

---

<sup>150</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692.

<sup>151</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 700.

<sup>152</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692–93.

<sup>153</sup> Luthar and Zelazo, “Research and Resilience,” 513; cf. Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 697.

<sup>154</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119; cf. Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 691–707.

#### 4.5.4. *Categorization of Death-Related-Words*

Based on the preceding exploration, the following categorization of the death-related verbal expressions can be stated: *Disorientation Stage 8 Death-Related-Words or DS8 Death-Related-Words* (inclusive of which are contrition and/or confession; curse; Instructions [Assassination; Burying, Embalming; Holiness; Returning Home and Remarrying; and Transporting Cadaver for Burial]; Interrogation and Rejoinder; Lament Elegy and Weeping).

#### 4.5.5. Summary

In the immediate section above, we surveyed several verbal expressions that were both communicated to/before God and humans, with emphasis placed on the latter, especially amidst the death of a leading OT Israelite. As such, the spectrum has now been extended to include both non-death-related and death-related verbal expressions communicated to/before God and humans, some of which will play a key role in chapter 5 wherein such verbal expressions will engage in a dialectical correlation with the verbal expressions garnered in chapter 3.

Having concluded our examination of the verbal anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation within the prosaic section of the OT (Genesis to Esther), we now attempt a survey of the physical expressions communicated to/before God and humans amidst disorientation, both death-related and non-death-related.

### 4.6. Physical Anthropological Expressions of Disorientation

Here we recall the words of Corless et al., for our understanding of physical expressions, “which are comprised of physical signs, bodily expressions, and sensual aspects such as



seeing and hearing. The manner in which the head is held (body language) is an example of a physical response, as is weeping. Sobbing, sighing, sudden, intense emotion, or other somatic, physical responses typically occur without intention.”<sup>155</sup> Though Corless et al., have included the physical and the emotional expressions together, here, the two will be separated for the purpose of engendering a threefold typology of anthropological expressions—verbal, physical, and emotional. Having previously deliberated on the verbal expressions, the move is now made to examine the physical expressions communicated to/before God amidst a situation of disorientation. This implies that the physical expressions that accompany grief in the context of the death of a leading Israelite will also be included in the discussion. The importance of including such physical expressions can once again be heard in Olyan’s words:

Biblical representations of mourning the dead employ a distinct and particular vocabulary of mourning which is also used by other biblical texts to describe the ritual activity of petitioners and others who do not mourn the dead. In other words, the texts narrating the mourning rites of penitents, humiliated individuals, and persons seeking a divine revelation, among others, do not use a different vocabulary to describe their behaviour; rather, they utilize the vocabulary of mourning the dead.<sup>156</sup>

That being said, attention is now given to the physical expressions communicated to/before God amidst disorientation. This will then be followed by the emotional expressions.

---

<sup>155</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 136.

<sup>156</sup> Olyan, *Mourning*, 19. Owing to the fact that it is not assumed by an Israelite, *looking heavenward* while praying is a posture located within the OT that is not considered. According to Dan 4, Nebuchadnezzar suffered from a temporary divine judgment of insanity (possibly lycanthropy) owing to his egotistic superciliousness. At the end of seven years, however, and *while* still dwelling like a beast of the field, Nebuchadnezzar raised his eyes toward heaven, and his reason returned to him; after which he blessed the Most High and praised Him who lives forever (4:34). It might not be farfetched to say that had he not raised his eyes toward heaven in an act of humility and dependence upon the sovereign Lord, his insanity might not have been reversed. Psalm 123:1[2] declares, “To You I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens!” (see also Ps 141:9 [8]; cf. 121:2 [1])

#### 4.6.1a. Anointing Oneself

Subsequent to the death of his unnamed son, David anointed himself (2 Sam 12:20).

Such an expression, however, should not find a place within a context of mourning. This is especially so in light of the question David's servants directed at him: "What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food!" (12:21). The fact that mention is made of David rising and eating food serves as a merism for everything he did in between. For that reason, David's anointing should be understood as a physical expression included in the servants' statement of bewilderment. Proffering the significance to his countercultural expression, David responds, "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.' But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (12:22–23). "There is to be heard a note of consolation in David's words 'I will go to him.'"<sup>157</sup>

Nevertheless, 2 Sam 13–14 tell us that after Absalom avenged his sister Tamar, by killing Amnon for violating her, and knowing that king David's heart was inclined toward Absalom, "Joab sent to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there and said to her, 'Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning garments now, and *do not anoint yourself with oil*, but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead many days" (14:1–2 [cf. 13:1–39]; emphasis mine).

According to Bill T. Arnold, "The episode of the child's death and David's reversal of conventional mourning customs leaves interpreters perplexed (12:15–23)."<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

<sup>158</sup> Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 537.

The reason being is that in OT Israelite mourning custom, “The normal period of mourning lasted seven days (1 Sam 31:13; cf. Gen 50:10). . . . Since David assumes an attitude of mourning while he prays for the sick boy, he has already fulfilled the customary period of mourning proleptically.”<sup>159</sup> Which suggests that, “David’s cheerfulness is not as heartless as it might seem to contemporary readers,”<sup>160</sup> as remarked by Mary J. Evans. Reasoning from this, David is no longer obligated to mourn another seven days following the death of his unnamed son. A. A. Anderson, nevertheless, avers that, “It is equally unlikely that David mourned for the child proleptically.”<sup>161</sup>

David’s reversal of conventional mourning customs in the act of anointing himself, however, is indicative of David having left his state of mourning and either returning to a state of normalcy, or even a state of joy. This is made clear from Gary A. Anderson’s statement that, “This joyous state meant that the mourner had to . . . put on . . . scented oil.”<sup>162</sup> By dabbing scented oil on himself, David’s mourning had thus turned into joy. And as Bosworth avers that, “While one may read David as cold hearted, the recognition of resilience opens another possibility: David may experience a resilient grief trajectory that does not reflect monstrous callousness or unconcern for his baby.”<sup>163</sup> Which is to say that, “David continues to exhibit a capacity to continue with his life more or less as normal in spite of trauma, loss, or other adversity that might be expected to result in significant dysfunction.”<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 537.

<sup>160</sup> Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 190.

<sup>161</sup> Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 164.

<sup>162</sup> Anderson, *Time*, 50.

<sup>163</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119.

<sup>164</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692.

For this reason, “David need not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative model to bereaved parents. The description of David’s behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn.”<sup>165</sup> That notwithstanding, David’s unconventional, yet resilient expression of anointing or dabbing himself with scented oil amidst the loss of his unnamed son appears alongside David’s DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16).

#### ***4.6.1b. Blowing (Silver) Trumpets***

Just prior to the battle between Israel, led by king Jeroboam, and Judah under king Abijah, we are told that even though Jeroboam had set an ambush behind Judah, “When Judah turned around, behold, they were attacked both front and rear; so they cried to the LORD, and the priests blew trumpets (2 Chron 13:13–14).

Such an expression should be understood against the backdrop of the words of the LORD in Num 10:9, wherein the people of Israel were instructed by Moses saying, “When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies.”<sup>166</sup> R. Dennis Cole identifies two types of trumpets employed by the people of Israel.

The silver trumpets are to be distinguished from the ram’s horn in function as well as appearance. The ram’s horn (*šopār*) announced the Day of Atonement throughout the land (Lev. 25:9) and was used in the marching around Jericho (Josh. 6:2–21). The bright pitch of the silver trumpet called the people to march

---

<sup>165</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119; cf. Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 691–707. See pages 123–26 above for more details on this contention of David’s grief trajectory of resilience.

<sup>166</sup> It is worth mentioning here that the coupling of both the blowing of trumpets and that of raising a war cry, which might be understood as shouting with a great shout, also played a key role in the fall of the wall of Jericho. Joshua 6:20 says, “So *the people shouted*, and *priests blew the trumpets*; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, *the people shouted with a great shout* and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight ahead, and they took the city” (emphasis mine). The trumpets blown in Josh 6:20, however, differ from those blown in 2 Chron 13:14.

through the wilderness and was blown by Phineas in the battle against Midian (Num 31:6).<sup>167</sup>

Within the context of 2 Chron 13:14, it was the תְּצַצְרוֹת or the silver trumpets, and not the שׁוֹפָר or the ram's horn that were blown by the priests as a clarion call to the LORD God for the purpose of divine intervention and victory over Judah's enemies. As stated in Num 10:9, the LORD said to Moses, "When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound the alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies." Yet Philip J. Budd probes, "In what sense can he need reminding?"<sup>168</sup> To which he responds, "It may be that this is a way of expressing man's complete dependence on God. From the perspective of faith God can never be taken for granted or exploited."<sup>169</sup> On a slightly different note, however, Cole remarks that, "In the context of battle, the trumpets served as a prayer by which the covenant relationship between God and Israel was invoked, and thus reminded soldiers that God remembers and delivers his people."<sup>170</sup> In a similar vein, Milgrom also suggests that, "The trumpet blasts serve as a prayer whose efficacy is recorded in the war between Abijah and Jeroboam (2 Chron 13:12–16)."<sup>171</sup>

On that note, it can be said that God's ears are so attuned to the blowing of the silver trumpets, that upon hearing them, He immediately rouses Himself for divine battle on behalf of His human-covenant partners who, rather than rely on their military prowess, resolve to acknowledge their dire need of His supernatural intervention and

---

<sup>167</sup> Cole, "Numbers," 353.

<sup>168</sup> Budd, *Numbers*, 108.

<sup>169</sup> Budd, *Numbers*, 108.

<sup>170</sup> Cole, *Numbers*, 163.

<sup>171</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 75.

deliverance. This ritual of blowing silver trumpets interestingly occurs within the disorientation context of Judah's DS1 lament prayer.

#### **4.6.1c. *Burning***

Subsequent to discovering the plunderer guilty of stealing some of the devoted things belonging to the LORD in Jericho, Joshua and all Israel took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that belonged to him to the valley of Achor (Josh 7:16–24). Once there, all Israel stoned Achan and all things belonging to him; next, all Israel burned them with fire (7:25).

As specified in 1 Sam 31:10–13, following the death of Saul and his three sons (i.e., Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua) at the hands of the Philistines, all the valiant men of Jabesh-gilead arose and walked all night. Arriving at their destination, the men took the body of Saul and his three sons from the wall of Beth-shan where they had been fastened. Upon their return to Jabesh, the men burned Saul and his three sons.”<sup>172</sup>

Burning or internment, however, was not a common mourning ritual practiced among the OT Israelites. Payne notes that, “In contrast to the Greeks and Romans, whose custom was to cremate the dead . . . the Jews ‘bury rather than burn dead bodies.’”<sup>173</sup> And as observed by Fisher, even the “Cremation of the bodies of Saul and his sons (1 Sam 31:12, 13) was also an exception to normal practice. The Roman historian Tacitus wrote that in contrast with Roman custom Jewish piety required

---

<sup>172</sup> Interestingly, when Judah was told that his daughter-in-law Tamar was guilty of prostitution, his immediate reaction was this: “Bring her out and let her be burned” (Gen 38:24; cf. Lev 21:9).

<sup>173</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 556; quote taken from Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 5.

burying rather than burning of dead bodies. Under Mosaic law such burning was reserved as a sentence of judgment (Lev 21:9; Josh 7:25).”<sup>174</sup>

#### ***4.6.1d. Burying (and Purchasing Land)***

With regards to what is otherwise referred to as interment, it is not surprising to observe that burying was the most conventional mourning ritual practiced among OT Israelites. Both Sarah and Abraham were buried in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan (Gen 23:19; 25:9–10). Subsequent to giving birth to her second son, Ben-oni, who was later renamed Benjamin by his father Jacob, Rachel suffered severe labor, died, and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem) (35:19). Although 35:29 says that Easu and Jacob buried their father Isaac, the location of this burial is not furnished. Ten chapters later, however, we read that Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were also buried alongside Abraham and Sarah in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre (49:13). The field at Machpelah was accrued by Abraham from Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite (cf. 50:13). Serving as a burial site, this prime piece of land cost Abraham four hundred shekels (23:1–16). Although his death occurred in Egypt, Joseph’s bones were later buried at Shechem, in the piece of ground that Jacob/Israel had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money (Josh 24:32). This was in keeping with Joseph’s final request to his brothers of burying him in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 50:24, 25).

---

<sup>174</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 388.

Numbers 11:31–35 tells us that after complaining and grumbling for meat, the children of Israel finally received what their stomachs craved greedily. But this also came at a heavy price. After consuming their quail, the LORD's anger was kindled against them, the result of which was a severe plague breaking out among them. The bodies of those who died were buried in Kibroth-hattaavah (i.e., graves of the greedy), which was named as such owing to the greed of the people.

Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses died and was buried in the wilderness of Zin (20:1). Later, Aaron died on Mount Hor and was buried in Moserah (33:38–39; Deut 10:6). Of all the characters of the OT, Moses was the only person who received a divine burial. Deuteronomy 34:5–6 says that Moses died in the land of Moab, and the LORD buried him there, although no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses' protégé, Joshua son of Nun, was buried in the territory of his inheritance, that is, Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash (Josh 24:29–30; cf. Judg 2:9). Eleazar the son of Aaron, is buried at Gibeah of Phineas his son, which was given him in the hill country of Ephraim (Josh 24:33).

Among the judges that ruled Israel, Gideon was buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites (Judg 8:32), Tola the son of Puah was buried in Shamir (10:2), Jair the Gileadite was buried in Kamon (10:5), and Jephthah the Gileadite was buried in one of the cities of Gilead (12:7). While Ibzan was buried in Bethlehem (12:10), Elon the Zebulunite was buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun (12:12). Subsequent to his death in the temple of Dagon of Philistia, Samson's brothers and all his father's household came down, took him, brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father (16:30–31). Interestingly, the burial places of Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, and Deborah, are unspecified within the OT.



Upon his death, Samuel is said to have been buried at his house in his own city of Ramah (1 Sam 25:1; 28:3). David's commander Joab, however, is buried at his own house in the wilderness (1 Kgs 2:34). After the man of God from Judah was killed by a lion, the old prophet of Bethel placed the man of God on his donkey, brought him back to Bethel, and buried him in his grave (13:29–31).

Several kings slept with their fathers and were buried in the city of David: David (2:10), Solomon (11:43), Rehoboam (14:31), Abijah (15:8), Asa (15:24), Jehoshaphat (22:50), Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:24), Amaziah (14:20–22), Azariah/Uzziah who was buried in the field of the grave, which belongs to the kings (15:7 // 2 Chron 26:23), Jotham (15:38), Rehoboam (2 Chron 12:16), and Hezekiah (32:33). From Neh 3:16, we learn that there were tombs of David, which perhaps is a reference to the field of the grave belonging to the kings (2 Chron 26:23). Likewise, with regards to their northern counterparts, there were a handful of kings who slept with their fathers and were buried in Samaria: Omri (1 Kgs 16:28), Ahab (22:37), Jehu (2 Kgs 10:35), Jehoahaz (13:9), Jehoash (13:13), and Ahaz (16:20).

Outside of the normal burial custom in either the city of David or Samaria, we read that Baasha slept with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah (1 Kgs 16:6). Manasseh was buried the garden of his own house, which was also known as the garden of Uzza (2 Kgs 21:18; 2 Chron 33:20). Amon son of Manasseh was also buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza (2 Kgs 21:26). Josiah died in Megiddo, but was buried in Jerusalem in his own tomb (23:30).

Miller specifies that, "While the Bible does not provide a detailed picture of proper burial procedures, it does allude to the common practices of the Hebrew people,

and contains some prohibitions relating to death.”<sup>175</sup> Since the children of Israel were considered a holy people unto the LORD their God, such prohibitions included no cutting of oneself nor shaving one’s head for the sake of the dead (Lev 19:27–28; 21:5–6; Deut 14:1–2), for such were the practices of the pagan nations surrounding them.<sup>176</sup> Also noted by Miller is that, “Placing the corpse in the ground or in a cave was the principal method of disposing of the dead. One of the worst indignities was to be left unburied or become ‘food for beasts of prey’ (Deut 28:26; 1 Kgs 11:15). If possible the deceased were to be buried on the day of death.”<sup>177</sup> As a matter of fact, “In the ancient Near East generally, burial occurred within twenty-four hours of death.”<sup>178</sup>

Owing to the fact that so many OT Israelites desired and/or were buried in close proximity to their departed family members, it is hardly surprising to hear Fisher aver that, “A society’s burial customs are a reflection of its spiritual views about death and the afterlife. . . . The ancient Hebrews emphasized a more spiritual concept of union or fellowship of the departed with generations gone before.”<sup>179</sup> This can be observed in the such phrases as “you shall go to your fathers in peace” (Gen 15:15; cf. 1 Kgs 13:22), “gathered to his people” (Gen 25:8, 17; 49:33), or “I will go to him” (2 Sam 12:23).

---

<sup>175</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

<sup>176</sup> Why this proscription might be heard in Olyan’s (*Mourning*, 110–23) statement: “In a word, shaving and laceration have the potential to become markers ‘out of place’, visible tokens of mourning on the bodies of those who have abandoned the mourning ritual stance and shifted to a posture of rejoicing” (123). What is more, “Such a mixing of mourning and rejoicing practices in the same ritual actor would blur the distinction between mourner and non-mourner, thereby obscuring the boundaries that separate the distinct ritual states and posing a threat to the continuity of the ritual order” (123).

<sup>177</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

<sup>178</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 386.

<sup>179</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 388.

#### 4.6.1e. *Chambering (Privacy/Isolation)*

Following the death of David's son Absalom, "The king was deeply moved and *went up to the chamber over the gate* and wept. And thus he said as he walked, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!'" (2 Sam 18:33; emphasis mine). V. Philips Long notes that, "City gates had numerous rooms where commercial, civic, or military affairs could be conducted. David's retreat to one of the rooms afforded him a place where he could weep in relative privacy."<sup>180</sup> What is more, "His withdrawal from his position sitting in the gate to one of the rooms of the gate tower reflects the fact that he is 'shaken' by the news of Absalom's death, as his anguished fivefold repetition of 'my son,' and threefold repetition 'Absalom' aptly capture."<sup>181</sup>

Overcome with grief, and unable to control himself, David not only voices one of his recorded elegies (cf. 1:19–27; 3:33–34; 19:4), but also "seeks isolation from others,"<sup>182</sup> as he leaves his company of ashamed combatants to mourn alone in private within his chamber over the gate, "ironically situated 'between the sky and the earth' (v. 9), the same position in which Absalom had died."<sup>183</sup> Whether ironically or not, David's movement "into deep mourning"<sup>184</sup> causes him to move away from his joyful compatriots and into isolation into the chamber over the gate where he could mourn the death of his son Absalom. That he moved into the chamber over the gate might be attributed to it being "the nearest place he could be private."<sup>185</sup> Regardless of his

---

<sup>180</sup> Long, "2 Samuel," 471.

<sup>181</sup> Long, "2 Samuel," 471.

<sup>182</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 425.

<sup>183</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 425.

<sup>184</sup> Evans, *1, 2 Samuel*, 216.

<sup>185</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 268.

personal feelings of grief, the text suggests that of all people, David should know better than to mix the ritual of mourning within that of rejoicing. In a context now dominated by rejoicing owing to Absalom's annihilation mourning is deemed incompatible.<sup>186</sup>

#### ***4.6.1f. Changing Clothes***

On the heels of losing his unnamed son, David "changed his clothes" (2 Sam 12:20). Which implies that David was wearing mourning clothes, perhaps sackcloth. That notwithstanding, David's servants cannot help but inquire of such a countercultural practice, saying, "What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food" (12:19). The mere fact that he was asked by his servants to explain his unusual actions indicate that such expressions were irregular amidst grief through death. Which implies that it would have been normal mourning practice for David to have continued fasting and weeping in his mourning clothes (perhaps sackcloth) during his time of grief following the death of his stillborn son who goes unnamed in the biblical text. After all, had David not mourned the deaths of Saul (1:11–12) and Abner (3:31–35), and then later the deaths of Amnon (13:36–37) as well as Absalom (18:32—19:4)? But why not mourn his unnamed son? Anderson avers that, "David's conduct after the death of the child appeared incomprehensible to the courtiers. Instead of mourning, David now dispensed of all outward signs of grief. According to the explanation given (vv. 22–23), there was no

---

<sup>186</sup> See also Neh 8:9–12 for another example on the incompatibility of mourning in a context of rejoicing. But see Isa 22:12–14 for an example on the incompatibility of rejoicing in a context of mourning.

longer any point in fasting and weeping; the child was dead and could not be brought back to life.”<sup>187</sup>

Arnold states that, “The normal period of mourning lasted seven days (1 Sam 31:13; cf. Gen 50:10). . . . Since David assumes an attitude of mourning while he prays for the sick boy, he has already fulfilled the customary period of mourning proleptically.”<sup>188</sup> Which infers that, “David’s cheerfulness is not as heartless as it might seem to contemporary readers.”<sup>189</sup> Reasoning from this, there is no longer an obligation placed upon David to mourn another seven days for his unnamed son. That being said, A. A. Anderson nevertheless avers that, “It is equally unlikely that David mourned for the child proleptically.”<sup>190</sup>

David’s countercultural expression of changing his clothes amidst the loss of his unnamed son, nevertheless, occurs within a state of normalcy or joy. As G. A. Anderson notes, “This joyous state meant that the mourner has to . . . put on fresh clothes.”<sup>191</sup> Again, it is important to note that David’s action of changing from his mourning clothes (sackcloth) to his regular or normal clothes does not make him callous or hard hearted. Rather, primarily on account of his faith in the LORD his God, David exhibits resilience, that is, “the capacity to continue with his life more or less in spite of trauma, loss or other adversity that might be expected to result in significant dysfunction.”<sup>192</sup> Thus, the text simply characterizes David’s resilient grief trajectory, rather than suggests any normativity in terms of mourning.<sup>193</sup> Equally important is the fact that such an

---

<sup>187</sup> Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 164.

<sup>188</sup> Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 537.

<sup>189</sup> Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 190.

<sup>190</sup> Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 164.

<sup>191</sup> Anderson, *Time*, 50.

<sup>192</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692–93.

<sup>193</sup> For more details on this argument of David’s grief trajectory of resilience, see pp. 123–26 above.

unconventional, yet resilient expression as that of changing his clothes, appears alongside his DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16).

#### ***4.6.1g. Covering/Hiding One's Face***

In his encounter of the LORD from the burning-yet-unconsumed bush, we read in Exod 3:5–6, “Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ He also said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then Moses *hid his face*, for he was afraid to look at God” (emphasis mine). This physical expression of hiding one’s face appears in the context of Moses’ DS1 lament prayer.

One thus wonders why Moses hides his face from God? Perhaps Exod 33:20 furnishes an answer: “But He [the LORD] said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” (cf. Judg 6:22–23; 13:21–23; Isa 6:1, 5). One might thus conclude that even when it says in Exod 24:9–11 that, “Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nabab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel,” and again, “Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank” (cf. 33:11), what they really saw was only “the form of the LORD” (Num 12:8). James K. Bruckner avers that, “God took a physical form that could be seen, as the text repeats, using two words to say, ‘they saw’ God (v. 10 *ra’ah*, v. 11 *khazah*). The second word denotes an intense perception of what is actually there and is true.”<sup>194</sup> While seeing the face of God might evoke an element of surprising, the reader is nevertheless made aware of the fact that those who saw God

---

<sup>194</sup> Bruckner, *Exodus*, 226.

were fully aware of the fact that, “this was a potentially dangerous situation.”<sup>195</sup> Despite this fact, however, “It was commonly known that one could not see God and live, yet God remained free to make exceptions, taking a visible physical form as with the seventy, later with Moses (33:11), and in the incarnation.”<sup>196</sup>

As a continuation of the account of David’s unconventional responses to his son Absalom’s death in 2 Sam 18:33, we read in 19:4 that, “The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, ‘O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my sons!’”<sup>197</sup> Fisher observes that it was customary during mourning for “the face to be veiled or the entire head draped with a veil.”<sup>198</sup> It should be noted, however, that Fisher also observes, that, “The action of putting hands on the head was a common sign of mourning (2 Sm 13:19; Jer 2:37).” The text, however, remains silent on whether it was a veil or his hands that David employed to cover his face. What is therefore acknowledged here is that David did employ some means by which he could hide his grief.

Overcome with “grief inconsolable,”<sup>199</sup> David once more attempts to veil his sorrow in the midst of his company of warriors (cf. 18:33), something that has now become visible, expressing itself upon his face. The anguish has become too unbearable for David the father and not just David the king. Little wonder the men in his company are covered with shame on account of David’s dissident behavior (19:5). Which means that, from the perspective of Joab and his men, it was incumbent upon David to compose

---

<sup>195</sup> Bruckner, *Exodus*, 226.

<sup>196</sup> Bruckner, *Exodus*, 226; cf. Bellinger (*Leviticus, Numbers*, 224–27), who suggests that when Moses spoke face to face with God, “the text should be read as ‘Mouth to mouth I speak with him.’ That rendering is preferable in a context of revelation in light of the affirmation in Exod 33 that no one sees the face of God. The revelation is direct” (227).

<sup>197</sup> One wonders about Absalom’s mother, Maacah’s (1 Chron 3:2), response to this news of her son’s death? Scripture, however, is silent on this matter.

<sup>198</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 387.

<sup>199</sup> Evans, *1, 2 Samuel*, 216.

himself and get over or put aside his grief of his son Absalom during this joyous occasion. David's public grief is thus proscribed by Joab who reprimands David for not being emotionally strong so as to *rejoice* instead of *mourn* Israel's victorious battle over Israel's archnemesis at the time—Absalom (19:5–7). “David's almost pathological approach to his sons prevented him from recognizing the necessity of Absalom's death as a moral judgment as much as, or as well as, a political necessity.”<sup>200</sup> Absalom's death therefore called for rejoicing rather than mourning. As Olyan avers, “victory in battle requires rites of rejoicing from the victors after the fact, as David learns in 2 Sam 19:1–9 (Eng. 18:33—19:8).”<sup>201</sup>

#### **4.6.1h. Deep Moving (Trembling)**

Subsequent to the death of David's son Absalom, we read that, “The king was *deeply moved* and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, ‘O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!’” (2 Sam 18:33; emphasis mine). Here it should be noted that the words “deeply moved” do not quite convey the meaning of the Hebrew word רָגַג. H. D. M. Spence contends that, “The Hebrew word properly refers to agitation of body. A violent trembling seized the king.”<sup>202</sup> Tsumura avers that the expression literally means, “trembling with emotion.”<sup>203</sup> In other words, “David is simply

---

<sup>200</sup> Evans, *1, 2 Samuel*, 216.

<sup>201</sup> Olyan, *Mourning*, 125. Similarly, in an effort to present her DS3 vow prayer to the LORD, Hannah separated herself both physically and ritualistically from the company of joyful Israelites at the sanctuary in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:9–11).

<sup>202</sup> Spence, *2 Samuel*, 440.

<sup>203</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 268.



convulsed with emotion.”<sup>204</sup> Overcome with grief, David’s body trembles uncontrollably, and this within a context of one of David’s elegies.

#### ***4.6.1i. Donning and Removing of Widows Clothes***

Genesis 38:19 states that, subsequent to the deaths of her two successive husbands (Er and Onan; 38:6–10), Tamar the daughter-in-law of Judah “arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow’s garments” (38:19). Earlier, however, the text informs us that Tamar “removed her widow’s garments” (38:14). But whereas “the face might be veiled or the entire head draped with a veil”<sup>205</sup> during mourning, Tamar’s veiling of her face was aimed at double-crossing her duplicitous father-in-law Judah (38:11–18). The text, however, remains silent on the exact nature of Tamar’s widowed garments.

#### ***4.6.1j. Donning Sackcloth***

Second Samuel 3:31–32 says that, following the death of Abner, “David said to Joab and all the people who were with him, ‘Tear your clothes and *gird on sackcloth* and lament before Abner” (emphasis mine). Futato states that, “Sackcloth is a rough cloth typically made from camel hair, goat hair, hemp, or flax. Wearing sackcloth would be like wearing burlap. The physical discomfort of the sackcloth made it an appropriate external symbol of the internal discomfort associated with mourning. Thus, the wearing of sackcloth was often associated with mourning.”<sup>206</sup>

---

<sup>204</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 268.

<sup>205</sup> Fisher, “Burial Customs,” 387.

<sup>206</sup> Futato, *Joy*, 96.

#### 4.6.1k. *Eating*

Also found within the context of the death of David's unnamed is his action of eating food (2 Sam 12:20). Such a countercultural response to death incited the following question from David's servants: "What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food!" (12:21). Bergen observes that, "David's servants were mystified by the king's actions and boldly asked him why he was 'acting this way' (v. 21). Whereas others rolled in the dust when a family member died, David had chosen to 'get up'; though others might fast (cf. Ezra 10:6), David ate."<sup>207</sup> The significance of David's countercultural expression can be heard in his optimistic response: "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.' But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (12:22–23).

In eating a meal, "he breaks his fast (cf. v.16) and eats ordinary food (as opposed to the food of mourners that he had earlier rejected . . . the verb 'ate' here is '*kl*, not *br*')."<sup>208</sup> K. A. Kitchen suggests that it was, "a breaking-fast meal [which] was possibly given to mourners."<sup>209</sup> Which indicates that secondary to regular food, there might have been a specific kind of food that was usually prepared and served to the immediate family members in mourning. Perhaps it was simply *bread* (לֶחֶם), but since it was served during a time of mourning, it might have assumed a different significance. In that case, it could then be referred to as the bread of mourners or bread of misfortune (Hos 9:4). If it

---

<sup>207</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 375.

<sup>208</sup> Youngblood, "1 & 2 Samuel," 948.

<sup>209</sup> Kitchen, "Burial and Mourning," 150.

were a mourning *meal*, however, it would have comprised the bread of mourners (2 Sam 3:35; Jer 16:7; Hos 9:4), otherwise the bread of men (Ezek 24:17, 22), in addition to the cup of consolation, which more than likely was wine (Jer 16:7; Hos 9:4).

Fisher notes, however, that any food preparation completed within the home of the deceased, was believed to be ceremonially unclean (Num 19:14, 15; Hos 9:4). The mourning meal would have been prepared outside of and subsequently brought into the home of the immediate family of the deceased. Those responsible for such preparations might be relatives, neighbors, and friends of the immediate family of the deceased. Ingestion of the mourning bread and imbibing of the consolation wine occurred, however, only after a period of fasting, which could last anywhere from one to several days (1 Sam 31:13; 2 Sam 1:12; 12:17, 20).<sup>210</sup>

By partaking of a meal immediately on the heels of his unnamed son's death, David moved swiftly from a state of mourning to a state of joy. And as noted by G. A. Anderson, "This joyous state meant that the mourner had to . . . eat and drink."<sup>211</sup> This lends credence to his hopeful words that he will go to his son. Once again, it is duly noted here that David's reactions of eating and drinking amidst grief, according to Bosworth, should be viewed, particularly in light of his faith in the LORD his God, as responses of resilience.<sup>212</sup> In other words, David exhibits a capacity to continue with his life more or less as normal in spite of his loss, which, culturally speaking, might be expected to result in significant dysfunction.<sup>213</sup> As such, "David not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative model to bereaved parents. The description of

---

<sup>210</sup> Fisher, "Burial, Burial Customs," 388.

<sup>211</sup> Anderson, *Time*, 50.

<sup>212</sup> Bosworth, "Faith and Resilience," 692–93.

<sup>213</sup> Bosworth, "Faith and Resilience," 692.

David's behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn."<sup>214</sup> Equally important is the fact that David's countercultural, yet resilient expression of eating a meal occurs within the context of David's DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16).

#### ***4.6.11. Erecting Gravestones (Monuments)***

Immediately after Jacob/Israel buried his beloved wife Rachel in Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem, he placed a stone or pillar over her grave (Gen 35:19–20; cf. 48:7). As noted by Hamilton, "To memorialize Rachel, Jacob raises a *pillar* over her grave. This is the third time Jacob has attempted to commemorate some event or person, either glorious (28:18; 35:14) or tragic (35:20), by raising a pillar."<sup>215</sup> It also appears as though "Some such identification of the burial place of Rachel was still known at the time of Samuel as can be seen from the fact that Samuel told Saul to look for the two men 'near Rachel's tomb' (1 Sam 10:2)."<sup>216</sup> First Samuel 10:2, however, presents a dilemma when it says that Rachel's tomb was located in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, which was near Ramah.<sup>217</sup> This would therefore situate Rachel's tomb near Bethel (in lieu of Bethlehem) and thus about 16 km north of Jerusalem.<sup>218</sup> Jeremiah 31:15 supplies further corroboration for this site. "Thus says the LORD, 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be

---

<sup>214</sup> Bosworth, "Understanding Grief," 119. See pages 123–26 for more details on this argument of David's grief trajectory of resilience.

<sup>215</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 386; emphasis original.

<sup>216</sup> Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 2:219. Noted here is the fact that Absalom also erected a pillar after his own name. However, this occurred during his lifetime the purpose of which was the preservation of his name on account of the fact that he had no son to preserve his name. The pillar is referred to as Absalom's Monument (2 Sam 18:18). If at the time of his death he had no son to preserve his name, then it implies that the expirations of his three sons (14:27) had already transpired, or that they were unwilling to perpetuate their father's name for reasons known only to them.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Scalise, "Rachel," 32.

<sup>218</sup> Cf. Jung, "Rachel's Tomb," 32.

comforted for her children, because they are no more.” On the basis of this, some scholars have moved to conclude that the words “that is, Bethlehem” in Gen 35:20 should be considered an incorrect gloss.<sup>219</sup>

As specified by Kurt G. Jung, “Although these references do not determine the original location of the grave, they do point out that the Church very early accepted the present tomb as authentic.”<sup>220</sup> Which thus suggests that in contradistinction to Bethel, more consideration should be given to Bethlehem as the correct locus of Rachel’s tomb.

The fact that the editor notes that this pillar of Rachel’s grave is still there to this day, lends itself to its easy identification. Which therefore suggests that perhaps an inscription of Rachel’s name would have been written on the pillar. If it is true that, “A pillar was usually a large stationary stone monument with a symbolic meaning,”<sup>221</sup> then the fact that stone was laid on top of the grave located in Bethlehem, seems to be an intentional part on the editor to signal the key role that such a place would play in the history of the Israelites.<sup>222</sup>

Yet Rachel was not the only one who had a gravestone or pillar erected on top of her grave. Second Kings 23:17 furnishes additional information concerning the mysterious man of God from Judah when it says that a monument was erected on top of his grave. Thus when Josiah and his men were undertaking a reformation throughout the land and came to the monument of the anonymous man of God from Judah, he said, “Let him alone; let no one disturb his bones” (23:18). What seems intriguing, however, is the

---

<sup>219</sup> Cf. Jung, “Rachel’s Tomb,” 32. The NT evangelist Matthew, however, favored Bethlehem as the burial place of Rachel (2:18).

<sup>220</sup> Jung, “Rachel’s Tomb,” 32.

<sup>221</sup> Omanson and Ellington, *Samuel*, 1012. Perhaps this stone is what might be referred to as a standing stele, which usually included an inscription of some sort.

<sup>222</sup> This is to say nothing about the NT Israelites, and thus the Christians, who would recognize Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah Jesus (Matt 2:1; Luke 2:4–7).

fact that while the men were familiar with the monument, Josiah was not. Which therefore begs the following question: Was there no inscription on the monument to assist Josiah in identifying the person whose bones laid buried below the monument?

Another leading OT Israelite who had a gravestone on top of his grave was Absalom. However, his was more than one stone. In 2 Sam 18:17 one reads that Joab and the people with him, “took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones.” Noted here, however, is the fact that during his lifetime, Absalom had taken and set up for himself a pillar, which is in the King’s Valley. The purpose of this pillar can be heard in his own voice: “I have no son to preserve my name. So he named the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom’s Monument to this day” (18:18).

But one should not forget the rebellious Achan who caused Israel much trouble for pilfering the devoted things belonging to the LORD, and as such, suffered death by stoning along with his entire family and all his belongings. Joshua 7:25–26a reads, “All Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. They raised a great heap of stones that stands to this day” (cf. Deut 21:18–21).

As noted by Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, “Burial markers preserved the memory of the righteous, the sinner, and men without offspring.”<sup>223</sup> Referencing all of the above names as well as the king of Ai, as well as the five kings of the southern coalition (Josh 8:29; 10:26–27), Bloch-Smith further contends that, “Monuments serving to perpetuate

---

<sup>223</sup> Bloch-Smith, “Burials,” 787.

the memory of men without descendants, literally to ‘memorialize the name,’ have been associated with death cult activities.”<sup>224</sup>

#### ***4.6.1m. Falling on and Kissing the Deceased***

Upon the death of his father (Gen 49:33), Joseph not only falls or throws himself upon Jacob/Israel, he also moves to kiss his father as well (50:1). Four chapters earlier, Jacob/Israel was told by God that, “I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes” (46:4). Thus the reader is meant to understand that at the time of Jacob/Israel’s death, his most loved son Joseph will be with him (37:3). It might also allude to “the custom of a near relative closing the eyes of the one who died with a fixed stare.”<sup>225</sup> Falling upon his father and kissing him were therefore expressions demonstrating “the great bond between Jacob and Joseph, which has been the mainspring of the story since chap. 37.”<sup>226</sup> In other words, such were expressions of affection assumed by loved ones. In fact, it was the oldest son or, failing him, the nearest of kin, in this case, Joseph, who would close the eyes of the dead, which appears to be “symbolic of the ‘sleep of death’ (Acts 7:60).”<sup>227</sup>

#### ***4.6.1n. Fasting***

Perhaps one of the most common auxiliary expressions to prayers of disorientation is the physical expression of *fasting*. Upon being reprimanded by the prophet Nathan, from whom David also learned of the looming death of the child to be born as a consequence

---

<sup>224</sup> Bloch-Smith, “Burials,” 787.

<sup>225</sup> Fisher, “Burial, Burial Customs,” 388.

<sup>226</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 2:488.

<sup>227</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 556.

of his illicit affair with Bathsheba, “David inquired of God for the child; and David *fasted* and went and lay all night on the ground” (2 Sam 12:16; emphasis mine). A few verses later, after David was made aware of the death of the child, we read that his servants approached him asking, “What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you *fasted* and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food” (12:21; emphasis mine). David retorted by asserting that, “While the child was *still* alive, I *fasted* and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ But now he has died; why should I *fast*? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (12:22–23; emphasis mine).<sup>228</sup> “There is to be heard a note of consolation in David’s words ‘I will go to him.’”<sup>229</sup>

Alongside David’s presentation of his DS1 lament prayer to the LORD (2 Sam 12:16), David fasted in “hopes that the Lord might change his mind . . . to spare his son’s life.”<sup>230</sup> Or as Bergen indicated, “David’s self-denial and self-abasement . . . may have been an effort to demonstrate to God that the child’s recovery was more important to him than either food, comfort, or pride.”<sup>231</sup>

James C. Vanderkam notes that, “Fasts and fasting receive fairly frequent mention in the Bible and could take the form of either personal or communal exercises. . . . Depriving oneself of food was regarded as a valuable religious exercise, one that many Jews appear to have practiced.”<sup>232</sup> While fasting is not widely attested in the ancient Near Eastern context, J. A. Scurlock further maintains that its actual

---

<sup>228</sup> While not discussed here, other examples of fasting within the context of OT prosaic prayers are recorded in 2 Chron 20:2–3; Ezra 8:23; Neh 9:1; Zech 7:3, 5; 8:19.

<sup>229</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

<sup>230</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 195.

<sup>231</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 374.

<sup>232</sup> Vanderkam, “Feasts and Fasts,” 446; cf. 1 Sam 1:7; 2 Sam 3:35.



confirmation is in association with the ritual of *mourning*.<sup>233</sup> Further to this, in his comments on fasting, John Muddiman states that it is “the deliberate, temporary abstention from food,”<sup>234</sup> which was connected with the “rites of mourning, personal penance, or the reinforcement of supplicatory prayer.”<sup>235</sup> V. Philips Long also notes that fasting was likewise associated with ritual rites, such as that prescribed for the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).<sup>236</sup>

#### ***4.6.10. Funeral Processioning***

Upon his death, there was a funeral procession for Abner, as is observed from the fact that David walked behind the bier and thereafter wept at the grave of Abner (2 Sam 3:31–32). “After preparation of the body it was carried on a bier (a simple frame with carrying poles) without being placed in a coffin.”<sup>237</sup> The fact that Abner was laid in a grave, suggests that, “The body was laid directly in a shallow grave dug in a burial plot.”<sup>238</sup> The bier, however, was not lowered into “the pit with the corpse.”<sup>239</sup>

The longest funeral procession, however, began in the land of Goshen, Egypt, and ended in the cave of the field at Machpelah before Mamre. Part of this funeral procession involved the seven days of mourning that were observed for Jacob/Israel at the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan River. Jacob/Israel was then buried alongside Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah (Gen 50:1–14; cf. 49:13). Arnold remarks that, Jacob/Israel’s funeral cortege “is the most elaborate funeral

---

<sup>233</sup> As cited in Long, “2 Samuel,” 414.

<sup>234</sup> Muddiman, “Fast, Fasting,” 773.

<sup>235</sup> Muddiman, “Fast, Fasting,” 774.

<sup>236</sup> Long, “2 Samuel,” 414.

<sup>237</sup> Fisher, “Burial, Burial Customs,” 388.

<sup>238</sup> Fisher, “Burial, Burial Customs,” 388.

<sup>239</sup> Fisher, “Burial, Burial Customs,” 388.

recorded in the Bible, parading the pomp and ceremony of Egypt itself, suitable for the patriarch whose life-story covers nearly half of Genesis.”<sup>240</sup>

#### **4.6.1p. Grieving/Mourning**

The first person who is said to have mourned in the Bible is Abraham, who mourns on the occasion of the death of his first wife Sarah (Gen 23:2).<sup>241</sup> When the daughter of Shua died, Judah mourned for his wife (38:12). At the death of the prophet Samuel, the entire nation of Israel gathered together and mourned (1 Sam 25:1; cf. 28:3). After receiving the news of Uriah’s death, Bathsheba mourned for her husband (2 Sam 11:26). David and the people with him also mourned for his son Absalom (19:1–2). It is also here that the only occurrence of the emotive response of grief—“The king is *grieved* for his son”—comes to the fore within the borders of Genesis and Esther. The prophet at Bethel mourned for the man of God from Judah (1 Kgs 13:29–30; emphasis mine). But it was the patriarch Jacob/Israel for whom a caravan (comprising of Joseph, all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt), paused for seven days at the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, lamented with a very great and sorrowful lamentation, and also mourned for Jacob/Israel (50:10). So great was this mourning that the Canaanites said, “This is a *grievous mourning* for the Egyptians,” which is why the place is called Abel-mizraim (50:11; emphasis mine).

---

<sup>240</sup> Arnold, *Genesis*, 386.

<sup>241</sup> Abraham’s second wife was Keturah (Gen 25:1). It is noted here that though not within the context of grief through death, Nehemiah mourns following his reception of the sad news that the wall of Jerusalem had been broken down and the gates had been burned with fire (1:1–11).

After hearing of the great distress and reproach that had fallen upon the remnant that had survived the captivity, and also about the broken wall of Jerusalem, as well as the gates being set on fire, Nehemiah not only presented to the LORD his DS1 lament prayer, but he also “sat down and wept and *mourned* for days” (1:4a; emphasis mine).

Within the OT Israelite culture, it was customary for close relatives and friends to visit the house of and mourn with the immediate family of the deceased (Job 2:11–13). During this time, it was also customary for professional mourners to be hired (Jer 9:17–18). King and Stager note that, “Mourning was part of the burial rite, a way of honoring the deceased. In addition to family members, professional mourners, generally women, were paid to lament during a funeral. . . . Mourning continued for a period of seven days.”<sup>242</sup> Further to this, “The emphasis on mourning resulted from the Hebrew appreciation of human life and health, which was considered one of God’s greatest gifts (Ps 91:16), and also from a view of human nature which affirmed embodied existence (Ps 16:9–11).”<sup>243</sup>

#### ***4.6.1q. Honoring (through Spice-Fire)***

Second Chronicle 32:33 reads: “So Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper section of the tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants honored him at his death.” What would such an honor have been comprised of? As specified by Bloch-Smith, “The honor certainly entailed lamenting (1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 22:18) and offering sacrifices (Isa 57:7; 2 Chron 16:14).”<sup>244</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> King and Stager, *Life*, 373.

<sup>243</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

<sup>244</sup> Bloch-Smith, “Burials,” 786.

According to 2 Chron 16:13–14, “Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign. They buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers’ art; and *they made a great fire for him*” (emphasis mine; cf. 1 Kgs 15:24). How interesting to read in 2 Chron 21:18–19, however, that although he was buried in the city of David, though not in the tombs of the kings, no fire was made in honor of Jehoram. “So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness. Now it came about in the course of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels came out because of his sickness and he died in great pain. And his people made no fire for him like the fire for his fathers.”

Rather than confuse this great fire with that of cremation or internment, however, according to Bloch-Smith, “The ‘very great fire’ probably resembled in appearance and intent the burnt-offering sacrifices of sweet savor presented to Yahweh (Gen 8:20–21; Lev 1:9, 17).”<sup>245</sup> Speaking to Zedekiah, the prophet Jeremiah said, “You will die in peace; and as *spices* were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they will burn *spices* for you; and they will lament for you, ‘Alas, lord!’” (34:5). On the basis of 2 Chron 16:14 and Jer 34:5, it is possible that the spices of various kinds blended by perfumers’ art, which Asa placed in his tomb prior to his death, were not the typical spices that were applied to a corpse. Rather, these spices were employed for the purpose of the great fire that was made in honor of Asa, as Ralph W. Klein’s avers: “A passage from Jeremiah [34:5] suggests that spices may have been the material that was

---

<sup>245</sup> Bloch-Smith, “Burials,” 786–87.

burned.”<sup>246</sup> As such, made of spices, the huge fire was not for cremation but rather, as the text says, in honor of Asa.

#### ***4.6.1r. Kneeling***

While presenting his DS4 penitential prayer to God, Ezra the priest and scribe says that, “I *fell on my knees*” (9:5; emphasis mine). While it is not unusual for humans to kneel before other humans (e.g., Gen 41:43), and before kings (e.g., 1 Kgs 19:18; Ps 95:7 [6]), Michael J. Brown submits that, “Kneeling frequently accompanies a request or supplication (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:54; 2 Chron 6:13).”<sup>247</sup> Brown further contends that, “Kneeling, or ‘bowing,’ or ‘bending the knee,’ (e.g., Isa 45:23; Phil 2:10), is a gesture of humility or reverence before a superior (Mark 10:17).”<sup>248</sup> Though he also affirms that the Israelites “prayed standing up,” Brown nevertheless maintains that, “whenever it was done, kneeling was meant to underscore the seriousness of the situation.”<sup>249</sup> Kneeling before God while uttering one’s prayer in the context of disorientation can therefore be understood as a symbolic act of humility and impotence, and at the same time, a deep reverence and worship to God who is sovereign over all, and who alone can supply all one’s needs.

#### ***4.6.1s. Offering Burnt Offerings and Peace Offerings***

Judges 20:26 says, “Then all the sons of Israel and all the people went up and came to Bethel and wept; thus they remained there before the LORD and fasted that day until

---

<sup>246</sup> Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 243.

<sup>247</sup> Brown, “Kneel,” 538.

<sup>248</sup> Brown, “Kneel,” 538.

<sup>249</sup> Brown, “Kneel,” 538.

evening. And they offered *burnt offerings* and *peace offerings* to the LORD” (emphasis mine). Such offerings accompanied the sons of Israel’s DS1 lament prayer. A burnt offering was a “Form of Israelite sacrifice in which a choice animal offered to make atonement for sin was completely consumed by fire.”<sup>250</sup> Another term for peace offering is that of fellowship offering. Commenting on both offerings, Daniel I. Block states that, “The reference to offerings is especially telling, suggesting the Israelites may have finally come to realize that their covenant relationship with Yahweh is in doubt.”<sup>251</sup>

#### ***4.6.1t. Offering Human Sacrifice***

Although human sacrifice was a ritual prohibited within Israel (Deut 12:31; 18:9–12; 2 Kgs 16:3; Ps 106:39 [38]; Jer 19:4–5), we read in Judg 11:39–40 that, “At the end of two months she returned to her father, who did to her according to the vow which he had made; and she had no relations with a man. Thus it became a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.” Which is to say that Jephthah fulfilled his vow by sacrificing his one and only daughter as a burnt offering to the LORD. As Barry G. Webb notes, “At the end of the two months she returns to her father, her submission complete. The time has come, and there is no word from heaven to stay Jephthah’s hand (cf. Gen 22). So now quickly, without judgment, the narrator tells the deed.” Which implies that,

Only the narrator refers to the vow directly, by its name, but even here there is reticence: not, ‘he offered her up as a burnt offering,’ but (literally), ‘he did ( *śh*) to her his vow which he vowed (*niḏrô* <sup>’ašer nāḏār</sup>.’ The one of course implies the others, and given the wording of the vow itself, we are clearly meant to understand that Jephthah literally sacrificed his daughter.<sup>252</sup>

---

<sup>250</sup> Elwell, “Burnt Offering,” 389.

<sup>251</sup> Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 560.

<sup>252</sup> Webb, *Judges*, 333

Further to this, Corrine L. Patton reasons that, “The tragic irony of the text lies in the fact that his vow leads him to sacrifice the only heir to the inheritance he has worked so shrewdly to regain, his daughter. . . . Jephthah has effectively disinherited himself.”<sup>253</sup>

Having said that, it should be accentuated here that the description of Jephthah’s brutal action appears to be used in the OT to characterize Jephthah, rather than to instruct other parents on the normativity of offering their child(ren) to the LORD as a living sacrifice. “Stories like the sacrifice of Jephthah’s daughter do not indicate that daughters were worthless, but in fact depend on the notion that they were cherished.”<sup>254</sup> Which explains why Jephthah “tore his clothes,” and also cried out, “Alas, my daughter!” (Judg 11:35)—both expressions of grief and love, after all, no one really grieves that which they do not love and cherish in some way or another.

Far from being the case then, such a ritual as that of sacrificing one’s daughter (or son) always remained categorically offensive and abominably grievous to the LORD and to His holy people throughout the OT. Which is why such a practice is never afforded a proper place within the OT Israelite cult. While the practice of offering one’s daughter and son in the fire was meant to appease pagan deities, the LORD God always related to His people with grace and compassion (Exod 34:6; Lam 3:22), appeasing Himself by means of the sacrifice of birds and animals (Lev 14:4; 16:15), and ultimately through His unique divine-human Son (Isa 53). After all, if each person bears the image of God (cf. Gen 1:26–27), why would the LORD God take delight in prescribing the destruction of His innocent and godly image-bearers (cf. Ps 116:16 [15]; Lam 3:32–33)?

---

<sup>253</sup> Patton, “Nameless Victim,” 41.

<sup>254</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 131.

This, however, does not detract from the brutal fact that Jephthah's human sacrifice of his one and only daughter as a burnt offering to God, was in fulfillment of his imprudent DS3 vow prayer to the LORD. Such a humanly savage and divinely abominable act, which not even the LORD proscribed, nevertheless transpired within the context of the disorientation of enemy warfare (Judg 11:30–31).

#### ***4.6.1u. Outstretching Hands***

Ezra 9:5 tells us that the priest and scribe “*stretched out my hands* to the LORD my God” (emphasis mine), while uttering his DS4 penitential prayer to God. The context of Ezra's disorientation expression was that of the postexilic people of Israel engaging once more in unlawful intermarriage (or more precisely, interreligious marriage) with the peoples of the land—the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. This physical posture of stretching or spreading out one's hands to the LORD or to heaven (cf. Exod 9:29; 1 Kgs 8:22; Isa 1:15), according to John. D. W. Watts, “describes prayer,” and in reference to Isa 1:15, “prayer in the particular sense of intercession.”<sup>255</sup> Going even further, Hans Wildberger avers that, “One prays by extending the hands, more specifically: the palms of the hands extended upwards, so that the deity would allow them to be filled.”<sup>256</sup> But one should ask: filled

---

<sup>255</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 32.

<sup>256</sup> Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 48. Duly noted here also is that, each time a plague occurred in Exod 7:14–12:36, Pharaoh would acknowledge his sin and thereafter request Moses to petition God for its removal, and each time Moses would oblige him. What is particularly interesting, however, is that on the occasion of the plague of hail, there is an absence of a Mosaic petition to God. Rather, we read thus: “So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and *spread out his hands to the LORD*; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth” (Exod 9:33; emphasis mine). Could this be Moses' Hebraic Sign Language to the LORD, especially in light of his speech impediment (cf. 4:10)? One only wonders. A further example of this gesture can be found in 17:8–16 in the battle at Rephidim between Amalek and Israel when Moses once more lifts up his hands. Whenever Moses lifted his hand, Israel gained the upper hand, while the lowering of his hands resulted in casualties. Interestingly there is no record of an articulated prayer of disorientation for deliverance from the lips of Moses, only that “his hands were steady until the sun set” (17:12).



with *what*? Ross contends that praying with palms upwards is “a focused prayer, that is, a metonymy of adjunct because the gesture is accompanied by prayer. . . . The picture is that of the suppliant standing in the courtyard of the sanctuary with *uplifted hands* facing the Holy of Holies, where the LORD dwelt among his people, crying out for deliverance.”<sup>257</sup> If this is the case, then Ezra is crying out with outstretched hands for the LORD’s deliverance in the form of forgiveness.

Interestingly enough, this expression is also observed in Pss 63:5 [4] and 134:3 [2] as a form of blessing to the LORD. In several cases throughout the OT (Job 11:13; Pss 28:3 [2]; 88:10 [9]; 143:7[6]; Lam 2:19), however, it appears within a context of disorientation, rather than of orientation or new orientation. Such an expression, as noted by Nancy deClaissé-Walford et al., “evokes the concept of God’s presence. . . . an incarnational act signifying, as it were, the absence of God when in need but also a desire and faith in the nearness of God.”<sup>258</sup> More specifically, this physical expression communicates a desire for God “to extend the power of divine presence in deliverance.”<sup>259</sup>

The expression of stretching or spreading out one’s hands to the LORD or heaven, specifically the extension of one’s palms turned upward, can therefore serve either as a symbolic action of supplication for divine presence in deliverance or for an offering of praise to the LORD. Such a physical expression in the company of prayers uttered amidst a context of disorientation, as in the case of Ezra 9:5, however, can thus be understood as symbolic or incarnational act signifying God’s absence and a desire to

---

<sup>257</sup> Ross, *Psalms*, 1:643; cf. 1 Tim 2:8.

<sup>258</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *Book of Psalms*, 276.

<sup>259</sup> deClaissé-Walford et al., *Book of Psalms*, 276.

experience His divine nearness or touch, that is, His divine deliverance in the form of His compassionate acceptance and forgiveness.

#### ***4.6.1v. Paralleling Two Outstretched Bodies***

This bodily expression occurs in the life of two familiar prophets: Elijah and the son of the Widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:17–24), and Elisha and the son of the Shunnamite woman (2 Kgs 4:18–37). In the case of Elijah, we are told that, while presenting his DS1 lament prayer to the LORD (17:20), “Then *he stretched himself upon the child three times*, and called to the LORD and said, ‘O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child’s life return to him’” (17:21; emphasis mine). Simon J. DeVries contends that, Elijah’s action upon the child “is not magic, but a typical symbolic act familiar to the prophetic movement in Israel. It is an ‘acted out’ way of saying, ‘Let his lifeless body be as my lively body,’ and the prayer that accompanies it fortifies this symbol.”<sup>260</sup> Paul R. House likewise avows that, “Elijah stretches himself on the child, thereby seemingly transferring life from himself to the sick one.”<sup>261</sup> Yet House also acknowledges that, “Regardless of the method used, the important fact is that God raises the body from the dead. The child revives because Yahweh hears Elijah’s plea, not because of the prophet’s prowess. Yahweh is God, not Baal, not Elijah.”<sup>262</sup>

In a similar fashion to that of Elijah, we are told that while bringing his DS1 lament prayer to the LORD (2 Kgs 4:33), Elisha mirrored the lad as “*he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on*

---

<sup>260</sup> DeVries, *1 Kings*, 222.

<sup>261</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 215.

<sup>262</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 215.

*his hands, and he stretched himself on him*” (4:34a; emphasis mine). At such physical expressions, “the flesh of the child became warm” (4:34b). Thereafter, Elisha “returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and *stretched himself on him*; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes” (4:35; emphasis mine). Volkmar Fritz remarks that, “Elisha achieves the raising of the boy through prayer and body contact. The aspect of prayer indicates that it is Yahweh alone, as the Lord of creation, who can give back life. The body contact confirms the share that the prophet has in this singular event: the life force of Elisha is passed on to the dead boy through his touch.”<sup>263</sup>

Alternatively stated, “Elisha’s work here proves the same points Elijah’s healing demonstrated: the Lord controls death, and the Lord cares for the needy and hurting. This scene also shows that prophets not only are preachers of sin and repentance; they also are agents of God’s healing mercy and kind compassion.”<sup>264</sup> Small wonder that T. R. Hobbs observes that, “What is important in the literary presentation of such incidents is not the miracle-working power attributed to Elisha, since the ability to perform miracles is not necessarily a sign of the power of God (cf. Exod 7:8–13).”<sup>265</sup> This is made all the more obvious as one witnesses “the narrator revealing a weakness on the part of Elisha during the performance of his most spectacular miracle, the raising of the Shunemite’s son. Only on the third attempt is the miracle successful.”<sup>266</sup> Rather than the miracle-working power of the prophet, “What is of great importance in these stories is the motivation of the miracle worker. Are the miracles an attempt at self-aggrandizement

---

<sup>263</sup> Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 252.

<sup>264</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 268.

<sup>265</sup> Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 54.

<sup>266</sup> Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 54.

or do they have another purpose? In the case of Elisha in chap. 4, the motivation is the desire to respond to pressing human needs. The motivation is compassion.”<sup>267</sup>

Motivated by the compassion of both prophets, such physical expressions communicated by Elijah and Elisha before the unrivaled creator God of life in the context of the death of a child, were prophetic symbolic actions of transferring of life from the living prophet to the dead child. But as noted above, such somatic and symbolic actions are not what necessarily effected the revivification of life, but rather, they served as an auxiliary expression before God. The primary expression communicated to God, which effected the revivification of each child’s life was that of the prophets’ DS1 lament prayer for the life of both lads to be restored. In both cases, however, each prayer was heard and answered as a means of demonstrating that it was the LORD who alone was not only compassionate to both Israelites and non-Israelites, but even more, that the LORD alone was the creator and reviver of life.

#### ***4.6.1w. Placing in Coffin***

Of all the Israelites who died whether within or without the promised land, it appears as though only Joseph the son of Jacob was placed in a coffin (אָרוֹן; Gen 50:26). Payne observes that, “Coffins were not employed in ancient Israel. The only one mentioned in the Bible is the sarcophagus (Heb. *’ārôn*, ‘box, chest,’ Gen. 50:26) in which the embalmed body of Joseph was preserved in Egypt.”<sup>268</sup>

---

<sup>267</sup> Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 54.

<sup>268</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 557.

#### ***4.6.1x. Plucking Hair from Beard and Head***

In the book that bears his name eponymously, Ezra the priest, receives word from the princes concerning the abominations of the people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites who once again fail to separate themselves from the peoples of the lands. Thereafter, Ezra states that, “I tore my garment and my robe, and *pulled some of the hair from my head and beard*, and sat down appalled” (9:3; emphasis mine), which is almost immediately met with Ezra’s penitential prayer, otherwise referred to as a DS4 penitential prayer (9:5–15; cf. Neh 13:25). Williamson avers that, “Ezra’s response should not be regarded as an expression of personal grief but rather as an attempt to act representatively on behalf of all the people.”<sup>269</sup> Ezra’s act of pulling out his own hair appears to be unique in the Bible for elsewhere the head is shaved (Job 1:20; Ezek 7:18; Amos 8:10). For a similar event, when confronted with the same issue, Nehemiah, instead of pulling out his own hair, plucked out the hair of the lawbreakers (Neh 13:25).

#### ***4.6.1y. Pouring Dirt on Oneself***

The donning of sackcloth is usually completed in combination with that of pouring dirt upon oneself. Within the context of his DS4 penitential prayer, Neh 9:1 says, “Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month [seventh] the sons of Israel assembled with fasting, in sackcloth and *with dirt upon them*” (emphasis mine). Martin H. Manser explains that, “the burnt ashes of wood was a sign of mourning for personal or national disaster, as a sign of repentance, and at times of prayer for deliverance.”<sup>270</sup>

---

<sup>269</sup> Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 132.

<sup>270</sup> Manser, “Sackcloth and Ashes,” 6742.

#### 4.6.1z. *Prostrating Oneself*

Within the context of his DS2 imprecatory prayer, and subsequent to the LORD's favorable response through the Levite Jahaziel, "Jehoshaphat *bowed his head with this face to the ground*, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem *fell down before the LORD, worshipping the LORD*" (2 Chron 20:18; emphasis mine). Amidst his DS4 penitential prayer to the LORD, "Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and *prostrating* himself before the house of God" (10:1; emphasis mine). And upon learning of the death of his son Amnon at the avenging hands of Absalom for violating Tamar his sister (2 Sam 13:1–29, 32), David not only "tore his clothes," he also "lay on the ground" (13:31).

Schultz and Knapp aver that yet "Another intensive manner of showing deep reverence or of appealing to a superior was by prostrating oneself, i.e., lying flat on the ground or kneeling with one's face and hands to the ground."<sup>271</sup> Culling support from such texts as Gen 17:3, 17; Num 16:45; 20:6; Josh 7:6; 1 Sam 20:41; and 25:23, Schultz and Knapp contend that, "Abject subjection was frequently involved and could be based either on genuine respect or on a fear of judgment."<sup>272</sup>

It is observed in Gen 17:17, however, that in falling on his face before God, Abram does *not* show abject subjection, genuine respect, or fear of judgment, for the text reads, "Then Abram *fell on his face and laughed*, and said, 'Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child*?' (emphasis mine). According to Hamilton,

---

<sup>271</sup> Schultz and Knapp, "Postures; Attitudes," 912.

<sup>272</sup> Schultz and Knapp, "Postures; Attitudes," 912; other intensive manners include bowing, kneeling, and standing erect with head bowed (911–12).

Perhaps v. 17 means that *Abraham fell over laughing about God's most recent proposition*. Abraham is no expert on gynecology, but he knows that he and his wife are well beyond the parenting years. Much like Moses later on, Abraham believes that his circumstances limit the promises of God. God is ignoring some fundamental problems that in effect make his promises stillborn. So thinks Abraham. That Abraham had already fathered a child as recently as fourteen years ago (16:16) seems not to affect his thinking (emphasis mine).<sup>273</sup>

Abram therefore does not fall on his face with abject reverence for the LORD. Rather, Abram communicates little to no faith in God's promise of being capable of fathering a son at the age of one hundred years witnessed in his *laughter* (cf. 18:10–15). God's promise to Abram is thus one that he doubtless finds amusing.

To be fair to Schultz and Knapp, however, falling on one's face before God in Num 16:45 is an act based on genuine respect and fear of divine judgment, though not for Moses and Aaron, but rather those opposed to them, i.e., all the congregation of the sons of Israel who grumbled against them (16:41). Which is why, on the instruction of Moses, Aaron makes expeditious atonement for the malcontents since the LORD's wrath had already commenced in the form of a plague (16:46–50; cf. 20:6).

In the context of disorientation, the posture of falling prostrate or on one's face before the LORD, which usually accompanies prayers of disorientation uttered to God, can thus be understood as both a deep reverence for God and also a fear of His wrath. In the context of orientation, as in Gen 17:17, however, such an expression displays an absence of reverence for or faith in God. Generally speaking, however, prostrating oneself or laying on the ground before God, is to be considered a component of the "classic expression of grief and distress (cf. Josh 7:6; 2 Sam 12:16),"<sup>274</sup> as mentioned by Bergen.

---

<sup>273</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 477.

<sup>274</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 385.

#### 4.6.1aa. *Removing Sandals*

In his encounter of the LORD from the burning-yet-unconsumed bush, we read in Exod 3:5–6, “Then He said, ‘Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.’ He also said, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.”

Given the textual evidence in favor of it, Moses’ removal of his sandals is owing to the fact that the place whereupon he stands is holy ground. “The idea of explicitly sacred (Heb. *kadosh*) space is encountered here for the first time. No such concept exists in Genesis, which features only sacred time—the Sabbath.”<sup>275</sup> Nahum M. Sarna further observes that, “The pagan mythological notion that certain areas are inherently holy does not exist in the Bible. It is solely the theophany that temporarily imparts sanctity to the site, rendering it inaccessible to man.”<sup>276</sup> Of further import here is the fact that, “In the ancient Near East, removal of footwear, here probably sandals of papyrus or leather, was a sign of respect and displayed an attitude of humility.”<sup>277</sup> What is more, “Priests officiated barefoot in the sanctuary; and to this day they remove their footwear before pronouncing the priestly benediction in the synagogue service.”<sup>278</sup>

That Moses removes his sandals in the presence of his holy God even as he stood on holy ground is an expression signifying respect and humility on his part should not be surprising in light of Num 12:3, which states, “Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.” Of further import here is the fact

---

<sup>275</sup> Sarna, *Exodus*, 15.

<sup>276</sup> Sarna, *Exodus*, 15.

<sup>277</sup> Sarna, *Exodus*, 15.

<sup>278</sup> Sarna, *Exodus*, 15; cf. Josh 5:15. It is worth mentioning here that with regard to the priestly garments, no prescription of a sandal or footwear is observed (Exod 28, 39; Lev 8).



that such an expression as that of removing one's sandals appears in the context of Moses' DS1 lament prayer (Exod 3:11).

#### ***4.6.1ab. Rising from the Ground***

In 2 Sam 12:20, we are told that, following the death of his unnamed son, “*David arose from the ground*” (emphasis mine). This, however, is at dissidence with normal cultural mourning practices, which is observed in David's servants' question, “What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food!” (12:21). David then offered the following optimistic response: “While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (12:22–23). “There is to be heard a note of consolation in David's words ‘I will go to him.’”<sup>279</sup>

Bergen remarks that, “Whereas others rolled in the dust when a family member died, David had chosen to ‘get up.’”<sup>280</sup> From the perspective of Evans, “The normal seven days of mourning rituals that David might have expected to take part in had been completed before the child died. Thus David's cheerfulness is not as heartless as it might seem to contemporary readers.”<sup>281</sup> In spite of that, A. A. Anderson contends that, “It is equally unlikely that David mourned for the child proleptically.”<sup>282</sup>

Rising from the ground, rather than sitting *shiva*, David exhibits a grief trajectory of resilience. Which is to say that David exhibits a capacity to continue with his life

---

<sup>279</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

<sup>280</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

<sup>281</sup> Evans, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 190.

<sup>282</sup> Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 164.

more or less as normal in spite of his loss, when culturally speaking, he might have been expected to have a significant dysfunction.<sup>283</sup> This resilient reaction of rising from the ground comes primarily as a result of his faith in the LORD his God.<sup>284</sup> On account of this, Bosworth suggests that, “David not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative model to bereaved parents. The description of David’s behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn.”<sup>285</sup> What is of import, however, is the fact that David’s rather unconventional expression of rising from the ground, in lieu of lying on it, is located within the context of his DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16).

***4.6.1ac. Sacrificing through Supernatural Fire (Building Altar, Making Trench, Arranging Wood, Cutting Ox, Laying Ox on Wood)***

In his duel with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, “Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob . . . [and] with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he *made a trench* around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. Then he *arranged the wood* and *cut the ox* in pieces and *laid it on the wood*” (1 Kgs 18:30–34; emphasis mine). Making a trench, which would later be filled with water, arranging the wood, cutting the ox, and placing the ox on the wood, are secondary to that of the primary act of repairing or rebuilding the LORD’s altar, since the latter is done in the name of the LORD (cf. Judg 21:4). This occurs within the context of Elijah’s DS1 lament prayer.

---

<sup>283</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692.

<sup>284</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692–93.

<sup>285</sup> Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119. For more details on David’s grief trajectory of resilience, see pages 123–26 above.

Commenting on Elijah's act of rebuilding the altar for the purpose of sacrificing through supernatural fire, Iain W. Provan points out that, "Strictly speaking, this represents the restoration of a 'high place'; and the authors of Kings are generally opposed to worship at such local shrines. They are even more opposed to idolatry, however, and it is unlikely that in a context where Israel has given itself over to idolatry, they intend us to think critically of Elijah for acting thus." Which implies that, "Centralization of worship of the LORD is ideal (cf. Deut 12), but any worship of the LORD is better than worship of Baal. And the LORD removes the altar, of course, after it has served its purpose (v. 38)!"

Bruce Chilton further observes that, "Opposition to foreign cults and to degradations of Israel's worship especially concerns the early prophets."<sup>286</sup> It therefore comes as no surprise to read Chilton's further remarks that, "Elijah symbolizes their confrontational stance in the context of Mount Carmel, where by supernatural means his sacrifice on the altar to Yahweh he repairs—carefully using the twelve stones that represent Israel (1 Kgs 18:30–32), prevails over the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:17–40)."<sup>287</sup> Elijah's opposition to foreign cults and degradations of Israel's worship is further observed when Elijah "slays the prophets of Baal, much as Moses dealt with the idolaters of his time."<sup>288</sup> In the end, the purpose of this altar restoration is that of a supernatural animal sacrifice by fire from heaven in order to *prove* that, rather than Baal, it was indeed, "The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God" (18:39).

---

<sup>286</sup> Chilton, "Altar," 116.

<sup>287</sup> Chilton, "Altar," 116.

<sup>288</sup> Chilton, "Altar," 116.

#### ***4.6.1ad. Separation from Foreigners***

Nehemiah 9:2 reads thus: “The descendants of Israel *separated themselves from all foreigners*, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers” (emphasis mine; cf. Ezra 10:3, 18–44). This occurred within the context of their DS4 penitential prayer. The issue at hand is that of mixed or intermarriage, or more precisely, interreligious marriages. While mixed marriages were not necessarily prohibited (cf. Gen 41:45; Num 12:1; Ruth 4:13), the peril of apostasy, nevertheless, lurked in close proximity (cf. 1 Kgs 11:1–3). Yamauchi insists that, “Though the actions of Ezra and later of Nehemiah may strike some readers as harsh, they were more than racial or cultural measures and were necessary to preserve the spiritual heritage of Israel.” Yamauchi further avers that, “Both from the principle and from exceptions to the rule, warnings against intermarriage were clearly concerned not so much about racial miscegenation as about spiritual adulteration.”<sup>289</sup> Which is another way of saying that the LORD’s people are to be holy even as He is holy (Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:7).

#### ***4.6.1ae. Shedding Tears***

Only one locale contained the expression of shedding tears within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, and that in 2 Kgs 20:5. In this passage of Scripture, the prophet Isaiah is told by the LORD to return to Hezekiah, the leader of His people, and say to him, “Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your *tears*; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD’” (emphasis mine). Peterman and Schmutzer speak of positive tears as those

---

<sup>289</sup> Yamauchi, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 420.

“tears that should be cried. That is, they are godly; they reflect love of people, grief over loss, and hatred of sin.”<sup>290</sup> However, they also make note of the incongruity of such positive tears in averring that, “Ironically, positive tears may have a variety of negative causes. By negative we mean weeping that is incited by sin in its various manifestations: infidelity, betrayal, loss of loved ones through death, sexual abuse, social fragmentation, prejudice. Such tears may arise from abuse of power, arrogance, the crippling effects of disease or war, substance abuse, lack of love, violence, or deception.”<sup>291</sup> In the case of Hezekiah, it was his tears, together with his DS1 lament prayer, that moved God’s compassionate heart, thus occasioning Hezekiah’s healing.

#### ***4.6.1af. Sitting***

The physical expression of sitting can occur within the context of a DS1 lament prayer (Gen 21:16; 1 Kgs 19:4), and also in silence (e.g., Job 2:13; Judg 20:26; Ezra 9:3; Neh 1:4). In fact, T. M. Gregory asserts that, “sitting in silence is a trait associated with mourning in the OT (Judg 20:26; 2 Sam 12:16).”<sup>292</sup> Further to this, Judah J. Slotki comments that, “The custom of mourners being seated (cf. Ps 137:1; Job 2:13) has survived among Jews, the bereaved sitting on low stools during the seven days of mourning.”<sup>293</sup> Xuan H.T. Pham also points out that, “The initial loud weeping and wailing, accompanied by visible ritual gestures such as tearing clothes, strewing dirt on the head, gashing the body, and so on, was usually followed by a period of stunned

---

<sup>290</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Between*, 164.

<sup>291</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Between*, 165.

<sup>292</sup> Gregory, “Mourning,” 304.

<sup>293</sup> Slotki, *Nehemiah*, 183.

silence.”<sup>294</sup> The location for such a silent sitting can either be on an ash heap or on the ground (Job 2:13; Isa 47:1; Jon 3:6).<sup>295</sup>

#### ***4.6.1ag. Spreading Out Letter***

Threatening Hezekiah and the people of Judah, Sennacherib sent a letter to him via his messengers. Second Kings 19:14 reads thus: “Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and *spread it out* before the LORD” (emphasis mine). This action occurs within the context of Hezekiah’s DS1 lament prayer (19:15–19). Hobbs observes that, “This is the first mention of letters in the diplomatic activity of this and the previous chapter.”<sup>296</sup> What is more, “A letter would be the normal means of such discourse, and it would certainly reinforce the spoken words of the Assyrian delegation. Hezekiah’s attitude is quite consistent. Having sought out the prophet and requested prayer, he is faced with an additional setback, so he enters the temple himself to pray.”<sup>297</sup> Commenting on this expression, John N. Oswalt remarks that, “it is not an attempt to inform God of something he does not already know but an expression of shock and outrage.”<sup>298</sup> In other words, “Hezekiah does not merely wish to tell God about the offending document; he places it before him in its entirety, as if to say, ‘Surely *this* cannot be left unanswered.’”<sup>299</sup> Rather than patiently waiting for Isaiah to intercede before the LORD on his behalf, Hezekiah’s bold action of entering into the temple and spreading out

---

<sup>294</sup> Pham, *Mourning*, 29.

<sup>295</sup> Pham, *Mourning*, 28.

<sup>296</sup> Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 277.

<sup>297</sup> Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 277.

<sup>298</sup> Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 653.

<sup>299</sup> Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 653.

Sennacherib's letter before the LORD is therefore to be understood as an expression of absolute urgency demanding divine intervention and deliverance. The name of the LORD is at stake. To wait any longer is to allow for the flourishing of Sennacherib's self-aggrandizements at the expense of the LORD's honor. Such arrogance, however, must cease. Therefore, the LORD must act swiftly to reclaim the fame of His glorious name. Hezekiah therefore spares no time, but urgently pleads with the LORD to keep the content of Sennacherib's disrespectful letter spread out before Him from becoming a devastating reality.

#### ***4.6.1ah. Spreading Sackcloth***

An interesting take on the use of sackcloth, however, was staged by Rizpah the daughter of Aiah. Rizpah spread sackcloth for herself on a rock even as she mourned the deaths of her two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth (2 Sam 21:10). While Rizpah does not don sackcloth as part of her mourning clothes, according to Larry G. Herr, Rizpah was publicizing her sorrow, and owing to the fact that she was Saul's concubine, Rizpah was protesting the lack of a proper burial for Saul.<sup>300</sup> What Herr fails to acknowledge here, however, is the proper burial for *Rizpah's two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth*. By allowing neither the birds of the sky to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night, seems to suggest that Rizpah's protest was more for a proper burial of the bodies she was covering by means of the sackcloth, primarily her two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and secondarily, the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul (21:10). This is all the more important when we consider that, as Payne notes, "For a corpse to

---

<sup>300</sup> Herr, "Sackcloth," 256.

remain unburied or to be exhumed subsequent to burial, and thus become food for beasts of prey, was the climax of indignity or judgment.”<sup>301</sup>

That Rizpah was thus protesting a proper burial primarily for her two sons can be heard in the following statement from John H. Walton: “After the execution, which took place at the beginning of the barley harvest, Rizpah stood guard over the exposed corpses, chasing away scavengers, until the rain fell. She thus procured for *her sons*, as provided for by David, an honorable burial along with the recovered bones of Saul and Jonathan.”<sup>302</sup> Owing to Rizpah’s sackcloth protest, dignity was thus restored to the corpses of Saul’s sons and grandsons, even and especially the two sons of Rizpah.

#### ***4.6.1ai. Standing***

Prayers in the sanctuary of the LORD in the context of disorientation can be uttered to God in a standing posture. While in the house of the LORD at Shiloh, 1 Sam 1:26 tells the reader that Hannah stood. Conversing with Eli the priest, “She said, ‘Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who *stood* here beside you, praying to the LORD’” (emphasis mine). In the verses that follow, Hannah explains to Eli that, “For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD.’ And he worshiped the LORD there” (1:27–28).

Within the ancient world, it appears to have been commonplace to pray while standing. At the dedication of the temple, “Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD,” and prayed to the LORD, God of Israel (1 Kgs 8:22). Within a context of

---

<sup>301</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 556.

<sup>302</sup> Walton, “Rizpah,” 199; emphasis mine.



disorientation, however, one does not only read that, “The descendants of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and *stood* and confessed their sin and the iniquities of their fathers,” but also that, “Now on the Levites’ platform *stood* Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bani and Chenani, and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God” (Neh 9:1–4; emphasis mine). When the psalmist David asks, “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may *stand* in His holy place?” (Ps 24:4 [3]; emphasis mine), John Goldingay remarks that, “Talk of standing rather than bowing down suggests that the questioners come not simply to worship but also to make request. They take the posture a suppliant takes before a king.”<sup>303</sup> Observing that the posture of standing before the LORD amidst a context of disorientation suggests supplication, it is hardly surprising that Hannah’s standing posture occurs within the context of her DS3 vow prayer.

#### ***4.6.1aj. Tearing Clothes***

After returning home from his victorious battle against the sons of Ammon, a victory granted by God in response to his DS3 vow prayer of sacrificing as a burnt offering whatever comes out of the doors of his house to meet him upon his return, Judg 11:35 says, “When he saw her [his daughter] he *tore his clothes*” (emphasis mine). A similar physical expression is also recorded in Josh 7. We read in v. 5 that, “the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men [Israelites] and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent so that the hearts of the people melted and became as water.” This is followed by, “Then Joshua *tore his clothes* and fell on the

---

<sup>303</sup> Goldingay, *Psalms 1–41*, 358.

earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads” (7:6; emphasis mine).<sup>304</sup> Such an expression surfaces in the company of Joshua’s DS1 lament prayer.

Just prior to his DS1 lament prayer, 2 Kgs 19:1 says that, “And when King Hezekiah heard *it* [the ominous news of Sennacherib threat against Hezekiah and the people of Judah], “he *tore his clothes*, covered himself, with sackcloth and entered the house of the LORD” (emphasis mine). A few chapters later, when the book of the law was found and read to him, Josiah feared that the wrath of the LORD might burn against him and the people of Judah on account of the sin of their fathers’ sin. In 22:11, we read that, “When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he *tore his clothes*” (emphasis mine). Such an expression occurred within the context of Josiah’s DS1 lament prayer. Approaching the LORD with his DS4 penitential prayer after hearing of abomination of intermarriage among the people of Israel and the priests and the Levites, Ezra 9:3 says, “When I heard this matter, I *tore my garment and my robe*, and pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and sat down appalled” (emphasis mine).

Commenting on this physical expression, R. Dennis Cole remarks that, “Tearing one’s clothes was a form of self-debasing lament in the Old Testament.”<sup>305</sup> What is more, the tearing of one’s clothes “was widely practiced in the ancient Near East in mourning for the dead, in expressing sorrow over disease or plague, or in prefacing a

---

<sup>304</sup> It is noteworthy nonetheless to read the words of the prophet Joel as he admonished the people of Israel saying, “And rend your heart and not your garments” (2:13), particularly since the LORD is concerned about the circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6; cf. Jer 24:7; Ezek 11:19; 36:26; Ps 51:10; Rom 2:25–29). Other occurrences of the physical expression of rending of one’s clothes can be found in Gen 37:29, 34; 44:13; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 3:31; 2 Sam 15:32; 2 Kgs 18:37; Isa 36:22; Jer 41:5. Matthew 26:65 records that upon hearing Jesus’ blasphemous words, the high priest rent his garment.

<sup>305</sup> Cole, “Numbers,” 362.

prophetic lament of judgment against an individual or nation.”<sup>306</sup> Ezra is therefore deeply grieved over this sacrilegious act of intermarriage that he tears “not only his outer cloak, but also his inner garment, or tunic to indicate the intensity of his actions.”<sup>307</sup>

#### ***4.6.1ak. Transporting Cadaver for Burial***

According to Gen 50:5, Jacob/Israel requested that Joseph bury him in his grave, which he had dug for himself in the land of Canaan. So, after seventy days of weeping in Egypt, Jacob/Israel’s embalmed body was transported from Egypt to the land of Canaan. His final resting place was that of the cave of the field of Macpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had purchased along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite (50:13). In so doing, “The sons carry out their father’s last wish. . . . Thus Jacob leaves one part of his family and joins another part of his family.”<sup>308</sup>

Although his death occurred in Egypt as his father, Joseph’s bones were later transported by the children of Israel, and buried at Shechem, in the piece of ground that Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money (Josh 24:32). This was in keeping with his final request to his brothers, i.e., burying him in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 50:24, 25).

Hubbard comments, “Strikingly, through object-first word order the Hebrew throws the syntactical spotlight on the bones, not the burial. The generations between Jacob and the first settlers were buried either in Egypt or in the wilderness, so to highlight the bones underscores their symbolic significance.”<sup>309</sup> This means that, “They tangibly link the

---

<sup>306</sup> Cole, “Numbers,” 362. Within a context of mourning for the dead, see 2 Sam 3:31–32 (Abner’s death); 13:31 (Ammon’s death);

<sup>307</sup> Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 133.

<sup>308</sup> Hamilton, *Genesis 18–50*, 698.

<sup>309</sup> Hubbard, *Joshua*, 594.

Israelite generation that realized the long-awaited promise of land with the patriarchal generations who first received it.”<sup>310</sup> In other words, “The box of long-carried and now-buried bones tucked into the earth symbolizes the long epic journey from Genesis to Joshua. Implicitly, those bones echo the last sound of one of the book’s central themes, God’s fulfillment to the patriarchs.”<sup>311</sup> Indeed, “Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass” (Josh 21:45).

Leviticus 10:1 reads, “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them.” Owing to the holiness of God (10:3), it is not surprising to read that, “And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD” (10:2). Beckoning Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron’s uncle Uzziel, the bodies of Nadab and Abihu (10:4), were transported from the altar to outside the camp where they were presumably buried, even while still in their tunics (Lev 10:5). Wenham points out that, “We should have expected the brothers of Nadab and Abihu to have buried them; instead the task is delegated to Aaron’s cousins Mishael and Elzaphan.”<sup>312</sup> Wenham also observes that, “Their bodies are unclean and must be removed from the holy area into the realm of the unclean outside the camp (cf. 4:12, 21, etc.). They are treated like the useless parts of the sacrificial animals.”<sup>313</sup> Even their tunics, “The garments that symbolized their high calling (8:13), were now used as shrouds for their ignominious burial.”<sup>314</sup>

---

<sup>310</sup> Hubbard, *Joshua*, 594.

<sup>311</sup> Hubbard, *Joshua*, 594.

<sup>312</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 157.

<sup>313</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 158.

<sup>314</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 158.

Subsequent to his death in the temple of Dagon of Philistia, Samson's brothers and all his father's household came down, took him, transported him, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father (Judg 16:30–31). Reading 2 Sam 21:1–14, we learn that David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead. His immediate reason for doing this is owing to the fact that the men of Jabesh-gilead had stolen the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the open square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines struck down Saul in Gilboa. So David brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there, and gathered the bones of those who had been hanged in Gibeah, namely, Rizpah's two sons (Armoni and Mephibosheth), and also the five unnamed sons of Merab the daughter of Saul). After being transported from Jabesh-gilead and Gibeah of Saul, their bones were finally buried properly in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the grave of Kish the father of Saul.

After the man of God from Judah was killed by a lion, the old prophet of Bethel placed the man of God on his donkey, brought him back to Bethel, and buried him in his grave (1 Kgs 13:29–31). Ahab's body was transported from Ramoth-gilead to Samaria for burial (1 Kgs 22:37).<sup>315</sup> Amaziah's body had to be transported on horses from Lachish to Jerusalem for burial (2 Kgs 14:20–22). And even Josiah's lifeless body was transported in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem for burial in his own tomb (23:30).

---

<sup>315</sup> The next verse reads: "They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (now the harlots bathed themselves *there*), according to the word of the LORD which He spoke" (1 Kgs 22:38). The word of the LORD through the prophet Elijah the Tishbite was thus: "Have you murdered and taken possession? . . . In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours" (21:19). Through Jezebel's wicked guile, her husband Ahab indirectly murdered Naboth and took possession of his family vineyard (21:1–16).

#### **4.6.1al. Turning Face to the Wall**

When Hezekiah became mortally ill, Isaiah the prophet sent word to him, saying, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live’” (2 Kgs 20:1). Hezekiah, however, “turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD” (20:2). That he turns his face to the wall and prays to the LORD might be a reflection of Hezekiah’s “refusal to accept this verdict as final.”<sup>316</sup> Rather than simply acquiesce to Isaiah’s prophetic word, Hezekiah “does what he has done before when in jeopardy—he prays. Just as in the previous episodes, he asks the Lord to change what seems to be a logical sequence of events. This time, though, his petition also includes a change in what is, apparently, what God intends to do.”<sup>317</sup> One can thus aver that in turning his face to the wall, “Hezekiah turns to God.”<sup>318</sup> In so doing, Hezekiah’s physical expression occurs within the context of his DSI lament prayer.

#### **4.6.1am. Washing**

Being made aware of the death of his son, David washed himself (12:20). Such an expression, however, runs counter to cultural norms. For this reason, David’s servants inquire, “What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food!” (12:21). David then proffered the following optimistic response: “While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will

---

<sup>316</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 373.

<sup>317</sup> House, *1, 2 Kings*, 373.

<sup>318</sup> Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings*, 604.

not return to me” (12:22–23). “There is to be heard a note of consolation in David’s words ‘I will go to him.’”<sup>319</sup>

That David washes himself, however, countercultural that may have been at the time, indicates that he had moved from a state of mourning to a state of joy. Anderson’s words confirm this understanding: “This joyous state meant that the mourner had to bathe.”<sup>320</sup> The fact that David was able to move so quickly from a state of mourning to a state of joy implies that David had no contact with his son. Otherwise, it would have been compulsory for David to quarantine himself for seven days (Num 19:11), and would have only been allowed to wash with water so as to purify himself on the third and on the seventh day, and then he would have been clean, and allowed to re-enter society as a normal person, rather than as a mourner (19:12).

That David washed himself or bathed signifies that David’s grief trajectory is one of resilience. Which is to say that while he was expected to remain in mourning for another seven days, or even have significant dysfunction, David exhibits a capacity to continue with his life more or less as normal in spite of the loss of his unnamed son.<sup>321</sup> Such resilience, while undergirded by external circumstances, such as the cause of death, David’s large family, and his place in an ancient society with high infant mortality, is primarily grounded in his intrinsic circumstances, such as his sense of personal agency and more particularly, his faith in the LORD his God.<sup>322</sup> Owing to this, Bosworth suggests that, “David not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative

---

<sup>319</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

<sup>320</sup> Anderson, *Time*, 50.

<sup>321</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 692.

<sup>322</sup> Bosworth, “Faith and Resilience,” 700.

model to bereaved parents. The description of David's behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn."<sup>323</sup>

Having said that, it is equally important to observe that David's untraditional, yet resilient expression of washing himself amidst the loss of his unnamed son appears alongside David's DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16).

#### ***4.6.1an. Worshiping God***

Having been made aware of the sad news of the death of his son, David "came into the house of the LORD and *worshipped*" (2 Sam 12:20; emphasis mine). David's physical expression of entering the house of the LORD for the purpose of worshiping Him amidst the loss of his unnamed son appears alongside David's DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16). Lacking in conformity to cultural mourning practices, such an expression caught the attention of his servants who probed him, saying, "What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food!" (12:21). In other words, it would have been normal mourning practice for David to continue sitting *shiva*, fasting, weeping, and wearing his mourning clothes (perhaps sackcloth) during his time of grief following the death of his stillborn son who goes unnamed in the biblical text. Proffering the significance for his countercultural expression, David avows that, "While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.' But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will

---

<sup>323</sup> Bosworth, "Understanding Grief," 119. For more details on this argument of David's grief trajectory of resilience, see pages 123–26.



not return to me” (12:22–23). “There is to be heard a note of consolation in David’s words ‘I will go to him.’”<sup>324</sup>

That notwithstanding, it has been observed that David’s worship in the house of the LORD should be regarded as David as either anachronistic,<sup>325</sup> or that of him making use of a Jebusite cultic building the locus of which was the threshing floor of Araunah, which Solomon later renovated and expanded.<sup>326</sup> Tsumura, however, points out that, “The mention of ‘the house of the LORD (*bêt YHWH*) here has been considered anachronistic by several scholars. However, there is no reason to think that the author meant Solomon’s temple; it was probably a tent shrine for the ark, which could be called a ‘house’ like the *bt* of El in Ugarit.”<sup>327</sup>

Bergen, however, remarked that, “In a manner appropriate for a priest (cf. Exod 30:20; cf. Ps 110:4) David first washed himself and then ‘went into the house of the LORD and worshiped.’ In losing his son, David sought more than ever to regain a deeper relationship with his Heavenly Father.”<sup>328</sup> For this reason, “It is significant that David did not break his fast until after he had worshiped God; David’s hunger for a right relationship with God exceeded his desire for culinary delights.”<sup>329</sup>

This is not to say, however, that David, or any OT Israelite for that matter, was bereft of any belief in the afterlife. King and Stager remark that, “There existed in biblical Israel a belief in some form of afterlife, considered to be basically an extension

---

<sup>324</sup> Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*, 376. Bosworth (117–38) avers that, “David finds comfort in the prospect of seeing his dead son in Sheol (2 Sam 12:23)” (128).

<sup>325</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 302.

<sup>326</sup> As noted in McCarter, *II Samuel*, 302; Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 164; cf. Rupprecht, *Temple*, 102.

<sup>327</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 197. David’s act of going into the house of the LORD immediately following his unnamed son’s death is indicative of the fact that there was no prior contact with his son’s cadaver, a sin deserving of being cut off from Israeli (Num 19:13).

<sup>328</sup> Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*, 375.

<sup>329</sup> Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*, 375.

of earthly life.”<sup>330</sup> Herbert Brichto, however, cautions the reader from conflating a belief in afterlife with that of resurrection. Brichto contends that biblical belief prior to Daniel was limited to afterlife, while post Daniel, the biblical credo embraced resurrection to eternal life.<sup>331</sup>

Despite that, on the word of Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, immortality was thought to be in the house of the LORD, the very place that David entered after the death of his stillborn son, and wherein he worshiped God (2 Sam 12:20). “The Temple [when] properly approached and respected, was thought to be an antidote to death, bestowing a kind of immortality on those who dwell there in innocence, purity, and trust.”<sup>332</sup> Perhaps this might lend credence to David’s statement in Ps 27:5 [4], which reads, “One thing I have asked from the LORD, that shall I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple.” Or Ps 23:7 [6], Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Better yet are the words of Pss 133:3, which says, “There the LORD ordained blessing, everlasting life,” as David spoke of Mount Zion, “the spiritual center of the Israelite-Judahite brotherhood,”<sup>333</sup> and the very dwelling place of the presence of the immortal God, the LORD (Ps 2:7 [6]). “The term ‘everlasting life’ connotes neither individual immortality nor the result of a collective resurrection, but it still adds an important note. Individual Israelites die, and do not rise from the grave, but the collective promise of life to the people Israel that emanates from Zion shall endure forever. Here, as often, Zion serves

---

<sup>330</sup> King and Stager, *Life*, 373.

<sup>331</sup> Brichto, “Afterlife,” 53.

<sup>332</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 89.

<sup>333</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 90.

as a spatial image of the liberation from the ravages of time and decay that characterize ordinary human life.”<sup>334</sup>

Further to this, the Temple was understood as possessing a paradisiacal character in connection with God’s Garden of Eden (Gen 1–3). Far from being simply decorative, gardens, especially those of the royal nature within the ancient Near East (cf. 1 Kgs 5; Eccl 2:4–6), were symbolic, “and their symbolic message was very much involved with that of the Temple in or near which they were not infrequently found. Gardens present and preserve natural things in a form that is so unnatural that it is free from chaos, decay, and death.”<sup>335</sup> And this symbolism is all the more important when it comes to the great temple city of Jerusalem, which appears to have a connection with the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:10–14 informs us that there was a river that flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it was divided into four rivers, the first being Pishon, the third being the Tigris, and the fourth being the Euphrates. What is of interest to our discussion is that of the second river, that is, Gihon, which just so happens to be the name of the spring below the city of David whose waters flowed eastward to the Kidron Valley, where, as Lawrence E. Stager points out, they “irrigated the gardens and parks planted . . . by kings of the Davidic dynasty.”<sup>336</sup> And according to 1 Kgs 32–40, David ordered Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, “Take with you the servants of your Lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel, a blow the trumpet and say, ‘*Long live King Solomon!*’

---

<sup>334</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 90–91.

<sup>335</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 85.

<sup>336</sup> Stager, “Garden of Eden,” 184–94.

Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne and be king in my place; for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.”

Noted here is the fact that, “The paradisiacal character of the Gihon thus draws upon a rich store of mythic materials deeply connected to the ancient Near Eastern theology of temples. Especially in the Zion theology of Judah, the Temple is not only the capital building of the universe but the place where God’s protective care is manifest, tangible, and inviolable.”<sup>337</sup> Thus in Ps 36:6–11 [5–10] we especially read of the river of God’s delights in God’s house (cf. 46:5 [4]), where the LORD himself is the fountain of life. “Presumably, the source of this Edenic [Heb. *Nachal ‘adaneykha*, which contains the plural of Eden] stream lies in the ‘fountain of life’ whose terrestrial manifestation is the Gihon spring from which the royal and temple city drew its drink.”<sup>338</sup>

Further to this, in Ezek 47:1–12, we read of the water that comes from the temple: “and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar” (47:1–2). Then in 47:8–9a, we read that, “Then he said to me, ‘These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live.” Skipping over to 47:12, we come to the most interesting part. “By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will

---

<sup>337</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 86.

<sup>338</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 87.

be food and their leaves for healing.” One cannot help but notice that such temple imagery bears a modicum of semblance to that of the Garden of Eden with its waters and trees, especially that of the tree of life (Gen 2–3).

The implication of the imagery of healing waters and ever-fruitful trees is clear. The Temple serves, among many other things, as a survival of the primal paradise lost to the profane world, the world outside the sanctuary (profane is from the Latin, *pro* + *fanum*, ‘sanctuary’) and as a prototype of the redeemed world envisioned by some to lie ahead.<sup>339</sup>

In other words, the temple serves as a means of connecting “the protological and the eschatological, the primal and the final, preserving Eden and providing a taste of the life of intimacy with God that the Talmudic rabbis would come to call the World-to-Come.”<sup>340</sup>

With such an understanding, it is not surprising to read that many of the psalms speak of God’s temple in Zion as a place of life rather than death. Thus we read that, “Psalm 133 and its kindred literature offer a paradigm that is spatial: death is the norm outside Zion and cannot be reversed, but within the temple city, death is unknown, for there God has ordained the blessing of eternal life. To journey to the Temple is to move toward redemption. It is to leave the parched land of wasting and death for the fountain of life and the revival and rejuvenation it dispenses [cf. Ps 36:10 [9]].”<sup>341</sup> What is more, “Since the Temple served as the antipode to Sheol, the locus of life against the Godforsaken realm of the dead, it stands to reason that longing for the Temple can also represent a longing for immortality [cf. Pss 15, 84, 125].”<sup>342</sup> This therefore leads to the assumption that owing to David’s shared covenant relationship with the immortal God of Israel, the LORD who inhabited the Temple on Mount Zion with His glorious

---

<sup>339</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 89.

<sup>340</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 89.

<sup>341</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 91.

<sup>342</sup> Madigan and Levenson, *Resurrection*, 94.

presence, it seems as though David may have been a firm believer, not only in an afterlife, but perhaps even in an eternal life, which was preceded by resurrection.

By virtue of this fact, which is related to his faith in the LORD his God, it is not hard to see why David could resume a normal life or move into a joyous state of worshiping the LORD his God so rapidly after losing his unnamed son.<sup>343</sup> Alternatively stated, David's countercultural behaviour of worshiping the LORD his God, when expected to grieve the loss of his unnamed son, exhibits a grief trajectory of resilience, that is, a capacity to continue with his life more or less in spite of loss.<sup>344</sup> For this reason, Bosworth suggests that, "David need not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative model to bereaved parents. The description of David's behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn."<sup>345</sup>

That being said, it is equally significant to note that David's rather countercultural, yet resilient reaction to the loss of his unnamed son, is recorded alongside his DS1 lament prayer (2 Sam 12:16).

#### ***4.6.2. Categorization of Physical Expressions***

Here an attempt is made to categorize the physical expressions in the context of verbal expressions communicated to/before God amidst disorientation, both death-related and non-death-related, within the DS1–7 continuum. With regards to the former, only one expression, prostrating oneself, was found within the context of a DS2 imprecatory prayer, as well as a DS4 penitential prayer context. Similarly, the expression of offering

---

<sup>343</sup> Bosworth, "Faith and Resilience," 692–93.

<sup>344</sup> Bosworth, "Faith and Resilience," 692.

<sup>345</sup> Bosworth, "Understanding Grief," 119. See pages 123–26 for more details on this argument of David's grief trajectory of resilience.

a human sacrifice, appeared within the context of a DS3 vow prayer. Four expressions, plucking hair from beard and head, pouring dirt upon oneself, separation from foreigners, and tearing clothes, were all found within a DS4 penitential prayer context. Within a DS1 lament context, several expressions came to the fore, namely, anointing oneself, blowing (silver) trumpets, changing clothes, covering/hiding one's face, eating, fasting, offering burnt and peace offerings, shedding tears, sacrificing through supernatural fire (building altar, making trench, arranging wood, cutting ox, laying ox on wood), rising from the ground, sitting, washing, and worshiping God. With regard to the death-related rituals, one finds such physical expressions as burning, burying (and purchasing land), chambering (privacy/isolation), deep moving (trembling), donning and removing widow's clothes, donning sackcloth, erecting gravestones (monuments), falling on and kissing the dead, funeral processioning, honoring (through spice-fire), placing in coffin, spreading sackcloth, and transporting cadaver for burial.

As such, the attempt is now made to categorize the physical expressions: (i) *Disorientation Stage 1 Gestures or DS1 Lament Rituals* (inclusive of which are anointing oneself, blowing [silver] trumpets, changing clothes, covering/hiding one's face, eating, fasting, kneeling, offering burnt and peace offerings, paralleling two outstretched bodies, removing sandals, rising from the ground, shedding tears, sacrificing through supernatural fire [building altar, making trench, arranging wood, cutting ox, laying ox on wood], sitting, spreading out letter, turning face to the wall, washing, and worshiping God); (ii) *Disorientation Stage 2 Gestures or DS2 Imprecatory Rituals* (inclusive of which is prostrating oneself); (iii) *Disorientation Stage 3 Gestures or DS3 Vow Rituals* (inclusive of which are offering human sacrifice and standing); and (iv) *Disorientation Stage 4 Gestures or DS 4 Death Rituals* (inclusive of which are

burning, burying [and purchasing land], chambering [privacy/isolation], deep moving [trembling], donning and removing widow's clothes, donning sackcloth, erecting gravestones [monuments], falling on and kissing the dead, funeral processioning, honoring [through spice-fire], placing in coffin, spreading sackcloth, and transporting cadaver for burial).

#### 4.6.3. Summary

At this juncture, we come to the end of our anthropological physical expressions communicated to/before God and humans amidst a context of disorientation inclusive of which was the death of a leading OT Israelite saint. These will be added to the spectrum of anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation where the reader will also be furnished with their significance. Some of these expressions will play a key role in the dialectic correlation with the expressions garnered from within the Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian cultures.

In the section that follows, we discuss the anthropological emotional expressions communicated to/before God and humans in the context of disorientation. Once again, the collection of this data is aimed at facilitating a dialectic correlation between biblical theology and pastoral theology. That is, between the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions conveyed to/before God from within a context of disorientation (i.e., the textual locus of the prosaic sections of the OT, namely, Genesis and Esther), and that of the verbal, physical, and emotional expressions that surface amidst the phenomenon of grief among Christian leaders within a Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian context. The objective of the entire endeavor, however, is the fostering of



compassionate, liberative, intercultural pastoral care practices that are true to the gospel of God, and thus grief-transformative, rather than grievous.

#### ***4.6.4. Emotional Anthropological Expressions***

It was remarked by Corless et al., that physical responses within a context of grief, “are composed of physical signs, bodily expressions, and sensual aspects such as seeing and hearing. The manner in which the head is held (body language) is an example of a physical response, as is weeping. Sobbing, sighing, sudden, intense emotion, or other somatic, physical responses typically occur without intention.”<sup>346</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, however, a distinction is made between the physical and the emotional expressions so as to provide a three-dimensional understanding of the anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation to/before God. In this section the emotional anthropological expressions communicated to/before God by leading Israelites within the OT are brought to the fore. Some of these expressions will then play a key role within the dialectic correlation of biblical and pastoral theology in chapter 4. Once again, Appendix 1 can be consulted for the full gamut of textual references relative to the emotional auxiliary expressions that accompany prayers uttered within the lived context of disorientation.

##### **4.6.4a. Anger**

Being made aware of the idolatrous sin of the children of Israel, and making his way down Mount Sinai, we read that, “It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp,

---

<sup>346</sup> Corless et al., “Languages,” 136.

that he saw the calf and *the* dancing; and Moses' *anger* burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain" (Exod 32:19; emphasis mine). This occurs just subsequent to his intercession on their behalf by means of a DS1 lament prayer to the LORD (32:11–13). Within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, this emotive response of anger is only provoked here. Ellen van Wolde contends that, "Whenever the verb *חרה* is used [as in Exod 32:19], it obviously does not describe an emotion kept inside, but an erupting emotion followed by fierce discussions, rows or destructive actions, such as murder, destruction, crash."<sup>347</sup> She further observes that, "This feature, together with the location of anger in the nostrils or nose, lips, and tongue, and not a location in the belly, stomach, or chest . . . makes it plausible that the verb *חרה* denotes uncontrollable fury. Once aroused it immediately rises to the head and comes out of the nose and blows upon someone."<sup>348</sup> Little wonder she contends that, "anger in the Hebrew Bible is related to the mouth, nose or face and expresses an uncontrollable fury in someone's head that leads prototypically to retributive actions."<sup>349</sup> Following the shattering of the tablets, it is thus observed that Moses' anger continues to manifest itself in his fierce discussion with Aaron (32:21–24). Subsequent to this, Moses then declares the slaughtering of all those against the LORD, which saw three thousand men of the people of Israel fall that day (32:25–29).

---

<sup>347</sup> van Wolde, "Sentiments," 11.

<sup>348</sup> van Wolde, "Sentiments," 11–12.

<sup>349</sup> van Wolde, "Sentiments," 22; she also notes that culturally accepted are only those instances of anger that start with and come from a person in a hierarchically higher position and are oriented towards someone in a lower position (23). In the case of Exod 32, anger starts with and comes from Moses the leader of the people of Israel and oriented towards the people of Israel. The only exception to her argument, however, as she notes, is Jonathan's expression of anger at his father Saul who desires to kill David (1 Sam 20:34). "Both the language of sentiment and the context of behaviour indicate the reversal of hierarchical roles in which Jonathan is not accepting his father's authority anymore" (16n28).

## 4.6.4b. Appalment

Ezra 9:3–4 tells us that, after the scribe and priest heard of the mixed marriages, and thereafter, “I tore my garment and my robe, and pulled some of the hair from my head and my beard, and sat down *appalled*” (אֲשׁוּמָה; emphasis mine). The news of the mixed marriages is something that Ezra finds disgusting. In other words, Ezra is deeply “horrified, terrified, dismayed, i.e., have an emotion or attitude of horror and great fear,”<sup>350</sup> as specified by James A. Swanson. Which is another way of saying that this matter of mixed or contaminated marriages is not something that Ezra treated apathetically, and was in fact very revolting to this priest of the LORD who desired that God’s people be holy even as He is holy (9:1–2; cf. Exod 22:31; Lev 19:2; Deut 14:2). In other words, the people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, should have restrained themselves from such impure matrimones (Exod 34:16) lest they contaminate themselves (Ps 106:35), turn away from the LORD their God, and serve other gods (Deut 7:3–4).

Perceiving the potential danger that a foreign wife is likely to have on her husband in enticing him away from his loyalty to God, Ezra is “extremely grieved.”<sup>351</sup> Yet it should be noted that, “The term ‘holy’ [in the holy seed, Ezra 9:2] shows that the term ‘seed’ has nothing to do with racial prejudice. . . . It was a question of the living relation between the LORD and his people.”<sup>352</sup> On the grounds of this infidelity with the potential for divorce from their holy God (Jer 3:8), Ezra finds unholy matrimones a sacrilegious act, giving him cause to mourn deeply, observed in his verbal and physical

---

<sup>350</sup> Swanson, אֲשׁוּמָה, np.

<sup>351</sup> Breneman, *Ezra*, 150.

<sup>352</sup> Fensham, *Ezra*, 125.

acts (9:3–15). In other words, Ezra is disgusted at such an unholy alliance among God’s holy people, and fears what God might do in response. In light of the fact that, “emotional disgust frequently associates with impurity language, whether the issue is prohibited foods, various conditions involving genital discharge or skin ailments, . . . or disapproved behaviors,”<sup>353</sup> it is hardly surprising to read that Ezra’s disgust manifests itself in his tearing of both his outer and inner garments, thus exposing the intensity of his appalment.

Interestingly, this emotive response of being appalled or disgust comes to the fore only once, and that in the context of Ezra’s passionate DS4 penitential prayer (9:6–15). It is also observed that such an emotive response surfaces in the company of Ezra’s physical expressions of tearing his garment and robe, pulling some of his hair from his head and beard, sitting down (9:3), falling on his knees, and stretching out his hands to the LORD his God (9:5).

#### 4.6.4e. Dismay

When the sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some of the Meunites make war against Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron 20:15 tells us that, Jahazial instructs all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat, saying, “Do not fear or be *dismayed*” (emphasis mine). Then in 20:17, one also reads, “Do not fear or be *dismayed*” (emphasis mine). This implies that along with fear, *dismay* was also a present emotive response, which only happened to occur within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, and that alongside a DS2 imprecation prayer (20:6–12). On account of the supernatural

---

<sup>353</sup> Kazen, “Disgust,” 103.

deliverance that they were about to experience the following day at the hands of the LORD who was with them, the affect of dismay is to be viewed as incompatible for the people of the living and ever-present *God* (20:17; cf. Deut 31:6, 8; Josh 1:5).

God's people are therefore not to abandon their hope in God their divine warrior, who will fight with and for them. According to Allender and Longman, otherwise referred to as despair, the affect of dismay "is the refusal to struggle. It deadens our heart to the hope that we will be rescued, redeemed, and happy."<sup>354</sup> In other words, "Despair refuses to hope. . . . Despair vocalizes the core question: *Is God good, or will He leave me in isolation? Will He offer His presence to others and leave me alone?*"<sup>355</sup> Small wonder that the people of Judah were dismayed. God puts their dismay to rest in the words of Jahaziel: "You *need* not fight this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem . . . . for *the LORD is with you* " (20:17; emphasis mine).

#### 4.6.4f. Displeasure / Distress

Numbers 11:10–15 gives the account of the children of Israel grumbling over the food that God was providing for them miraculously on a daily basis. Dissatisfied with their daily manna, otherwise referred to as the bread of angels (Ps 78:26 [25]), the children of Israel weep throughout their families, each man at the doorway of his tent, thus greatly kindling the angering the LORD (11:10). As stated by Moses, "they weep before me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat!'" (11:14). Unable to fulfill their selfish desire, "Moses was *displeased*" (11:10; emphasis mine).

---

<sup>354</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 48.

<sup>355</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 48–49.

Interestingly, the Hebrew text reads, וּבְעֵינֵי מֹשֶׁה רָע, translated *and in Moses' eyes, [it was] evil*.<sup>356</sup> Milgrom asks: “Is the referent of ‘it’ the people’s complaint or the Lord’s actions? That is, with whom did Moses side—with God, that the people’s complaint was evil, or with the people in their complaint against God?”<sup>357</sup> Milgrom responds: “Moses’ own discomfiture with God in the following verse indicates that he concurred with Israel that the Lord had dealt ill with.”<sup>358</sup> Timothy R. Ashley, however, adds that, “As the following verses indicate, Moses does not react against the people’s rejection of God’s provision but against the people for making his job as leader more difficult, and against Yahweh for giving him the task as leader.”<sup>359</sup>

Being the leader of such a great number of people so overwhelms Moses, that he directs his affect of displeasure or distress at both the people of Israel and the LORD. The burden of furnishing God’s people with food affects Moses to the point that he even petitions God to take his life. Moses’s emotive response of displeasure or distress, nevertheless, occurs within his DS1 lament prayer that is furnished in 11:11–15.

On account of his persistent idolatry, Manasseh is taken into captivity. But while there, 2 Chron 33:12 says that, “When he was in *distress*, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers” (emphasis mine). That the Hebrew word used here appears in the Hiphil infinitive construct (וַיִּקְרָצֵר), suggests that the situation within which Manasseh found himself caused him distress.<sup>360</sup> Here, in his distressing situation of being treated like a subdued animal,<sup>361</sup> he petitions God in

---

<sup>356</sup> See also Ashley, *Numbers*, 210.

<sup>357</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 85.

<sup>358</sup> Milgrom, *Numbers*, 85.

<sup>359</sup> Ashley, *Numbers*, 210.

<sup>360</sup> See BDB 864 where the word means “*make narrow for, press hard upon, and cause distress to.*”

<sup>361</sup> Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 268.

humility. “Manasseh’s plea issues from a contrite heart, for he ‘humbled himself [*kn*] greatly (33:12). This word signifies true repentance. . . . For this reason, the report of Manasseh’s repentance and prayer of forgiveness is reminiscent of the language of God’s promise to King Solomon to restore those who ‘humble themselves and pray’ (2 Chron 7:14).”<sup>362</sup>

After hearing of the LORD’s regret in making Saul king of His people Israel, we read in 1 Sam 15:11, “And Samuel was distressed” (emphasis mine). Interestingly the Hebrew text reads: וַיִּחַר לְשׂוּמְיָאֵל, which Tsumura translates, “Samuel was angry.” Yet he notes that, “it suggests that the prophet of the Lord feels God’s inner feelings, the divine pathos, violently.”<sup>363</sup> His reference to divine pathos comes from Abraham J. Heschel, who observes that, the experience of Samuel is “a fellowship with the feelings of God, a *sympathy with the divine pathos*, a communion with the divine consciousness, which comes about through the prophet’s reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos.”<sup>364</sup> Bergen, however, posits that, “First of all, God was ‘grieved’ (*nḥm*) that he made Saul king. . . . The employment of the term suggests that the Lord was deeply concerned—or as H. V. D. Parunak asserts, ‘suffered emotional pain’—regarding choices Saul made of his own volition.”<sup>365</sup> Clearly there is some kind of emotional pain within the heart of God and that of Samuel’s.

As is observed from these passages of Scripture, within the limits of Genesis and Esther, this emotive response of distress, appears in a variety of Hebrew words. Additionally, distress is awakened in most cases amidst a DS1 lament prayer.

<sup>362</sup> Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 615; see also Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 482.

<sup>363</sup> Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 396; cf. van Wolde, “Sentiments,” 11–12, 22.

<sup>364</sup> Heschel, *Prophets*, 26; emphasis original.

<sup>365</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 170; see Parunak, *Survey*, 519.

Despite that, 1 Sam 1:10–11a reads thus: “She [Hannah], greatly *distressed*, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. She made a vow and said . . .” (emphasis mine). The Hebrew text says, קָרַת נַפְשׁ meaning *bitter of soul*. The bitterness in Hanna’s soul manifests itself in her bitter weeping (וַיִּבְכֶּה תְּבַכֶּה). In the process of such great distress, “Hannah’s agony finally finds words,”<sup>366</sup> even as she presents her DS3 vow prayer to the LORD, which was accompanied by her standing posture.

In addition to this, Bergen maintains that, the phrase “bitterness of soul,” is “a phrase used elsewhere to characterize the psychological pain experienced by one who has been deprived of a child through death (cf. Ruth 1:13, 20; 2 Kgs 4:27; Zech 12:10) or who is experiencing great personal physical suffering (cf. Job 3:20; 7:11; 10:1; Isa 38:15).”<sup>367</sup> He also observes that, “Relief from this sort of pain is never pictured in the Hebrew Bible as coming from a human being; in each case divine intervention was the only remedy. Wisely, Hannah also went to the Lord for help.”<sup>368</sup>

Later, when Eli the priest wrongfully accused Hannah of drunkenness, Hannah responded, “No, my lord, I am a woman *oppressed in spirit*; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD” (1 Sam 1:15; emphasis mine). Tsumura translates the phrase קָשַׁת־רוּחַ as “struggling in spirit.”<sup>369</sup> Comparing the expression *oppressed or struggling in spirit* with the determinedness of Sihon in Deut 2:30, Takamitsu Muraoka, however, posits that Hannah was “firmly determined to take up the matter with her God.”<sup>370</sup> Possessing an *oppressed spirit or struggling spirit*, “Hannah here takes her refuge in the Lord, bringing her problem

---

<sup>366</sup> Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 117.

<sup>367</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 68.

<sup>368</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 68.

<sup>369</sup> Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 121.

<sup>370</sup> Muraoka, “1 Sam 1,15 Again,” 98–99.



directly to her God by prayer.”<sup>371</sup> Within the bounds of the Genesis and Esther, only here does the emotive response of an oppression within one’s spirit appear within the context of a DS3 vow prayer to the LORD (cf. Prov 31:2).

#### 4.6.4g. Embarrassment and Shame

Upon the confession of his sins and the sins of his people, Ezra declared, “O my God, I am *ashamed* and *embarrassed* to lift up my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens” (9:6; emphasis mine). The elicitation of the emotive response of embarrassment only occurs here within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, and this within a DS4 penitential prayer.

That being said, as Ezra and the family heads returned to Jerusalem, Ezra sought God for protection on the journey, but admitted, “For I was *ashamed* to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, ‘The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him’” (8:22; emphasis mine). Within the limits of Genesis and Esther, only here does the emotive response of shame surface amidst a DS1 lament prayer. As noted in 9:6, however, the emotive response of shame is brought to the fore amidst his DS4 penitential prayer.

Ezra therefore feels ashamed in the holy eyes of God. Allender and Longman add that shame “is one of our deepest fears: We will be isolated and mocked forever. It is a taste of hell—the experience of being caught without defense or cover and condemned to unrelenting humiliation.”<sup>372</sup> In other words, “Shame is feeling exposed as ugly

---

<sup>371</sup> Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 121.

<sup>372</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 51.

beyond words. Nothing else cuts to the core so personally as shame does.”<sup>373</sup> In fact, “Shame drains us of our energy and withers our desire to exist.”<sup>374</sup> What is more, “Its typical posture is eyes downcast, shoulders slumped, heart disengaged.”<sup>375</sup> Interestingly, along with his DS4 penitential prayer, Ezra tore his garment and robe, pulled some of the hair from his head and beard, and sat down appalled (9:3), fell on his knees and stretched out his hands to the LORD his God (9:5), ashamed and embarrassed that he cannot lift up his face to the LORD his God (9:6).

#### 4.6.4h. Fear (Divine and Human)

The emotion of fear is elicited toward God and humans. Thus we read in Exod 3:6 that, “Then Moses hid his face, for he was *afraid* to look at God” (emphasis mine), and this within a DS1 or lament prayer (3:13). The rationale behind Moses’ fear of looking at God, however, is heard in the words of God in 33:20: “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!”

For an example of the fear of a human being, after sojourning with Laban, Jacob prepared to reunite with his older twin brother and rival Esau. While he camped in Manahaim (Gen 32:2), he sent messengers before him to Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom (32:3) commanding them saying, “Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: ‘Thus says your servant Jacob, ‘I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight’” (32:4–5). Returning from their meeting

---

<sup>373</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 51.

<sup>374</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 51.

<sup>375</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 51.

with Esau, the messengers told Jacob thus: “We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him” (32:6). At this the reader is told that, “Then *Jacob was greatly afraid* and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; for he said, ‘If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape’” (32:7–8; emphasis mine). What is more, in his DS1 lament prayer, Jacob acknowledges his fear when he articulated,

O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you.’ I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff *only* I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau; for *I fear him*, that he will come and attack me *and* the mothers with the children. For You said, ‘I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered’ (emphasis mine).<sup>376</sup>

Allender and Longman aver that, “fear energizes us to flee. It quickens our retreat. It makes any movement forward into battle seem absurd. Fear triggers a dilation of the pupils, as if our eyes are opening wide enough to take in all the data necessary to avoid destruction.”<sup>377</sup> They further observe that in fear, “Our stomach tightens, heaviness descends, and sweat glands release moisture to ‘cool’ down the physical machine. So that it doesn’t burn up. The body is prepared for flight and hiding. As fear increases, the body is prepared to shut down and curl up. At its extreme, terror is immobilizing.”<sup>378</sup>

On the whole, the fear of another human, which is likely to cause one to flee, is aroused within the context of a DS1 lament prayer within the limits of Genesis and Esther (Exod 14:10; 1 Sam 7:7; 28:5; 1 Kgs 19:3; 2 Kgs 19:3; Neh 2:2). So also the fear

---

<sup>376</sup> For other examples, see 1 Sam 28:6; 2 Chron 20:2–3.

<sup>377</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 46.

<sup>378</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 46.

of God appears within the context of Moses' DS1 lament prayer. However, in only one case, as the sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and the Meunites wage war against him, Jehoshaphat's fear is evoked within the context of his DS2 imprecatory prayer (2 Chron 20:15, 17).

#### 4.6.4i. Grief

Following on the heels of the death of his son Absalom, one reads that, "The king is *grieved* for his son" (2 Sam 19:2; emphasis mine). According to David A. Bosworth, "grief is more than bereavement; it encompasses a range of losses and trauma. Grief responses may occur in connection to any serious threat to a valued relationship (both the seriousness of the threat and the importance of the relationship are determined in the culturally-embedded mind of the person who appraises them)."<sup>379</sup> Although he admits that, "there is no fixed sequence, grieving behaviors can be organized into 'stages,' beginning with numbness, then protest, despair, and finally detachment / reorganization."<sup>380</sup>

Wayne E. Oates, however, posits at least six quantitative kinds of grief: (i) anticipatory (a double grief, that is, the grief of a person dying with a long-term grief over his or her gradual loss of life due to a terminal illness and the grief of the family and close friends of the dying); (ii) sudden or traumatic (with little or no warning and can lead to shock, alarm, disbelief, panic, hastening back to hyperactive work, or grieving alone); (iii) chronic sorrow or no end grief (also called 'the death of a dream' grief); (iv) near miss grief (in which a person narrowly escaped being killed); (v)

---

<sup>379</sup> Bosworth, "Grief," 126–27.

<sup>380</sup> Bosworth, "Grief," 127–28.

pathological grief (the shock of a sudden death unhinges the judgment and behavior of a severely shocked family member or an intense desire to be near God but it is complicated by the complaint that God does not care, does not hear, or does not exist; (vi) tragic sense of life grief (arises from the sense of being limited in our care of others and the sense of being subject to death ourselves).<sup>381</sup> It is likely that David experienced sudden or traumatic grief, which manifests itself, at least in one way, by his desire to grieve alone.<sup>382</sup> For which reason one reads, “The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept” (18:33).

#### 4.6.4j. Guilt

The affect of guilt comes to the fore in Ezra 9:6, after Ezra catches wind of the news from the princes that the people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands. Particularly, they have encouraged interreligious marriages between their sons and daughters and those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites (9:1–2). A few verses later we read, “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our *guilt* has grown even to the heavens” (9:6; emphasis mine; cf. 9:7). As such, the emotive response of guilt is evoked amidst Ezra’s DS4 penitential prayer.

According to Susan Krauss Whitbourne, “Guilt is, first and foremost, an emotion. . . it’s more accurate to think of guilt as an internal state. In the overall scheme of emotions, guilt is in the general category of negative feeling states. It’s one of the

---

<sup>381</sup> Oates, *Grief*, 20–25.

<sup>382</sup> Oates, *Grief*, 21.

‘sad’ emotions, which also include agony, grief, and loneliness.”<sup>383</sup> Looking at guilt “From a cognitive point of view, guilt is an emotion that people experience because they’re convinced they’ve caused harm. In cognitive theory, the thoughts cause the emotions. The emotion of guilt follows directly from the thought that you are responsible for someone else’s misfortune, whether or not that’s the case.”<sup>384</sup> Applying this cognitive theory, Whitbourne proposes five types of guilt: (i) guilt for something you did; (ii) guilt for something you didn’t do, but want to; (iii) guilt for something you think you did; (iv) guilt that you didn’t do enough to help someone; and (v) guilt that you’re doing better than someone else.<sup>385</sup>

In the case of Ezra, guilt is elicited not necessarily because of what he has done, but because of what the people of Israel and the priests and the Levites had done. They had not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, and in fact had taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons. In doing so, the holy race intermingled with the peoples of the lands and contaminated themselves. As a priest himself and an Israelite, Ezra doubtless saw himself as inextricably connected to this rebellious community of people. As Fensham notes,

A great sin had been committed, a sin which ran contrary to the law of God. Ezra identified himself with this sin, although he and the exiles who had returned with him did not commit it. In a certain sense Ezra accepted solidarity with his people. He became mediator for them as Moses did after the golden bull was worshipped at Sinai (cf. Exod 32:33ff).<sup>386</sup>

In identifying himself with his people, Ezra brings his DS4 penitential prayer to the LORD asking for His forgiveness (9:6–15).

---

<sup>383</sup> Whitbourne, “Guide,” para. 2.

<sup>384</sup> Whitbourne, “Guide,” para. 4.

<sup>385</sup> Whitbourne, “Guide,” para. 7–17.

<sup>386</sup> Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 125.

## 4.6.4k. Sadness

Upon hearing of the condition of the city of Jerusalem, and taking up the wine and giving it to king Artaxerxes, as was his custom as the cupbearer, the king asked Nehemiah, “Why is your face so *sad* though you are not sick?” (2:1–2a; emphasis mine). According to king Artaxerxes, “This is nothing but *sadness* of heart” (2:2b; emphasis mine). Fensham maintains that Nehemiah’s sadness is really a depression. At a time when everyone was rejoicing, Nehemiah is depressed. But

All the people were enjoying the party. Why should this cupbearer spoil the party? *Why are you so depressed?* Literally ‘Why is your face so bad?’ The word translated depressed (plural of *ra*’, which was used in v. 1) has a great variety of meanings. It is always associated with something unpleasant, bad, or wicked. In this case the inner feeling of Nehemiah was reflected in his outward appearance. The term depressed is the best translation of this phenomenon. . . . The last expression speaks of a sad heart (Heb, *rōa’ lēb*).<sup>387</sup>

Clearly Nehemiah is “unhappy about something.”<sup>388</sup> Nehemiah’s sadness stems from the city of Jerusalem being desolated and the gates being consumed by fire (2:3). Within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, this is the only occurrence of the emotive response of sadness within the context of a DS1 lament prayer (1:11).

## 4.6.4l. Tender-heartedness

After finding the book of the law and reading it, Josiah not only weeps before the LORD, but in 2 Kgs 22:19–20, we read the words of Huldah the prophets concerning him: “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘*Regarding* the words which you have heard, because your *heart was tender* and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place [Judah] and against its inhabitants that they should

---

<sup>387</sup> Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 159–60.

<sup>388</sup> Fensham, *Ezra and Nehemiah*, 160.

become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you,' declares the LORD" (emphasis mine).

Coogan and Tadmor notes that, "*since you took fright*. Heb. *rak lēbābēkâ*, lit. 'your heart was soft.' This idiom is used in parallel to verbs of fear and timidity; cf. Deut 20:3, Isa 7:4, Jer 51:46, 2 Chron 13:7. Here it describes Josiah, overcome by the warnings in the book of the Law read to him."<sup>389</sup> Only here does this tender-hearted emotive response occur within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, and contiguous to a DS1 lament prayer.

#### 4.6.4m. Troubled Heart

After taking a census of Israel and Judah, and David is convicted of his sin: "Now David's *heart troubled* him after he had numbered the people" (2 Sam 24:10; emphasis mine). The Hebrew reads, "וַיִּנָּחֵם לִבְדָּוִד אֹתוֹ," translated *but David's heart struck him*. This was another way of saying that David was conscience-stricken.<sup>390</sup> It is therefore not surprising that David's emotive response is elicited within the context of his DS4 penitential prayer. Within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, this is the only place that the emotive response of a troubled or conscience-stricken heart is elicited.

#### 4.6.5. *Categorization of Emotions*

At this juncture an attempt is made to categorize the emotions that have just been discussed, both the death-related and the non-death-related. It is important, however, to keep in mind that, "Every emotion, though horizontally provoked, nevertheless reflects

---

<sup>389</sup> Coogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 284

<sup>390</sup> McCarter, *II Samuel*, 510.



something about the vertical dimension: our relationship with God.”<sup>391</sup> That said, with regard to the non-death-related emotions, one observes that of the twelve emotions explored above, half were found in the context of a DS1 lament prayer. These emotions are anger, displeasure, distress, fear of God and humans, sadness, and tenderheartedness. It should be pointed out, however, that the fear of humans can also be found within the context of a DS2 imprecatory prayer (only one; 2 Chron 20:15, 17). The emotion of distress can also appear within a context of a DS3 vow prayer (only one; 1 Sam 1:10–11). Also located within the context of a DS3 vow prayer is the emotion of appalment. Dismay appeared within the context of a DS2 imprecatory prayer. Finally, such emotions as embarrassment and shame, guilt, and a troubled heart were found within the context of a DS4 penitential prayer.

Based on this, one can move to categorize these emotions as follows: (i) *Disorientation Stage 1 Emotions or DS1 Distress* (inclusive of which is displeasure, fear of God / humans); (ii) *Disorientation Stage 2 Emotions or DS2 Dismay*; (iii) *Disorientation Stage 3 Emotions or DS3 Appalment*; and (iv) *Disorientation Stage 4 Emotions or DS4 Appalment* (inclusive of which is embarrassment / shame, guilt, and troubled or conscience-stricken heart); and (v) *Disorientation Stage 5 Emotions or DS5 Death Emotions* (inclusive of which is grief).

#### 4.6.6. Summary

In this section the emotional anthropological expressions communicated to/before God amidst disorientation, both death-related and non-death-related, were explored. Further

---

<sup>391</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 13–14.

to this, an attempt was made to categorize these emotions, especially in light of the categorization of the verbal anthropological expressions communicated to/before God amidst disorientation (i.e., prayers).

#### 4.7. Expressive Domain of Disorientation Prayers and Their Auxiliaries

In consideration of all that has been completed within this chapter, the expressive domain of anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation (verbal, physical, and emotional) within biblical theology can thus be generated. Accordingly, our anthropological expressive domain relative to OT prosaic prayers of disorientation (i.e., Genesis to Esther) is thus:

Verbal Anthropological Expressions	
<i>Categories</i>	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers or DS1 Lament Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation accompanied by the stinging questions of “Why?” and “How long?,” or even simply groans, and sometimes weeping.
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers or DS2 Imprecatory Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within the context of disorientation that call for a divine judgment or curse upon one’s enemies.
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Prayers or DS3 Vow Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and which promise God something, that is, “If . . . then.”
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers or DS4 Penitential Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and which convey penitence over one’s sins.
<i>Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers or DS5 Confidence Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation confident of God’s presence and anticipating His deliverance.
<i>Disorientation Stage 6 Prayers or DS6 Thanksgiving Praise Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation confident of God’s presence and anticipating His deliverance.
<i>Disorientation Stage 7 or DS7 Death-Related-Words</i>	Complaint; Contrition and/or Confession; Instructions [Assassination; Burying; Embalming; Holiness; For a Woman on Returning Home and Remarrying; and

	Transporting Cadaver for Burial]; Interrogation and Rejoinder; Lament Elegy and Weeping
--	---

Physical Anthropological Expressions	
Categories	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Gestures or DS1 Lament Ritual</i>	Inclusive of which are anointing oneself, blowing [silver] trumpets, changing clothes, covering/hiding one's face, eating, fasting, offering burnt and peace offerings, shedding tears, sacrificing through supernatural fire [building altar, making trench, arranging wood, cutting ox, laying ox on wood], rising from the ground, sitting, washing, and worshipping God
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Gestures or DS2 Imprecatory Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which is prostrating oneself
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Gestures or DS3 Vow Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which are offering human sacrifice and standing
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Gestures or DS4 Death Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which are burning, burying [and purchasing land], chambering [privacy/isolation], deep moving [trembling], donning and removing widow's clothes, donning sackcloth, erecting gravestones [monuments], falling on and kissing the dead, funeral processioning, honoring [through spice-fire], placing in coffin, spreading sackcloth, and transporting cadaver for burial

Emotional Anthropological Expressions	
Categories	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Emotions or DS1 Distress</i>	Inclusive of which are displeasure, struggling spirit/bitterness of soul, and fear of God and humans
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Emotions or DS2 Dismay</i>	
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Emotions or DS3 Appalment</i>	Inclusive of which are embarrassment / shame, guilt, and troubled or conscience-stricken heart
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Emotions or DS4 Death Emotions</i>	Inclusive of which is grief

In chapter 5, some of this data will facilitate a dialectic correlation between biblical theology and pastoral theology. Of particular interest are those expressions conveyed to/before God in the life setting of grief within the textual locus of the prosaic sections of the OT—Genesis to Esther. Together with those expressions that surface amidst the phenomenon of grief among Christian leaders from within a Guyanese-Canadian and a Vietnamese-Canadian context, a dialectic correlation will be set in motion. To reiterate, the objective of this endeavor is that of fostering compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices that lend their aid toward mitigating and transforming grief, thus making it manageable and even redemptive, rather than complicated.

## CHAPTER 5: DIALECTIC CORRELATION OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIONS OF DISORIENTATION: BIBLICAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY

### **5.1. Introduction to Dialectic Correlation of Anthropological Expressions of Disorientation Between Biblical and Pastoral Theology**

This chapter employs a dialectic correlation between the multivalent anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation communicated to/before God by contemporary Christian pray-ers amidst their lived experience of grief, with those conveyed to/before God by ancient OT Israelites amidst grief and recorded within the prosaic limits of Genesis and Esther. The practices examined within this chapter are rooted in biblical theology and conversant with those practices present within pastoral theology. Particular attention, however, is afforded those expressions that help to sustain the bereaved as part of their coping and sustaining mechanism amidst their grief.<sup>1</sup>

Miller notes that, “Most anthropologists believe that funeral customs fulfill certain important social functions for the living. However, the general meaning these customs provide for any given culture is a matter of longstanding dispute.”<sup>2</sup> Inferred here is that, “On the one hand, some behavioral scientists believe that funeral rites alleviate the sudden anxiety which death brings for the grieving. On the other hand,

---

<sup>1</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 64.

<sup>2</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 820.

some believe that the purpose of death customs is not to dispel anxiety but rather to foster the feelings of religious awe or group solidarity.”<sup>3</sup> Critiquing both interpretations, Miller avers that, “In varying degrees both of these factors probably underlie most funeral rites. Funerary customs remind the participants that death must be taken seriously, while at the same time providing a comforting interpretation of death.”<sup>4</sup>

On account of this, an examination of the practices that have emerged during grief from within the Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian contexts, will participate in a critical, theological reflection with the practices of the OT Israelites, the objective of which is that of attending to those practices that are grief-transformative, rather than grievous. Which means that, even though “Grief is an expression of love, not despair,”<sup>5</sup> grief needs mitigation to facilitate the continuous abundant living of the bereaved (John 10:10).

#### 5.1.1a. Dialectic Correlation of Anthropological Expressions among Israelite OT, Guyanese-Canadian, and Vietnamese-Canadian Leaders

What follows immediately is the collective expressive domain of the anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation culled from within each of the three contexts (Israelite OT [Genesis to Esther], Guyanese-Canadian, and Vietnamese-Canadian).

These expressions are as follows:

Verbal Anthropological Expressions	
<i>Categories</i>	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage I Prayers or DSI Lament Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation accompanied by the stinging questions of “Why?” and “How long?,” or even simply groans, and sometimes weeping.

<sup>3</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 820.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 820.

<sup>5</sup> Ngien, *Interpretation*, 11.

<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers or DS2 Imprecatory Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within the context of disorientation that call for a divine judgment or curse upon one's enemies.
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Prayers or DS3 Vow Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and which promise God something, that is, "If . . . then."
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers or DS4 Penitential Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and which convey penitence over one's sins.
<i>Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers or DS5 Confidence Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation confident of God's presence and anticipating His deliverance.
<i>Disorientation Stage 6 Prayers or DS6 Thanksgiving Praise Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation confident of God's presence and anticipating His deliverance.
<i>Disorientation Stage 7 or DS7 Death-Related-Words</i>	Complaint; Contrition and/or Confession; Instructions [Assassination; Burying; Embalming; Holiness; For a Woman on Returning Home and Remarrying; and Transporting Cadaver for Burial]; Interrogation and Rejoinder; Promise; Lament Elegy and Loud Cries for Help/Weeping/Wailing/Screaming/Shouting; Sharing Stories of Each Other's Grief.

Physical Anthropological Expressions	
Categories	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Gestures or DS1 Lament Ritual</i>	Inclusive of which are anointing oneself, blowing [silver] trumpets, changing clothes, covering/hiding one's face, eating, fasting, offering burnt and peace offerings, shedding tears, sacrificing through supernatural fire [building altar, making trench, arranging wood, cutting ox, laying ox on wood], rising from the ground, sitting, washing, and worshiping God.
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Gestures or DS2 Imprecatory Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which is prostrating oneself.
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Gestures or DS3 Vow Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which are offering human sacrifice and standing.
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Gestures or DS 4 Death Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which are burning, burying [and purchasing land], chambering [privacy/isolation], deep moving [trembling], donning and removing widow's clothes, donning sackcloth, erecting gravestones [monuments], falling on and kissing the dead,

	<p>funeral processioning, honoring [through spice-fire], placing in coffin, spreading sackcloth, and transporting cadaver for burial; Avoiding Food and People [Silence and Solitude]/Isolation; Bearing the Cost of the Funeral; Celebrating the Life of the Deceased Annually with Lots of Food; Celebrating the Life of the Deceased through a Eulogy, a Shared Meal, and Singing Psalms, Hymns, and Songs of the Spirit to the Lord, such as Upbeat Songs or Bhajans, while also Proclaiming an Evangelistic Message of Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and the Comforting Presence of the Holy Spirit; Composing Vietnamese Songs and Poems; Deep Breath; Embracing the Deceased's Cadaver; Fainting; Keeping Memorabilia; Keeping Wake (with <i>Kweh-kweh</i>); Kissing the Deceased; Lying Down on the Casket/Hitting Oneself; Reading through the Bible; Sitting beside the Tomb while Thinking about the Lost Loved One; Visiting the Grave and Carrying Flowers; Wearing a White Band; and Writing Letters of Comfort to the Bereaved.</p>
--	---

Emotional Anthropological Expressions	
Categories	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Emotions or DS1 Distress</i>	Inclusive of which are displeasure, struggling spirit/bitterness of soul, and fear of God and humans
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Emotions or DS2 Dismay</i>	Inclusive of which is dismay
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Emotions or DS3 Appalment</i>	Inclusive of which are embarrassment / shame, guilt, and troubled or conscience-stricken heart
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Emotions or DS4 Death Emotions</i>	<p>Inclusive of which is grief;            Anger/Heartbreak/Shock;            Confusion/Depression;            Comfort/Joy/Happiness;            Pain/Sadness/Sorrow/Listlessness/Guilt/Regret;            Stress/Bogged Down/Mourning.</p>

While each of these expressions is of significant import, of particular interest are the pastoral practices that have aided in the mitigation of grief within the context of death.



The following is a list of ancient OT Israelite expressions observed amidst a context of grief over the death of a leading Israelite: (i) Burning and/or Burying; (ii) Chambering (Isolation); (iii) Donning Mourning Clothes (Widow's Clothes and/or Sackcloth); (iv) Elegiac Lament/Dirge and Weeping Lament; (iv) Fasting / Eating; (v) Mourning / Grief; (vi) Worshiping. These Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian grief expressions will be conversant with those gleaned from within the OT Israelite context for the purpose of determining whether or not these expressions are faithful to the gospel of God, that is, helpful (transformative) or harmful (complicated). The goal of course is that of generating pastoral care expressions that are transformative and even redemptive of grief, thus sustaining the bereaved and restoring their souls.

### ***5.2a. Burning and/or Burying***

As was noted earlier, burning or internment, was not a common mourning ritual practiced among the OT Israelites. Neither does one observe it within the NT. As Payne remarks, "In contrast to the Greeks and Romans, whose custom was to cremate the dead . . . the Jews 'bury rather than burn dead bodies.'"<sup>6</sup> Within the OT, and throughout the time of Christ's first advent and earthly ministry, it was commonplace to have caves or tombs for burial, and within a garden. In point of fact, John 19:38–42 tells us that after being given permission to remove his body from the cross for burial, Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, along with Nicodemus, took Jesus' body, bound it in linen wrappings with the spices (a mixture of myrrh and aloes), as was the burial custom of the Jews, and placed Jesus in the tomb that was in a garden. Thus, even Jesus

---

<sup>6</sup> Payne, "Burial," 556; quote taken from Tacitus, *Histories*, v. 5.

himself was buried in a sepulchre cave, which appeared to have been a single-chamber cave. But by the time of Jesus, sepulchre caves were coated with lime making them easily recognizable and thus avoided so as not to contaminate the living.<sup>7</sup> In light of Christ's own burial, it is not surprising to know that among Christians of both Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian cultures, burial is the more generic option. While GL5 spoke of "announcing the death and burial of the deceased," VL3 spoke of "head[ing] to the cemetery to bury my brother." In fact, according to F. L. Cross, "Burial is the traditional Christian method of disposing of the dead."<sup>8</sup> This, however, raises the question of the appropriateness of burning as an option for Christians today.

Since burning is particularly practiced among non-Christians, burying has been deemed more appropriate for Christians over and above burning. But what should be noted here is that Christians are not called to imitate Christ in *everything* that he said and did. Christopher J. H. Wright maintains that, "For when we speak about Christian discipleship as 'Christlikeness', *we do not mean that we are obliged to imitate every detail of Jesus' earthly life in first-century Galilee.* Often we work back from the stories of Jesus to a composite picture of his character, attitudes, priorities, values, reactions and goals. Then we seek to be 'Christlike' by reflecting what we know to have been true of Jesus in the choices, actions and response we have to make in our own lives."<sup>9</sup> With reference to the acronym WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?), Wright suggests that, "a rather simplistic tag, but it does embody a valid ethical stance, even if it usually needs a

---

<sup>7</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Burial: Death Rite," para. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Cross, "Burial Services," 255.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, *Ethics*, 37–38; emphasis mine.

lot of hard thinking and working out in our very ambiguous circumstances (and usually more than most people are prepared to do).”<sup>10</sup>

As a disciple or follower of Christ, Christians are called to imitate Christ. As Paul says, “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). The literary context suggests that such an attitude is one of humility (2:6–8), for which reason God the Father highly exalted Christ the Son as Lord over all (2:10–11; cf. Prov 3:34; 29:23; Matt 23:12). At the same time, Paul also urged, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). If by this Paul meant doing exactly as Jesus did, it seems fair to say that one should expect him to have abstained from food offered to idols, as would have been the case with Christ as part of his perfect fulfillment of the law (cf. Matt 5:17–19). Paul, however, remarked, “But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat” (1 Cor 8:8). Small wonder that he could say elsewhere, “I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself” (Rom 14:14), and thus, “All things indeed are clean” (14:20). Yet Paul goes on to assert that, “The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves” (14:22).

Reasoning from this equivalent analogy, it might be safe to contend here that if one approves of burying, good. If another approves of burning, this is also good. For in doing either, both done with thanksgiving to God, is done for the Lord (cf. 14:5–9). By doing so, no judgment is passed on the one who chooses to burn in lieu of bury, or vice versa, for all Christians will stand before the judgment seat and give an account to God

---

<sup>10</sup> Wright, *Ethics*, 38.

(14:10–12). And if there is therefore now no condemnation for anyone who is in Christ Jesus, then on judgment day, one should not expect the verdict in Christ’s court of law to be any different (8:1; cf. John 5:24).

Although one might consider the fact that Jesus was buried rather than burned, on the one hand, this might have been in keeping with the Jewish practice of burial as a means of distinction from the Greeks and Romans who burned their dead. But on the other hand, and even more specifically, in preference to burning, Jesus’ burial appears to have served as a fulfillment of God’s word in Ps 16:11 [10], which says, “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”

According to Peter C. Craigie and Marvin E. Tate,

*Sheol* was conceived as a kind of underworld; the word is translated in *G* as *hades* (ᾗδης). In Sheol, persons were believed to exist in a form of semi-life, at rest, yet not in joy, for they had not the fullness of life which made possible the riches of relationship with the living God. Death was thus to be dreaded. . . . in the state of Sheol there would be neither memory of God, nor the praise and worship of God.<sup>11</sup>

And in agreement with Paul, these words from Ps 16:11 [10] applied not to David, but to one greater than David, that is, David’s son Jesus Christ whom God raised from the dead (Acts 13:35–38).

The same, however, cannot be said of Christians. For it is appointed for all humans to die once, and after this, to stand before the judgment seat of Christ the righteous and just Judge of all the earth, the living and the dead (Heb 9:27; cf. John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5). Avoiding decay is thus not a possibility for any Christian. Preferring therefore to bury the dead will eventually lead to decomposition, which occurs swiftly upon burning the dead. The end—putrefaction—is

---

<sup>11</sup> Craigie and Tate, *Psalms 1–50*, 93.

still the same for both, albeit for a short while. Purification and transformation of our earthly bodies into bodies of immortality and imperishability will transpire at the appearing of Christ Jesus our Judge.

Further to this, as noted by Miller, within the early church, “Because pagans often desecrated Christian tombs and burned bodies, however, Christians began to affirm that any form of disposal was acceptable—no method could impede the resurrection.”<sup>12</sup> Either burning or burial therefore seems reasonably acceptable for all those who are in Christ Jesus. Even if more non-Christians practice it, there is *nothing sinful* in Christians adopting the ritual of internment. And apart from the high cost of a burial, “Cremation is becoming more popular in the West and may become more widely practiced because of the increasing scarcity of land for grave sites.”<sup>13</sup>

It therefore seems as though the choice is left to the believer in Christ whether to be burned or buried. Burning should not be viewed as somehow less dignifying than burying. Especially when the finances and the land for grave sites are becoming more and more difficult to obtain, coercing followers of Christ to bury rather than burn their dead seems more grief-complicating than grief-transforming. Consequently, *both* burning *and* burying appear to be helpful and transformative grief practices for Christians of all cultures. Both take death seriously, and both offer comfort to the bereaved. Yet one should not be favored over another because one might be deemed sinful, for both are acceptable when viewed from God’s perspective with thanksgiving, particularly in light of the resurrection that is a matter of fact for all those who are in Christ, their resurrection and their life (John 11:25).

---

<sup>12</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

<sup>13</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 820.

When accomplished with thanksgiving to God, and to the Lord (cf. Rom 14:5–9), both burning and burying are grief-transformative and embodying of the gospel of God since they both serve the purpose of honoring the dead while comforting the bereaved, both of whom have been created in the image of God, and thus endowed with dignity. And even if it is *impossible* for one to either burn or bury, (e.g., in the case of a person going missing at sea without resurfacing), we can still trust that God will perform the necessary funeral rites (as in the case of Moses [Deut 34:5–6]). Ultimately, at the second advent of Christ, all the dead in Christ will be raised in glory and power, their bodies fully transformed from perishability to imperishability, and from natural to spiritual, that is, completely dominated by the Spirit of the true and living God, just as it is with Christ’s body (1 Cor 15:42–49; Phil 3:20–21). Grounded in such confidence, all Christians can therefore exclaim: Thanks be to God who gives Christians victory over death, burial, and burning, through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:57).

### ***5.2b. Chambering (Privacy/Isolation)***

Following the death of David’s son Absalom, 2 Sam 18:33 tells us that, “The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, ‘O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!’” Overcome with grief, David’s body begins to tremble uncontrollably. At a time when David was called upon to display emotional strength and rejoice with his compatriots over the death of Israel’s enemy, he buckles under the weight of his grief, so that he has to isolate himself from his company of joyful men to mourn alone in private within his chamber.

Similarly, we learned from VL1 that, “In my culture . . . The father never cries in front of the family, but alone; he tries to be strong.” VL4 also noted that, “Grieving is not approvable in our culture. Men are encouraged to show strength and courage in pain and sorrow. People withdraw when they grieve. They would like to vent their pain and sorrow, but only to their trusted friends or relatives. People also cry. Women tend to cry more than men.” While ministering to the bereaved, especially during a funeral service, GL2 noted that, “Yes, I may be crying before, or after with the family. But at the time of the service, when I’m called upon to be a pastor, a minister, in that role, God gives me the grace to be able to do these things. And especially when the family members are all around you, even hugging you, or leaning on you for support, you have to be strong and stand up there.”

In his article “Aspects of Men’s Sorrow,” Zylla acknowledges that, “Research shows that men are more likely than women to avoid emotional expression in response to a loss or to be less willing to talk about their loss.”<sup>14</sup> From his own personal research on the autobiographical works of C. S. Lewis (*A Grief Observed*), Henri J. M. Nouwen (*A Letter of Consolation*), and Nicholas Wolterstorff (*Lament for a Son*), Zylla discovered a few insights into how one might think about gender roles in grief. “The lifeworld of grieving men takes new form with the loss of their loved one. There is a rupture in their lived world but also continuity. This forces an internal creative response of taking on parts of the loved one within one’s self and expressing the features of that person—even if it means changing their own self of self.”<sup>15</sup> Zylla especially references

---

<sup>14</sup> Zylla, “Aspects,” 846–47; cf. Cook, “Dad’s Double Binds”; Littlewood, *Aspects of Grief*; Staudacher, *Men and Grief*.

<sup>15</sup> Zylla, “Aspects,” 847.

the work of J. A. Cook whose research involved a qualitative study of fifty-five fathers who had lost their child to cancer within the previous five years. Four major mourning strategies were found helpful in allowing these fathers to “handle upsetting feelings without disclosing them to other people,”<sup>16</sup> and which were:

- i. Thinking about something else (i.e., cognitive blocking whereby the person deliberately thinks about practical, concrete details of their day-to-day lives).<sup>17</sup>
- ii. Reason/reflection (i.e., a rational reflection on the situation that caused the death of their child and a rather intentional focusing on the details of painful memories and failures rather than blocking them from consciousness).<sup>18</sup>
- iii. Doing something else (i.e., deflecting the pain of the grief by doing other things, which were divided into two orders: one was distracting themselves from their own mourning, and the other was allowing their child’s death to serve as a catalyst especially for engagement in community involvements).<sup>19</sup>
- iv. Solitary reflectiveness (i.e., expressions of grief as part of a private and solitary experience, partly because of the internal pressure to be strong for others who were affected by the loss, and partly because of social scripting).<sup>20</sup>

As it turns out, Zylla observed that Lewis, Nouwen, and Wolterstorff, each also practiced at least one of these mourning strategies as part of the process of handling their grief.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Cook, “Dad’s Double Binds,” 294.

<sup>17</sup> Cook, “Dad’s Double Binds,” 295.

<sup>18</sup> Cook, “Dad’s Double Binds,” 297.

<sup>19</sup> Cook, “Dad’s Double Binds,” 298–99.

<sup>20</sup> Cook, “Dad’s Double Binds,” 290.

<sup>21</sup> Zylla, “Aspects,” 849–52.



Feelings of guilt, with its not too distant friend of regret, can also be an emotion that steps into the context of grief, even when grief is expressed in private. Commenting on David's grief expressions at the funeral of Absalom, Arnold observed that, "David's powerful sense of loss ('If only I had died instead of you,' 18:33) towers over the landscape of this narrative, turning the army's spectacular military achievement into defeat (19:2). His anguish 'my son' is repeated five times in 18:33 (and another three times in 19:4) and reflects David's inconsolable attempt to fathom the loss." Arnold further adds that, "He seems to gather the past, with all his sins and those of his family, into this one defining moment of sorrow. When all is said and done, David cannot begin to resolve the incompleteness of his loss."<sup>22</sup> David presumably has regrets and thus feels a sense of guilt. Small wonder that Joseph Bayly also acknowledged, "Guilt is another natural response to death's wound."<sup>23</sup> Likewise, it was GL5 who noted that moments of being alone and pondering past memories of the lost loved one might lead one to "start thinking about what you could have done, and what you should have done. All these things come back in grief, and you feel regret, and you feel guilty. These are the emotions that you pass through and you get depressed."

In his monograph, *On Caring*, Milton Mayeroff stated that,

In caring I commit myself to the other; I hold myself out as someone who can be depended on. If there is an acute break within this relationship because of my indifference or neglect, I feel guilty, as if the other were to say, 'Where were you when I needed you, why did you let me down?' This guilt results from my sense of having betrayed the other, and my conscience calls me back to it. The more important this particular other is to me, the more pronounced is my guilt."<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 596.

<sup>23</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 46.

<sup>24</sup> Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 45.

What is more, Mayeroff affirms that,

Like pain, guilt tells me that something is wrong; if it is felt deeply, understood, and accepted, it provides me with the opportunity to return to my responsibility for the other. That return does not necessarily reinstate the relationship as it existed prior to the break; rather, it often makes for a deeper seriousness and awareness of my trust. It is like almost losing something through indifference, and by this near-loss realizing more deeply how precious it actually is to me. I do not resume caring simply to overcome guilt, but I overcome guilt by renewed caring.<sup>25</sup>

But what happens in the context of the loss of a loved one wherein the caregiver is unable to offer further care? What does the caregiver do with that pronounced guilt within? Margaret Stroebe et al., affirm that, “People often wish that they could have done things differently following the death of a loved one; thus can make them feel guilty. For example, bereaved persons may think that they should have done more to prevent the death or to have lived up to their expectations in their prior relationships with the deceased.”<sup>26</sup> Within the context of grief, guilt has been defined as “a remorseful emotional reaction in bereavement, with recognition of having failed to live up to one’s own inner standards and expectations in relationship to the deceased and/or the death.”<sup>27</sup> However, from their longitudinal investigation among participants of bereaved spouses (30 widows and 30 widowers), Stroebe et al., realized that “self-blame was associated with grief at the initial time-point and with its decline over time.”<sup>28</sup>

Even Bayly adds that, “All of us hurt the person we love, one way or another: we say sharp words, are inconsiderate and impatient, act selfishly. . . . In life we have a chance to straighten things out with, ‘I’m sorry, please forgive me,’ with gifts and surprises and special acts of love. Death closes the door on making amends, opens the

---

<sup>25</sup> Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Stroebe et al., “Guilt in Bereavement,” e96606.

<sup>27</sup> Li et al., “Guilt in Bereavement,” 166.

<sup>28</sup> Stroebe et al., “Guilt in Bereavement,” e96606.

door to a flood of ‘If only . . .’ thoughts.”<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Bayly also adds that, “If we feel guilty, we must find forgiveness. We can’t say ‘I’m sorry’ to the one who has died, but we can say it to God (Psalm 51:4, 10, 11).”<sup>30</sup>

What is more, rather than allow it to become overwhelming, guilt can even lead the mourner to extend care to others who might be alive and in need of it, although not for the purpose of overcoming guilt, which has already been removed by the ever-  
efficacious lifeblood of Jesus Christ, once for all (Heb 9:14). Eugene Khan suggests that, “the solution to self-pity is to feel pity for someone else and move in the direction of helping that person.”<sup>31</sup> In doing so, it is likely that, “Our thoughts will no longer be on what might have been, nor on visiting a cemetery plot or keeping a room ‘just as it was the last time he was in it,’ nor on ‘what she’d like us to do,’ nor on one own pains and fears of death. We will be freed from bondage to the past to move in a meaningful forward direction.”<sup>32</sup> In fact, even after losing their three children, Bayly admits that, “In ministering to the healing of others, my wife—and I—found healing.”<sup>33</sup>

Zylla also noted that, “Although men may not demonstrate strong emotions in loss and may suppress or contain the powerful emotions of grief, these recognitions begin to take root—grief isolates.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, “Grief is powerfully isolating. . . . Loneliness is inevitable.”<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman averred that, “Inevitably, a loss of hope leads to loneliness: the absence or loss of

---

<sup>29</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 46–47.

<sup>30</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 48.

<sup>31</sup> In Bayly, *Last Thing*, 48–49.

<sup>32</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 49.

<sup>33</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 49.

<sup>34</sup> Zylla, “Aspects,” 846.

<sup>35</sup> Zylla, “Aspects,” 846.

relationship. Loneliness is isolation from those who mean the most to us.”<sup>36</sup> Allan Hugh Cole, however, remarks that,

Most people feel lonely after a significant loss, especially the loss of a person with whom they spent a lot of time. When I served as a pastor, I heard widows and widowers speak frequently of feeling lonely after the spouse died. Several of these people confirmed, in different ways, what one woman said after her husband of fifty-two years died: ‘The nights are the worst. I dread going to bed because that’s when the loneliness becomes almost unbearable.’ I also listened to those who had lost children, friends, and colleagues, and social outlets speak of their loneliness and the pain it caused. We feel lonely because we miss what we once had but have now lost. But sometimes feelings of loneliness are also tied to our fears and anxieties about living with our loss.<sup>37</sup>

Writing from his own twin experience of grief having lost both of his wives,<sup>38</sup> J. Oswald Sanders avowed that, “One of the most prolific creators of loneliness is the natural grief and sorrow that accompany bereavement. In the early stages of that shattering experience, the sense of loss of the loved one is so pervasive that the grieving person cannot believe the sun will shine again. It seems quite outside the bounds of possibility that one could ever again face life with any semblance of enjoyment.”<sup>39</sup>

Yet a significant loss can lead to a desire to be left alone in silence and solitude. Bayly captures it quite accurately as he enumerates some of the natural responses to death, listing among its first a “Desire to be alone, or to have social contacts severely restricted.”<sup>40</sup> At some point, however, the mourning individual will realize that it is not good for him/her to be alone for the remainder of their lives (cf. Gen 2:18). Life must go on, and that without the deceased. The community of pastoral caregiving Christians therefore becomes a primary resource for the mourner to continue along life’s journey

---

<sup>36</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 142.

<sup>37</sup> Cole, *Good Mourning*, 13.

<sup>38</sup> After the passing of his first wife, Sanders remarried, but also lost his second wife.

<sup>39</sup> Sanders, *Facing Loneliness*, 67.

<sup>40</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 45.

together, and not alone. It is therefore necessary that the grieving person move, when s/he feels comfortably to do so, from a place of isolation into a space of communal silence and solitude. Eventually, that silence will be broken, and words will return so that communal communication can persist, and the burden of grief can be born. That is, weeping, or more precisely mourning, can be reciprocated (Rom 12:15). Otherwise, the mourner will find the words of Grollman to be true in that, “Pain suffered in solitude is more difficult to bear than anguish that is shared.”<sup>41</sup>

What is worse, however, is that of being the object of isolation, which might be referred to as social degradation, where the mourner is forced to isolate him/herself from the company of *happy* people. Which is what David was being called upon to do by Joab and his men amidst his expressions of grief at Absalom’s funeral (19:5). Which is not quite different in our contemporary society. Of import here are the words of Dana G. Cable’s observation of grief in American culture, (which also appears to correspond to the Canadian culture as well), that, “today mourning is regarded by some as morbid, even pathological. We want the bereaved to express their grief in private, and we make all kinds of efforts to encourage them to do so. Such statements as *You are doing so well, You have to be brave for the children, and Big boys don’t cry*, effectively discourage outward signs of mourning. We even go so far as to suggest that the loss is easily replaceable, as in the statement, *You’re young, you can have another baby*.”<sup>42</sup>

What is more, Cable further perceives that,

Much of this response is a function of our own discomfort with death and our lack of knowledge of what to say to grievers. We do not like to see people sad, and we attempt to cheer them up. Therefore, we communicate the subtle message that if someone wants our company and support, they should ‘be happy.’ If they

---

<sup>41</sup> Grollman, “Jewish Clients’,” 31.

<sup>42</sup> Cable, “Grief,” 62–63.

start to speak of the dead, we try to change the subject. If that doesn't work, *we begin to avoid them*. It doesn't take long for them to get the message: 'Don't show your grief to me.' In turn, they withdraw, or learn how to cover up their real feelings when they are with us.<sup>43</sup>

Since its appearance on the pages of the edited volume *Living with Grief* some twenty plus years ago, the perceptive comments of Cable still appear to ring true today. Such an attitude of negativity towards others who might be grieving and mourning, which can be considered as characteristics of affliction, has seen minimal change, if any at all. This is especially witnessed in Zylla's recent assertion that, "When we encounter the suffering of others, we do not readily enter into that suffering as much as we might think. In subtle ways we fail to acknowledge the full implications of the situation."<sup>44</sup> Further to this, "Often, suffering includes this social experience of being shamed, ridiculed, accused, or attacked."<sup>45</sup> This has given rise to Zylla's identification of the three types of social suffering that are inter-related, and which deepen the experiences of social degradation: "abandonment (the deep disappointment of the withdrawal of support of others), rejection (the alienation from the community where companionship of life is refused), and forsakenness (the anticipation of love and acceptance is fully disappointed and, in its place, one experiences scorn or forsakenness itself)."<sup>46</sup>

Challenging the community of God to act compassionately rather than indifferently, Zylla states that, "Before we can fully live into our mandate as the compassionate community of God [i.e., moving toward suffering rather than away from it, and thus entering into the suffering of others with active help] we must come to terms

---

<sup>43</sup> Cable, "Grief," 63; emphasis mine.

<sup>44</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 93.

<sup>45</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 62–63.

<sup>46</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 62–63.

with the source of our indifference to the suffering of others,”<sup>47</sup> by which is meant “the failure to either see, to acknowledge or to act on behalf of others.”<sup>48</sup> One way of acting on behalf of others in their suffering is by moving into the context of grief so as to be with and sit in solidarity with those who mourn. As Wolterstorff suggests,

Death is awful, demonic. If you think your task as comforter is to tell me that really, all things considered, it’s not so bad, you do not sit with me in my grief but place yourself off in the distance away from me. Over there, you are of no help. What I need to hear from you is that you recognize how painful it is. I need to hear from you that you are with me in my desperation. To comfort me, you have to come close. *Come sit beside me on my mourning bench.*<sup>49</sup>

The words of Edward Musgrave Blaiklock offer comfort to anyone experiencing grief. Blaiklock wrote the following prayer in support of those who experience loneliness amidst sorrow and grief, the likeness of which he experienced at the passing of his wife Kathleen Minnie Mitchell. “Father, we pray for all lonely people, especially for those who, coming home to an empty house, stand at the door hesitant, afraid to enter. May all who stand in a doorway with fear in their hearts, like the two on the Emmaus road, ask the Living One in. Then, by His grace, may they find that in loneliness they are never alone, and that He peoples empty rooms with His presence.”<sup>50</sup>

### ***5.2c. Donning Mourning Clothes (Widow’s Clothes and/or Sackcloth)***

According to Gen 38:14, after the deaths of her two successive husbands (Er and Onan), Tamar the daughter-in-law of Judah donned widow’s clothes. Second Samuel 3:31–32 says that, following the death of Abner, David, Joab, and all the people with them,

---

<sup>47</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ford, *Sins*, 12.

<sup>49</sup> Wolterstorff, *Lament*, 34; emphasis mine.

<sup>50</sup> Blaiklock, *Sorrow*, 41.

clothe themselves in sackcloth. As noted earlier by Herr, “It most frequently refers to a garment worn during times of mourning or sorrow (Gen. 37:34; Ps. 30:11 [MT 12]).”<sup>51</sup>

While it was not mentioned, it is customary for Guyanese-Canadians to wear all black to a funeral. It was noted by VL3, however, that, “There is a traditional Vietnamese way of dealing with grief. During the funeral service, whereas in Vietnam the immediate bereaved family wear all white, the mourners in Canada wear black clothing with a white band around their head and/or their arm.” Explaining the significance behind this ritual, VL3 further elucidated that, “This traditional white band is to be worn for an entire year as a sign of mourning and as a symbol of the loss of life or the ashes of the deceased.” Also implied in such a year-long physical expression is the silent truth that *grief* is not terminated upon the completion of the committal (burial or cremation) of the deceased. Alternatively stated, wearing the traditional white band throughout the rest of the year following the death of a close family member is to suggest the implicit statement that even when the dead is long gone and no longer physically present, *grief still* persists.

At this juncture we are reminded of the words of Hoang who noted that, “After the funeral, family members wore a small piece of black or white fabric on their clothes everyday to signify that they were in mourning.”<sup>52</sup> Hoang further remarked that this piece of fabric would usually be worn for two years. “On the second anniversary, these clothes would be burned to signify that the mourning period was over.”<sup>53</sup> And according to Hoang, “The burning of the mourning clothes signifies the incorporation of the

---

<sup>51</sup> Herr, “Sackcloth,” 256.

<sup>52</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 21.

<sup>53</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 21.



bereaved into the normal course of life.”<sup>54</sup> Yet Hoang also affirmed that, “The deceased’s memory is not erased and the family still observes the anniversary of the death each year.”<sup>55</sup>

One might therefore contend that wearing sackcloth or mourning clothes rooted within one’s culture, can be understood as something helpful rather than harmful. When worn amidst grief, mourners continue to testify to the reality that grief is not something that vanishes with the invisibility of the body of the deceased to either interment or incineration. But even while it persists, grief can be transformed in the wearing of such mourning clothes as it signals to outsiders that the mourner is still in a period of grief, and thus should be respected, especially when there is a tendency for some to coerce mourners to get over their grief as soon as possible so as to move on with their lives. Grief becomes complicated when people are told to move on with their lives quickly following the death of their loved ones. By wearing their culturally customary mourning clothes for a specific period of time, and in so doing keep the memories of the deceased alive, the bereaved can indeed move on with their lives, one step at a time, rather than expeditiously. Doing so will permit them a time to process their grief rather than hurry it along, which can make matters worse for the bereaved. The possibility for grief to be transformed increases as the bereaved is respectfully allowed time to grieve, and this, even by means of wearing of their cultural mourning clothes. Even Jesus told his disciples, “Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. . . . Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take

---

<sup>54</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 22.

<sup>55</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 22.

your joy away from you” (John 16:20, 22). By inference, patience with those who need time to process their grief even as they wear their grief clothes, can be viewed as an act of compassion that embodies the gospel of God (1 Thess 5:14).

#### ***5.2d. Elegiac Lament/Dirge and Weeping Lament***

At the death of his first wife, Abraham wept for Sarah (Gen 23:2). On the occasion of Jacob/Israel’s death, Joseph and the Egyptians wept seventy days (Gen 50:1, 3). What is more, as the corpse of Jacob/Israel was being transported from Egypt to Israel, the funeral cortege (i.e. Joseph, all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and the elders of the land of Egypt), paused for seven days at the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, where they lamented with a very great and sorrowful lamentation, and also mourned for Jacob/Israel (50:10). So great was this mourning that the Canaanites said, “This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians,” for which reason the place is called Abel-mizraim (50:11). The longest recorded period of weeping in the OT is on behalf of the patriarch Jacob/Israel. When Aaron died, the house of Israel wept thirty days for him (Num 20:29). Similarly, there was also a thirty-day period of weeping among the sons of Israel for the prophet Moses in the plains of Moab (Deut 34:8). And finally, we are told that at his death, David and the people with him wept for Abner (2 Sam 3:32).

Here one is reminded of the words King and Stager that, “The announcement of death was followed by lamentation. . . . In addition to family members, professional mourners, generally women, were paid to lament during a funeral.”<sup>56</sup> This is particularly

---

<sup>56</sup> King and Stager, *Life*, 372–73.

observed in the words of Jeremiah: “Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Consider and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for the wailing women, that they may come’” (9:17).

It was remarked by VL2 that, “When a close relative like a mother, a father, husband, or wife, passes away, the bereaved who have been closely bonded with the deceased, will lament that death for a long time.” At the death of VL2’s mother, VL2 stated that, “We lament in silence.” Likewise, GL1 noted that, “It is normal for people to wail and weep so much that they actually pass out. It is normal sometimes for people to scream and shout virtually at the top of their lungs all while beating their chest. It is not uncommon to hear loud wails from those stricken by grief. You see that at some funerals. But it has a deep emotional impact.”

Weeping lament was also observed in GL3’s understanding of grief as that of “An outward expression of an inward feeling,” which was further supplemented by, “The word grief means to me that you have a loss, and there is something to lament over that is beyond your control.” In addition to this, GL3 then proceeded to aver that, “You lose a part of you, or a part of your relationship with loved ones and friends, and you cannot help them, so you grieve. . . . It’s a loss that you lament over.” Sharing the example of the loss of a sister, GL3 further stated that, “There is always an empty space, an empty chair there, and you lament over that.” For GL3, grief in the form of lament includes weeping and shedding of tears.

Laments, however, do not only constitute wailing and weeping, but can also include dirges and elegies, which are mournful songs. Five elegiac laments come to the fore within the bounds of Genesis and Esther amidst grief, three of which were chanted by David, one by an old prophet living in Bethel, and one by Jeremiah.

With regards to David's elegiac laments, the first one and longest is sung on the occasion of the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:19–27), the lyrics of which are as follows:

Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen! Tell *it* not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult. O mountains of Gilboa, let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in life, and in their death they were not parted; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Titled "The Song of the Bow," and written in the book of Jashar, this elegy was to be taught to the sons of Judah (1:17–18).

David's second elegy was occasioned by the death of Abner, cousin of Saul and commander-in-chief of Saul's army. The lyrics are as follows: "Should Abner die as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters; as one falls before the wicked, you have fallen" (3:33–34).

The third of David's elegies was occasioned by the death of his son Absalom, the lyrics of which are as follows: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son! (18:33). This elegy is echoed once more in the words, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son! (19:4).

First Kings 13:29–30 tells of an old prophet living in Bethel who buried the man of God from Judah in his own grave. While mourning his death, the old prophet expressed his sorrow through the following elegiac lament: "Alas, my brother!"

On the occasion of Josiah's death, Jeremiah chanted an elegiac lament. Also noted here is the fact that, together with Jeremiah, all the male and female singers speak and write about Josiah in their lamentations (2 Chron 35:25). Unfortunately, this elegy is lost to the reader.

VL5 remarked, "Vietnamese people grieve for our loved ones who passed away for a long period. At the time of the funeral, family and relatives usually show deep grief as loud crying, talking to the [deceased] loved one." Similarly, GL1 noted that, "People in the Guyanese culture are not afraid to express their emotion and especially among Indian people, old Indian people who were Hindus. They will just express it, and sometimes they will express it in singing. Wailing singing would be like a funeral dirge. They might express it by saying things related to the past. They might repeat words told them by the deceased." To this GL1 further stated that, "I was at one funeral where a lady said to the deceased, 'I know you used to tell me that my family is ugly, and your family is nice. Yeh, that's true, you know. But you're taking all your niceness with you right now.'" When such humor surfaces, GL1 remarked, "You probably have to put your hand on your mouth" so as to restrain oneself from bursting into laughter.

When asked what range of expressions of grief are normal responses within the Guyanese-Canadian culture, it was GL1 who also acknowledged that, "Well, there are all kinds of expression. There's tears, there's wailing, there's mourning. People can faint. It is normal for people to faint and have to be revived in our culture. It is normal for people to wail and weep so much that they actually pass out. It is normal for people to scream and shout virtually at the top of their lungs all while beating their chest. You see that at some funerals. But it has a deep emotional impact." Such emotional impact has to do with love for the deceased, which can be heard in the words of GL1: "In terms

of the significance, I think it is the culture that people grew up in, and what they saw that is just what they continue to do, especially among Indian people. Indian people felt that if you do not do that, you were not actually showing that you love that person. And it would come over to their family that you really didn't care about that person." In other words, according to GL1, "So in many cases, the wailing, the weeping, the fainting, were ways of telling their people that we also love this person. If they didn't do something like that, it might be conceived that they didn't really love the person."

One is reminded of Fisher's words that, "Immediately following a death in a home the entire neighborhood was alerted to the sad event by the wail that was suddenly raised."<sup>57</sup> On a similar note, Payne remarks, that, "Death was announced by a shrill cry, followed by a tumult of lamentation (2 Sam 1:12; 18:33; cf. Mark 5:38)."<sup>58</sup> While it would appear as though the wives of the deceased mourned by themselves (Zech 12:12–14), it was the professional mourners, consisting mainly of women (Jer 9:17), who "occupied a prominent place" during mourning. Being "skilled in lamentation (Amos 5:16)," such female professional mourners comprised of "dirge singers and flute players (Matt 9:23; Mark 5:38)."<sup>59</sup> Payne further avers that, "Weeping, so natural in itself (Jer. 9:18), was supplemented by cries of 'Alas, alas' (Amos 5:16), 'Alas, my brother' (1 Kgs 13:30; cf. Jer 22:18; 34:5), and similar phrases, until self-control vanished."<sup>60</sup> Not surprisingly, Miller notes that, "In ancient Israel, groups of paid mourners emerged who could wail on ritual cue. Much of the funeral services centered around these professional

---

<sup>57</sup> Fisher, "Burial Customs," 386.

<sup>58</sup> Payne, "Burial," 556.

<sup>59</sup> Payne, "Burial," 557.

<sup>60</sup> Payne, "Burial," 557.

mourners who sang psalms and delivered elaborate eulogies for the dead (2 Chr 35:25; Jer 9:17–22).”<sup>61</sup>

Within the NT, wailing is evoked at the death of a synagogue official’s daughter. Mark 5:38 reads, “They [Jesus, Peter, James, and John] came to the house of the synagogue official; and He saw a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.” Weeping also surfaces at the death of Dorcas/Tabitha of Joppa, a disciple of Christ and a woman abounding in the deeds of kindness and charity. Requesting his presence in Joppa, Acts 9:39 tells us that Peter travelled from Lydda to Joppa where he was taken into the upper room where all the widows stood and wept while they showed him all the tunics and garments that Dorcas/ Tabitha used to make during her time with them. Following the death of Lazarus, Jews visited the home of Mary and Martha to console them during their grief. As Jesus advanced towards Bethany, the village of Mary and Martha, we observe that the consoling Jews came along with Mary when she approached Jesus and together they wept with her (John 11:33). Upon seeing this, Jesus was so deeply moved in spirit and troubled that we are told in no uncertain terms that, “Jesus wept” (11:35). Is it any wonder that when Paul wrote his letter to the Romans, he admonished the believers to be united in their sincere love for each other by rejoicing with those who rejoice, and weeping with those who weep (12:15)?

While it can evoke wailing/weeping, it is not uncommon for grief to also inspire eulogies and elegies. Which is why it is not unusual for most funerals to include a formal eulogy of the deceased with many informal eulogies by family and friends during a wake night or viewing, or even days leading up to or following the death of a person. In

---

<sup>61</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

fact, “the funeral is the last opportunity to publicly present someone’s characteristic personality.”<sup>62</sup> Eulogies can take the form of elegies, that is, funeral songs or dirges or poems written and sung and recited in memory of the deceased. For VL1, “especially since Vietnamese music is sad music, the composition of songs and poems” become essential expressions that aid in the coping of grief.

Within our contemporary society, while it is common for the bereaved to write a eulogy, finding such elegiac poems and songs is a rather rare expression. Especially since it has served as a coping mechanism for the Vietnamese people, thus transforming their grief, which embodies the gospel of God (Rev 2:8–11; cf. Jer 29), such a practice can be reclaimed for our contemporary Christian appropriation.

### ***5.2e. Fasting***

Upon the death of the tribe of Benjamin, the sons of Israel fasted (Judg 20:26). The tribe of Benjamin, however, was destroyed at the hands of the sons of Israel on account of their sin of abusing the body of the concubine of a Levite. The valiant men of Jabesh-gilead also fasted following the death, burning, and burial of Saul and his three sons. Their fast lasted seven days (1 Sam 31:32). Interestingly, David fasted for seven days prior to the death of his son through his clandestine relationship with Bathsheba the wife of Uriah (2 Sam 12:15–18). As a mourning ritual, fasting was one of the initial reactions to grief among OT Israelites, and this especially “at times of extraordinary grief, as at the death of an only son (Jer 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10).”<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> van Tongeren, “Ritual,” 127.

<sup>63</sup> Payne, “Burial,” 557.



GL5 stated that, “For some Guyanese, as a means of respecting the dead, no rank food like meat or fish, is consumed during the time of grief.” It is also possible for those in grief to engage in an involuntary fast. Thus, the words of GL5, “Your stomach doesn’t accept anything.” Upon receiving the sad news of the death of two sisters and three nephews at sea while crossing from Vietnam to Canada, VL1 remarked that, “When I realized this, for eight years, I prayed and questioned God, ‘Why has this happened to me and my family?’ I even went to the Prayer Garden in Oshawa and prayed and fasted for answers from God.”

Westermann notes that, “no worship observance in ancient Israel is as well known to us as is the special rite of lamentation, often called a ‘fast’ (*sôm*).”<sup>64</sup> What is more, “Since it was always anticipated by a special crisis, fasting had to be announced in preparation for the rite. The community had to be called together for it, and that meant the entire people, including women and children (cf. the summons to community laments in Ezek 21:12; Joel 2:16; Jonah 3:5).”<sup>65</sup> Further to this, “Part of the observance of a fast included purification of the worshipers (Joel 1:14), abstinence, and garments of mourning. Above all, girding on sackcloth (Isa 22:12; Jer 4:8; 6:26), sprinkling one’s head with dust and ashes (Josh 7:6; Neh 9:1), gestures of humiliation and entreaty, and ‘weeping before the Lord’ (Judg 20:23–26).”<sup>66</sup> And according to Gunkel, “The holy act of ‘fasting before YHWH’ (Jer 36:9) characteristically arises from the withholding of food and drink (Deut 9:9, 18; Judg 20:26; 1 Sam 7:6; Isaa 58:3; Neh 9:1; Jonah 3:7; Esth

---

<sup>64</sup> Westermann, *Psalms*, 30.

<sup>65</sup> Westermann, *Psalms*, 30.

<sup>66</sup> Westermann, *Psalms*, 30.

4:16) in precise contrast to the joyous festivals in which the consumption of the sacrificial meat before YHWH plays such an important role.”<sup>67</sup>

In a similar vein, Clarence B. Bass observes that, “In the OT the fast was regarded as an act of self-renunciation designed to mollify God’s wrath and move him to act in gracious disposition. In times of emergency, the people fasted to persuade God to spare them from impending calamity.”<sup>68</sup> Otherwise stated, by performing the ritual act of fasting, “One hoped especially that the plight of the helpless would move God.”<sup>69</sup> In the case of David, his fast was employed in “hopes that the Lord might change his mind . . . to spare his son’s life.”<sup>70</sup> Otherwise stated, “David’s self-denial and self-abasement . . . may have been an effort to demonstrate to God that the child’s recovery was more important to him than either food, comfort, or pride.”<sup>71</sup>

Voluntarily or not, fasting is observed to be part of the cycle of processing one’s grief. When fasting is inhibited, grief can become complicated. Fasting, however, is not forever. There will come a time when fasting needs be broken, and a consistent intake of food commenced for the healthy development of the body, which is from God, and should be cared for as part of one’s self-love, and love for God (cf. Eph 5:29). Otherwise, complications can arise, leading to another unnecessary death, and with it, compounded grief for other bereaved relatives. When properly done, fasting can thus embody the gospel of God, and thus be both an expression that is transformative of grief, and helpful rather than hurtful to the bereaved.

---

<sup>67</sup> Gunkel, *Introduction*, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Bass, “Fast, Fasting,” 781; cf. Jer 14:12 and Isa 58:1–10 for an abuse of fasting.

<sup>69</sup> Gunkel, *Introduction*, 83.

<sup>70</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, 195.

<sup>71</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 374.

### ***5.2f. Grieving / Mourning***

Several OT Israelites engaged in the ritual of mourning their dead. Abraham mourned on the occasion of the death of his first wife Sarah (Gen 23:2).<sup>72</sup> Judah mourned for his wife, the daughter of Shua (38:12). The entire nation of Israel gathered together and mourned the death of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 25:1; cf. 28:3). Bathsheba mourned for her husband Uriah (2 Sam 11:26). David mourned for his son Absalom (18:33—19:1–2). It is also here that the only occurrence of the emotive response of grief—“The king is grieved for his son”—comes to the fore within the borders of Genesis and Esther. The prophet at Bethel mourned for the man of God from Judah (1 Kgs 13:29–30). But none was as great as that of the patriarch Jacob/Israel for whom the Egyptians mourned seventy days (Gen 50:3). Further to this, a caravan (comprising of Joseph, all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt), paused for seven days at the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, where they lamented with a very great and sorrowful lamentation, and also mourned for Jacob/Israel (50:10). So great was this mourning that even the Canaanites exclaimed, “This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians,” which is why the place is called Abel-mizraim (50:11).

Within the OT Israelite culture, it was customary for close relatives and friends to visit the house of and mourn with the immediate family of the deceased. During this time, it was also customary for professional mourners to be hired (Jer 9:17–18). Here one is reminded of the words of King and Stager, who remark that, “Mourning was part

---

<sup>72</sup> Abraham’s second wife was Keturah (Gen 25:1). It is noted here that though not within the context of grief through death, Nehemiah mourns following his reception of the sad news that the wall of Jerusalem had been broken down and the gates had been burned with fire (1:1–11).

of the burial rite, a way of honoring the deceased. In addition to family members, professional mourners, generally women, were paid to lament during a funeral. . . . Mourning continued for a period of seven days.”<sup>73</sup> Further to this, “The emphasis on mourning resulted from the Hebrew appreciation of human life and health, which was considered one of God’s greatest gifts (Ps 91:16), and also from a view of human nature which affirmed embodied existence (Ps 16:9–11).”<sup>74</sup>

While there is nothing distinct about mourning, different cultures mourn differently. As noted by VL2, “Last year my mother passed away in the hospital. Since my younger sister was living with my mother for a long time, she was deeply attached to her, she was the one who mourned much. She cried in loud tears expressing her love for my mother, embracing her still warm body.” For VL3, “Emotionally, from time to time, when I am driving alone, I would cry remembering my dad sitting beside me, and what he said. I usually don’t tell anyone about this because it’s my way of mourning for my dad by myself.” VL3 further noted that while mourners wear black clothing in Canada, it is more traditional for Vietnamese to wear a white band around their head and/or arm for an entire year as a sign of mourning, as a symbol of the loss of life, or as a symbol of the ashes of the deceased.

For GL1, mourning is itself an expression of grief. In fact, “the culture believes that you should grieve, and that you should mourn the loss of a loved one. The cultural belief is that you should pull together at that time, and do your very best in expressing your final respects for the deceased.” However, there is comfort in mourning, as noted by GL5’s reference to Matt 5:3, which says, “Blessed are those that mourn for they shall

---

<sup>73</sup> King and Stager, *Life*, 373.

<sup>74</sup> Miller, “Funeral Customs,” 821.

be comforted.” Thus it is not surprising to hear GL5 further avow, “God is the God of all comfort. You know that He is the only One who can bring you through, and give the strength at the time of your great loss. And He’s the only One that you can depend on and lean upon at this time. And you know that you have the full assurance that God is not going to forsake you, and let you down, because He promises in His word to bring you that comfort and to be there.” Which is why GL5 further asserted that, “So you turn to Him because He is your only source of comfort. You have family and friends that are there to comfort and surround you, but God is the ultimate comfort that you turn to. So you lean mostly on Him.”

Privately or publicly, mourning should expressed, otherwise it can become complicated, adding sorrow upon sorrow. Billman and Migliore argue that, “the capacity to grieve deeply is a mark of psychological maturity, rooted in the processes that are essential to human life and development. The inability to mourn diminishes human life.”<sup>75</sup> From this perspective, Billman and Migliore can go on to affirm that within the Christian tradition, grief and mourning are inclusive within lament.<sup>76</sup> Sadly, much of our Western culture has denied and minimized our expression of grief with all its emotions. One ramification of this is the opening of wounds amidst grief that have been expanded and grown from cracks to chasms leaving Christian mourners “less and less human, empty Christian shells with painted smiley faces. For some, a dull, low-level depression descends upon us, making us nearly unresponsive to all reality.”<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Billman and Migliore, *Rachel’s Cry*, 82.

<sup>76</sup> Billman and Migliore, *Rachel’s Cry*, 82.

<sup>77</sup> Scazzero, *Spirituality*, 139.

J. LeBron McBride avows that, “Some of the symptoms of an unresolved grief reaction can be clinical depression lasting more than one and one half years after the loss, prolonged isolation, emotional numbing, continuing compulsive overactivity without a sense of loss, profound identification with the deceased, and extreme and persistent anger.”<sup>78</sup> Likewise, the late John Bowlby pointed out that much of the anxiety, depression, and personality disturbance observed within clinical practice may very well be attributed to pathological or disordered mourning.<sup>79</sup> Alternatively termed complicated bereavement disorder (CBD) or complicated grief (CG), according to Deborah Khoshaba,

Grieving the loss of a loved one tears open our hearts, our lives, and seems to make time stand still, as we search for ways to make sense of the loss and what it means to our whole lives. We cry, eat more or less, can’t sleep, long for our loved ones and wonder how we will ever be able to live without them. This is all normal in simple grief. . . . However, for some people, acute grief can gain a foothold and become a chronic, debilitating mental health condition that worsens over time, rather than gets better. This is called complicated grief.<sup>80</sup>

Allowing one to grieve their loss might therefore serve as a healthy step toward preventing the onslaught of complicated grief and the subsequent need for professional treatment. However, as Khoshaba also notes, “Pre-existing mental health conditions, multiple stressors, emotional dependency, or substance abuse issues complicate the grieving process and increase the likelihood of complicated bereavement disorder that may necessitate professional treatment.”<sup>81</sup> If it does reach that point, it is crucial for the Christian know that s/he should not be ashamed to seek out professional help. That said, however, Khoshaba also notes that, “CG do not adequately mourn the loss of the loved

---

<sup>78</sup> McBride, *Spiritual Crisis*, 97.

<sup>79</sup> Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*, 23.

<sup>80</sup> Khoshaba, “Complicated Bereavement,” para. 2.

<sup>81</sup> Khoshaba, “Complicated Bereavement,” para. 3.

one because they haven't faced the reality of the loss. Preoccupation with the deceased and exclusion of activities and relationships that fall outside this preoccupation gives them enough subconscious pleasure to keep them stuck in the grieving process. They are feeling most certainly. But, their feelings emphasize more a wish to keep the person alive than an acceptance that the person is gone."<sup>82</sup> In other words, depression can result from the mourners inability to let go of the deceased loved one, which is another natural response to death wherein people feel bound to the one who has died.<sup>83</sup>

In the ministry of lament, the work of Therese A. Rando plays a very important role. In *Treatment of Complicated Mourning*, Rando proposed six mourning processes: (i) recognize the loss; (ii) react to the separation; (iii) recollect and reexperience the deceased and the relationship; (iv) relinquish the old attachments to the deceased and the old assumptive world; (v) readjust to move adaptively into the new world without forgetting the old; and (vi) reinvest.<sup>84</sup> Using Rando's work as a conversation partner, Gene Fowler draws a parallel between Rando's six-stage mourning process and that of the form or structure of a typical lament psalm in his *Ministry of Lament: Caring for the Bereaved* as a way to extend pastoral care to the bereaved. In this manner, Fowler engages psychology in dialogue with that of biblical theology. The table below depicts the supposed dialogue between psychological mourning and that of the biblical lament psalm.<sup>85</sup>

<b>Psychological Mourning</b>	<b>Biblical Lament</b>
Recognize the Loss	Address to God
React to the Separation	Complaint
Recollect and Reexperience the Deceased and the Relationship	Confession of Trust

<sup>82</sup> Khoshaba, "Complicated Bereavement," para. 13.

<sup>83</sup> Bayly, *Last Thing*, 47.

<sup>84</sup> Rando, *Treatment*, 44–60.

<sup>85</sup> Fowler, *Ministry*, 43–149.

Relinquish the Old Attachments to the Deceased and the Old Assumptive World	Petition
Readjust to Move Adaptively into the New World without Forgetting the Old	Words of Assurance
Reinvest	Vow of Praise and Thanksgiving

Figure 2.

Through this dialogue between Rando's mourning processes and the form or structure of the lament psalms, Fowler characterizes those who are rewriting their bereaved life story as contemporary psalmists of lament. As such, Fowler commends this ministry of lament to pastors and congregations in hopes that they will learn from contemporary psalmists of lament what it is like to grow in relationship to God during the course of rewriting their bereaved life story.

As psalmists, they become poets who cry out to God for help in prayer. They experience complaint, bringing the awfulness of their suffering to light, facing their alienation from God, and wrestling with the perennial human questions about suffering. They also reach the point of confessing trust in God's reliability, not by avoiding complaint but by facing it. They make specific petitions for help, and they experience assurance that God heard their prayer and will act. They know what it means to be grateful to God in the aftermath of all that has happened, and they genuinely respect, admire, and appreciate God, which we see in their praise.<sup>86</sup>

In a world wracked with grief, it is hoped and prayed that the ministry of lament will find a prominent place where it may serve to bring comfort and healing and sustainability to all who grieve.

### **5.2g. *Shedding Tears***

Only locale was the expression of shedding tears found within the bounds of Genesis and Esther, and that in 2 Kgs 20:5. In this passage of Scripture, the prophet Isaiah is told by the LORD to return to Hezekiah, the leader of His people, and say to him, "Thus says

---

<sup>86</sup> Fowler, *Ministry*, 148–49.



the LORD, the God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your *tears*; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD’” (emphasis mine).

Here we are also reminded of the words of VL3 that, “Emotionally, from time to time, when I am driving alone, I would cry remembering my dad sitting beside me, and what he said.” VL4 also added, “People also cry. Women tend to cry more than men.” And according to VL5, “From a Vietnamese point of view, my understanding of grief is that of a deep cry. . . . Vietnamese people grieve for our loved ones who passed away for a long period of time. At the time of the funeral, family and relatives usually show deep grief as loud crying.” For GL5, “Crying is the most common one [expression]. When you don’t cry, it’s grieving within your inner being, and it makes you sad.” During the funeral, staring at the body of the eldest brother, GL1 stated, “When I saw him, his body, I released my grief by crying and expressing it in tears, and I felt so much better.”

Peterman and Schmutzer speak of positive tears as those “tears that should be cried. That is, they are godly; they reflect love of people, grief over loss, and hatred of sin.”<sup>87</sup> However, they also make note of the incongruity of such positive tears in averring that, “Ironically, positive tears may have a variety of negative causes. By negative we mean weeping that is incited by sin in its various manifestations: infidelity, betrayal, loss of loved ones through death, sexual abuse, social fragmentation, prejudice. Such tears may arise from abuse of power, arrogance, the crippling effects of disease or war, substance abuse, lack of love, violence, or deception.”<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Pain*, 164.

<sup>88</sup> Peterman and Schmutzer, *Pain*, 165.

It is an irrefragable reality known the world over that death brings with it the shedding of tears. Thus we are reminded of the words of Thomas and Habermas that, “Crying is one of God’s ways of helping us release the intensity of our pain.”<sup>89</sup> That notwithstanding, Judith Kay Nelson, relying on the attachment theory proposed by John Bowlby, recently developed a comprehensive theory of crying. Nelson asserted that, “crying is above all a relationship behavior, a way to help us get close and not simply a vehicle for emotional expression or release. We do not cry because we need to get rid of pain, but because we need connection with our care givers—literal, internal, fantasized, or symbolic—in order to accept and heal from our pain and grief.”<sup>90</sup>

Shedding tears then appears to be a cathartic response to grief. Bottling one’s tears, rather than pouring them into God’s bottle (Ps 56:9 [8]) might only serve to complicate rather than mitigate grief. Therefore, shedding tears should be encouraged as a means of mitigating one’s grief, and sustaining the bereaved.

### ***5.2h. Worshiping God***

According to 2 Sam 12:20, following the death of his unnamed stillborn son, “David arose from the ground, washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his clothes; and *he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped*. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate” (emphasis mine). When asked by his servants, “What is this thing you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food!” (12:21), David proffered the following optimistic response: “While the child was *still* alive, I fasted and wept; for I

---

<sup>89</sup> Thomas and Habermas, *Season*, 239.

<sup>90</sup> Nelson, *Tears*, 6.

said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (12:22–23). According to Bergen,

In a manner appropriate for a priest (cf. Exod 30:20; cf. Ps 110:4) David first washed himself and then ‘went into the house of the LORD and worshiped.’ In losing his son, David sought more than ever to gain a deeper relationship with his Heavenly Father. It is significant that David did not break his fast until after he had worshiped God; David’s hunger for a right relationship with God exceeded his desire for culinary delights.<sup>91</sup>

Worshipping God was also found to be a common practice among both the Guyanese-Canadians and Vietnamese-Canadians amidst grief. As a matter of fact, according to GL5, wakes prayer services will be held in memory of the deceased. The contents of such services are usually that of singing hymns and songs to bring comfort. Such songs or hymns would be “the favorite hymns of the person while he or she was a live.” Also noted by GL5 is that, “You sing sacred hymns and songs of comfort and healing such as: ‘O God Our Help in Ages Past,’ ‘Happy the Home When God is There,’ and ‘The Lord’s My Shepherd.’ And if the person who died is of an East Indian descent, we usually sing bhajans at the wake and funeral. One of the most common bhajans is ‘Yishu Ne Kaha: Jiwan Ki Roti,’ which means, ‘Jesus said: I am the bread of life.’”

When it comes to worshipping God amidst grief from within the Vietnamese-Canadian context, it was noted by VL2 that, “We commemorate the life of the deceased one devoted to God by holding a solemn ceremony with one’s family and others, either in the church, or in the funeral home. During the funeral service we worship God with meaningful songs, prayer, and witnessing to unbelievers [through preaching].” The impetus for such worship can be heard in VL2’s affirmation of VL’s mother being in the

---

<sup>91</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 375.

very hands of God, that is, Christ, in whose presence VL2's mother had gone to be:

“After a while, I gathered my brothers and sisters together in the hallway of the hospital and reminded them that the most important thing was my mother had put her faith in God through the blood of Christ. Her life was in God's hands. We believe in the eternal life that God has promised to those who put their faith in Him. Since we are believers in Christ, we believe we will meet our mother again.”<sup>92</sup>

Having this hope fuels Vietnamese-Canadian believers to proclaim an evangelistic message at every funeral service for the salvation of their souls/spirits. Just as the Lord had sent ships to rescue them so that they were and are able to find refuge in such places as American and Canada, according to Minh Van Lam, “The Lord Jesus Christ . . . also wants to save our souls.”<sup>93</sup> Stephen J. Nichols avers that, “The idea of proclaiming merely by our presence is never a substitute for using words. The saying, often attributed to Saint Francis, ‘Preach Christ and if necessary use words,’ may sound good, but actually makes no sense. It runs entirely counter to the model of Christ himself. He used words, a lot.”<sup>94</sup> As the apostle Paul states, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!’” (Rom 10:14–15). Central to this good news is the fact that, “Since Christ died for all, and his atonement has paid satisfactorily

---

<sup>92</sup> Eternal life (*zōē aiōnios*) can be defined as such: “Primarily this means the life of the age (*aiōn*) to come, resurrection life, which believers in Christ enjoy in advance because of their union with one who is already risen from the dead. In the Gospel of John that meaning is certainly present, but eternal life here [in John 3:15] is the very life of God which resides in the eternal Word (‘in him was life’) and is communicated by him to all believers” (Bruce, *John*, 89; see also Carson, *John*, 202–3).

<sup>93</sup> Lam, *God's Miracles*, 160.

<sup>94</sup> Nichols, *Story*, 143.

for the sins of all, preachers and evangelists can unashamedly proclaim that Christ has died for them, and paid for their sins in full.”<sup>95</sup> Alternatively stated, Niven Harrichand declares that, “God is love, and Christ, who is God the Son, has died for all people, regardless of race or ethnicity. He wants all people to know him, trust in him, and spend eternity with him.”<sup>96</sup> It is on account of this truth that these Vietnamese-Canadian believers enthusiastically affirm that there is nothing more important in life than having an intimate relationship with God the Father in Christ the Son through the Spirit who gives the free and unmerited gift of eternal life to *all* who will ask (John 3:16; 11:25–26; Rom 10:9–10).

True hope from sin and death for any mortal, however, is undergirded by faith in Christ alone (John 14:6). So, like the apostle Peter, these Vietnamese-Canadian believers insist that, “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” except in the risen Christ (Acts 4:12; 1 Cor 15:20). Or as Alister E. McGrath asserts, “The resurrection of Jesus . . . establishes and undergirds the Christian hope. This has both *soteriological* and *eschatological* implications.”<sup>97</sup> Which means that, “At the soteriological level, it enables the death of Christ upon the cross to be interpreted in terms of God’s victory over death and a coalition of allied forces and powers. At the eschatological level, it gives both foundation and substance to the Christian hope of eternal life.”<sup>98</sup> This genuine hope in the crucified-yet-resurrected Christ enables the believer “to observe the power of death in terms of its empty future and in the knowledge of its, not God’s, sure defeat. It can

---

<sup>95</sup> Harrichand, “God’s Will that All be Saved,” 115.

<sup>96</sup> Harrichand, “God’s Will that All be Saved,” 116.

<sup>97</sup> McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 325.

<sup>98</sup> McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 325; emphasis original.

tolerate, therefore, the agonizing presence of the power of death as ‘on the way out,’ and be confident that evil will not have the final say over God’s creation.”<sup>99</sup> This message of hope is what is proclaimed in the hope of unbelievers becoming believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, thus sharing in his resurrection to eternal life in his glorious presence of exceeding worshipful joy (Jude 24).

But worship, even through the proclamation, or even reading the word of God, also brings comfort to the bereaved. As Cole avers, worship draws the bereaved more deeply into the Christian story. “This story tells of how God, especially known in the person of Jesus, comforts, heals, renews, and restores health, wholeness, relational well-being, and spiritual vitality. . . . Living with this story shapes how we feel and think about life and death, and also our hopes for the future.”<sup>100</sup> Further to this, “On occasions of loss, we are invited to perceive our experience and need in light of the Christian faith, its support, and its hope. To that end, worship and reading [and hearing] Scripture draws us into the Christian story, keep us there, and sustain us with its promises.”<sup>101</sup>

Cole also states that worship can even foster connections to God and others within the community of faith for the bereaved. Being a member of a church therefore “provides for strong connections to God and to other persons.”<sup>102</sup> By participating in the rituals of the church, such as reading the Bible together, praying together, etc., the bereaved can “live the Christian story together. In living this story with one another, we find ourselves bound to God, each other, and the world in ways that only come with

---

<sup>99</sup> Beker, *Suffering and Hope*, 121–22.

<sup>100</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 76.

<sup>101</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 77.

<sup>102</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 77.

sharing a worshipful life.”<sup>103</sup> By virtue of this communal worship, “living your faith with others *will* enrich your life.”<sup>104</sup>

At the same time, Cole also avows that worship moreover transports the bereaved to spiritual and emotional places where mourning can occur. It is in “creating and cultivating new ‘places’ or ‘spaces’ for mourning that we find comfort, rest, encouragement, and hope.”<sup>105</sup> It is also likely that the bereaved may “find a deeper connection with God, other people, and the Christian story.”<sup>106</sup>

### 5.3. Summary

While each of these expressions are generally commonplace among all cultures, there are certain expressions that were observed within both the Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian cultures that were not discussed. These practices would therefore be deemed new and distinctly intercultural and hopefully transformative of grief, thus sustaining the bereaved. Chapter 6 will explore these redemptive mourning practices.

---

<sup>103</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 78.

<sup>104</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 79.

<sup>105</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 79–80.

<sup>106</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 80.

## CHAPTER 6: COMPASSIONATE LIBERATIVE INTERCULTURAL PASTORAL CARE PRACTICES

### 6.1. Reflective Practice or Compassionate Liberative Pastoral Care Responses

On the basis of our discussion in the previous chapters, this chapter consequently proposes and explores five compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices. It is hoped that these five practices will sensitize pastoral carers to their multivalent significance within our intercultural society, and also challenge them to explore further ways people define, express, experience, and adapt to the phenomenon of grief.<sup>1</sup> Drawing upon theories and practices from different cultures (and with respect to this dissertation, the Guyanese and Vietnamese cultures), the underlying premise of the liberative intercultural pastoral care is “equal respect for all cultures and all people as bearing the image and likeness of God.”<sup>2</sup> Alternatively stated, “The *modus operandi* of intercultural pastoral care and counseling has entailed respectful dialogue between participants from different geographic and social locations in which each purports to learn from the other.”<sup>3</sup> This requires that, “If all people are created in and bear the image of God then all have a contribution to make in the presentation of the God of all creation and in the care of all humanity. It goes without saying that if there is to be genuine intercultural interaction among pastoral practitioners, there indeed needs to be

---

<sup>1</sup> Doka and Davidson pursued a similar line of research in their edited volume *Living with Grief*, albeit not from a biblical and pastoral theological position, as is the case of this current project.

<sup>2</sup> Lartey, “Pastoral,” 80.

<sup>3</sup> Lartey, “Pastoral,” 80.



recognition and respect for each participant's cultural and religious heritage."<sup>4</sup> This is all the more significant as one considers that, "The colonial project with its inherently oppressive and de-facing characteristics in relation to cultures different from itself has left partners in intercultural interaction who originate from the former colonies unable to truly engage the colonizers and the descendants from an equal epistemological and political."<sup>5</sup> This implies that, "Participants in the intercultural dialogue whose origins lie on the side of the formerly colonized need the uplifting strength and empowerment of their own resources in order to be enabled to related to the descendants of the colonizers on an equal or at least more fulsome and authentic footing."<sup>6</sup> It is therefore hoped that respect will be extended to both the Guyanese and Vietnamese cultures, moderately represented here in this dissertation, as legitimate intercultural dialogue participants.

Liberative intercultural pastoral care encompasses six functions: healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling, liberating, and empowering. Of import amidst grief is the function of *sustaining*. Lartey avers that, "When death has actually occurred, no amount of denial, natural as it is, is going to reverse it. It is in such circumstances that the art of *sustaining* is called for."<sup>7</sup> Viewed negatively, "Sustaining goes beyond resignation. It is not about maintaining a stoic silence or a cynical resolution."<sup>8</sup> Considered positively, however, "To be sustained is to find strength and support, from *within* and *without*, to cope adequately with what cannot be changed. It has to do with a transformation of a situation by traversing through it, and is more to do with attitude

---

<sup>4</sup> Lartey, "Pastoral," 80.

<sup>5</sup> Lartey, "Pastoral," 80.

<sup>6</sup> Lartey, "Pastoral," 80.

<sup>7</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 63–64; emphasis mine.

<sup>8</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 64; emphasis mine.

than escape.”<sup>9</sup> In this light, Lartey urges that, “Pastoral caregivers give support in such times not by promising a favorable outcome or better times, but by enabling and facilitating coping mechanisms within them. Or else by helping them draw upon sustaining forces outside themselves, within their immediate social or cultural circumstances.”<sup>10</sup> Liberative intercultural pastoral care is thus inductive, collective, and inclusive as it seeks to be present empathically in the concrete experiences of the bereaved, even those whose voices have been muted by external oppressive voices.<sup>11</sup> For this reason, it allows the bereaved the complete freedom to express in their own way, the length and breadth and height and depth of their grief experience.<sup>12</sup> Here also the knowledge and understanding of the divine and the human are enriched,<sup>13</sup> even while communal spaces are cultivated wherein all God’s people can be safe, nurtured, and empowered to grow by the power of God’s Spirit into the image of God’s unique Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup>

What follows in this chapter are five compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral practices that endeavor to help and sustain others amidst their situation of grief, each of which is couched within rituals. As specified by Elaine J. Ramshaw, “A ritual proper is a relatively formalized, corporate, symbolic act of ritualization. Ritualization is a much wider phenomenon, including all the aspects of our biosocial behavior that are patterned, repetitive, conventionalized.”<sup>15</sup> Which implies that, “Without ritualization we would have to plan every action from scratch and analyze the meaning of every

---

<sup>9</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 64.

<sup>10</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 64.

<sup>11</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 125.

<sup>12</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 125.

<sup>13</sup> Lartey, *Intercultural*, 98.

<sup>14</sup> Lartey, *God*, 121.

<sup>15</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 23.

interaction. . . . All ritualization, then, is about the ordering of experience.”<sup>16</sup> Or as Donald Capps remarks, rituals “help persons become better oriented in the world.”<sup>17</sup>

When it comes to formal corporate rituals, as opposed to everyday ritualization, it is important to note that, “healthy rituals order experience flexibly. The greater formalization is necessary due to the corporate nature of the event, the symbolic weight it must bear, and the tradition it must pass on.”<sup>18</sup> Which means that, “all ritualization communicates some sort of meaning. . . . Formal rituals carry the core meanings of the social group performing them, the meanings which determine the group’s worldview.”<sup>19</sup> This is enacted “through the use of symbols which have many layers of significance as a wooden cross or the act of giving bread or the community’s forming a circle, [wherein] we express the deepest meanings we know of, and often meaning deeper than we consciously know.”<sup>20</sup> By implication, “The human need to make sense of experience is universal and fundamental. Faced with the biggest questions of life and death, love and evil, the origin and destiny of the human race and the universe, we cannot pin down an answer in logical formulas.”<sup>21</sup> In those moments, “We turn to symbolic expressions of our trust in that which grounds the goodness in our experience and shapes the tradition which we make our meanings.”<sup>22</sup> Or as someone once said, “When words are inadequate, have a ritual.”<sup>23</sup>

It would be a mistake, however, to think that a symbol should only serve as a vehicle for meaning. Such was the definition Geertz proposed when he sought to define

---

<sup>16</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 23.

<sup>17</sup> Capps, *Life*, 116.

<sup>18</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 24–25.

<sup>19</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 25.

<sup>20</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 25.

<sup>22</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 25.

<sup>23</sup> Anonymous; noted in Wolfelt, *Ceremonies*, 13.

a symbol is “any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for conception—the conception is the symbol’s meaning.”<sup>24</sup> Challenging this definition, however, Talal Assad has duly pointed out that, “the symbol is not an object that serves as a vehicle for a conception, *it is itself the conception*.”<sup>25</sup> Symbol is therefore equivalent to meaning. For support, Asad leans on the work of Marcel Mauss, particularly Mauss’ “Techniques of the Body.”

According to Mauss, “the body is man’s first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man’s first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body.”<sup>26</sup> In his comment on this statement, Asad remarks that, “By talking about ‘body techniques,’ Mauss sought to focus attention on the fact that if we were to conceptualize human behavior in terms of learned capabilities, we might see the need for investigating how these are linked to authoritative standards and regular practice.”<sup>27</sup> For Mauss, “these techniques of the body are the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies.”<sup>28</sup> It is here that Mauss’ notion of the *habitus*, that Latin word, which emphasizes the social nature of embodied action, comes into play.

For Mauss, “These habits do not vary just with individuals and the imitations, but rather especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, and prestiges. In them we should see the techniques and work of collective individual practical reason

---

<sup>24</sup> Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 91.

<sup>25</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 30; emphasis original. Cf. Bell (*Ritual*, 72–83) who remarks that, “ritual is more complex than the mere communication of meanings and values,” and therefore suggests that, “it is a set of activities that construct particular types of meanings and values in specific ways” (82). She therefore avoids proffering a universal definition for ritual since she is opined to believe that such an act can “obscure how and why people produce ritualized actions” (82). For this reason, she affirms that, “Ritual, or ritualization, may be best defined in culturally specific ways since cultures, and even subcultures, differentiate among their actions in distinctive ways” (82).

<sup>26</sup> Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” 104.

<sup>27</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 75.

<sup>28</sup> Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” 97.

rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties.”<sup>29</sup> In this way, as Asad notes, “The concept of *habitus* invites us to analyze the body as an assemblage of embodied aptitudes, not as a medium of symbolic meanings.”<sup>30</sup>

By virtue of this fact, the human body should not to be viewed simply as the passive recipient of “cultural imprints, and still less, as the active source of natural expressions that are clothed in local history and culture.”<sup>31</sup> On the contrary, the human body should to be viewed “as the developable means for achieving a range of human objectives, from styles of physical movement (e.g., walking), through modes of emotional being (e.g., composure), to kinds of spiritual experience (e.g., mystical states).”<sup>32</sup>

Reasoning from this, it can thus be concluded that a ritual should be understood not as a symbolic action that communicates an idea, but, though complex, an embodied action that emerges from socio-cultural aptitudes that humans acquire and develop.<sup>33</sup> By means of habituated performance, rituals are socially acquired and culturally shaped, rather than individual or universal in form.<sup>34</sup> Which is to say that ritual is the way in which humans properly function, move, and relate to each other within culture.<sup>35</sup> Rituals, as embodied practices (including language in use), therefore form a precondition

---

<sup>29</sup> Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” 101. Interestingly Mauss did not chose the French word most familiar to him: *habitude* (habit or custom).

<sup>30</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 75.

<sup>31</sup> As noted in Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 76; here, Asad refers to Mary Douglas’ interpretation of Mauss in *Natural Symbols*.

<sup>32</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 76; in this way, Mauss seems to avoid the Cartesian dualism of the mind and objects of the mind’s (body) perception that has dominated Western thought (as also noted by Werline through personal correspondence).

<sup>33</sup> As noted by Werline through personal correspondence; even the action of bringing a meal to a grieving family is not symbolizing a detached ideal of love, but rather, the action *is an embodied act of love* (emphasis Werline).

<sup>34</sup> Farnell, “Techniques of the Body,” 2.

<sup>35</sup> As noted by Werline through personal correspondence.

for varieties of religious experience,<sup>36</sup> even that of grief and mourning. Alternatively stated, rituals, as embodied practices, become “a means of entering into communion with God,”<sup>37</sup> even the God who grieves and mourns with those find themselves in the crucible of bereavement.

“Care for the dead is a universal human phenomenon which manifests itself in diverse cultures and religions in varied customs and rituals surrounding death.”<sup>38</sup> This infers a willingness to embrace grief as one’s own, as well as the grief of others, in a life marked by prophetic engagement, the courage to risk compassionate involvement, and communion with God who grieves with us.<sup>39</sup> That each of these practices is understood as ritualistic does not necessarily assume a need of our own, but rather, “God’s invitation.”<sup>40</sup> Yet as Victor White points out, “God’s command to us to worship him is a concession to our needs.”<sup>41</sup> Which infers that, “whatever else we do together, the core of our communal identity is enacted in our worship. . . . The more widely and actively people participate in a ritual, the more they experience it as their own, as part of their

---

<sup>36</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 76–77; cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 72–83, wherein she notes that, “A practice approach to ritual will first address how a particular community or culture ritualizes (what characteristics of acting make strategic distinctions between these acts and others) and then address when and why ritualization is deemed the effective thing to do” (81). In this respect, “The goal of ritualization is completely circular: the creation of a ritualized agent, an actor with a form of ritual mastery, who embodies flexible sets of cultural schemes and can deploy them effectively in multiple situations so as to restructure those situations in practical ways. Among the most important strategies of ritualization is the inherent flexibility of the degree of ritualization invoked” (81). Ritual as practice therefore involves “a basic shift from looking at an activity as the expression of cultural patterns to looking at it as that which makes and harbors such patterns” (82).

<sup>37</sup> Mauss, “Techniques of the Body,” 122. Yet, Asad also contends that the perspective on ritual as embodied symbolic activity is nonetheless an historically shaped organization of power. Asad therefore cautions against the normative application of concepts that are the historical products of a Christian history and Christian organizations of power (Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 27–79). See also Bell (*Ritual*, 72–83) who avers that, rather than viewing “ritual as the vehicle for the expression of authority, practice theorists tend to explore how ritual is a vehicle for the construction of relationships of authority and submission” (82).

<sup>38</sup> van Tongeren, “Ritual,” 117.

<sup>39</sup> Adapted and changed from Zylla’s, *Roots*, 167; Zylla acknowledges that these have been adapted and changed from a proposal first put forward by Westerhoff, *Spiritual Life*, 30.

<sup>40</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> As quoted in Hovda, *Dry Bones*, 59.

identity, and the more connected they tend to feel with the other participants.”<sup>42</sup> And as Ramshaw indicates, “the pastor’s role is to assist the people’s creative task, through her knowledge of the church’s liturgical tradition and the people’s ritual needs.”<sup>43</sup> At the same time, it should be pointed out that, “The normative aim of the liturgy is not human comfort but the glory of God.”<sup>44</sup> But in light of the fact that God has chosen to make His dwelling with humans, implies that, “God has chosen to link divine glory and human need. The incarnational heart of our theology is what opens the way to a consideration of the human side of the religious experience.”<sup>45</sup> It is therefore in their religious experience that humans encounter God and this through rituals.

According to Romeo Vitelli, “It is safe to say that grief is universal. Everybody experiences loss, whether it’s the loss of a loved one, the ending of a romantic relationship, or any sort of a serious setback in life. The process of dealing with that grief often involves mourning ‘rituals’ that vary across different times and cultures.”<sup>46</sup> On account of this, Vitelli asserts that, “How mourners respond emotionally to a death can also be carefully controlled by mourning rituals.”<sup>47</sup> What is more, Vitelli further contends that, “Though rituals can be highly formal, such as the kind of rituals seen in many religions, they can also be informally created by people needing to find a way to come to terms with grief.”<sup>48</sup> This implies that, “Since people who have suffered some kind of loss often feel as if their lives are out of control, using rituals can help restore

---

<sup>42</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 22; here she also notes that, “*liturgy* etymologically means the work of the people, not the work of the pastor. The pastor’s work is to midwife the labor of the people of God. She presides, leads, directs, and organizes, all to help the people of God do their work. She coaches them in the various skills necessary to their work.”

<sup>44</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 22–23.

<sup>46</sup> Vitelli, “Rituals,” para. 1, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Vitelli, “Rituals,” para. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Vitelli, “Rituals,” para. 5.

that feeling of control and, in turn, make it easier for them to cope with grief.”<sup>49</sup> From research conducted among both participants and non-participants of rituals, it has been observed that, “The evidence to date suggests that using rituals, whether formal rituals associated with many religions or the informal rituals we can create ourselves, can help people regain some feeling of control in their lives as well as cope with loss.”<sup>50</sup> For this reason, “Considering the devastating impact that grief can have on physical and mental health, relying on rituals can play an important role in alleviating the deep grief of loss as well as the more mundane losses we all experience.”<sup>51</sup>

The necessity for rituals become all the more important when the church is called upon “to answer certain generic needs, [for example], the need to shape communal grief.”<sup>52</sup> And as one funeral director notes in relation to immigrants embedded in traditional communities: “The more the community is involved and the more the family is involved in this event, the more meaningful [it becomes].”<sup>53</sup>

When it comes to ritual with regards to the dying, Ramshaw notes that, “The type of ritual expression appropriate would vary widely according to the personality and religious style of the dying person, and the circumstances of the death.”<sup>54</sup> Ramshaw also finds that, “A number of people writing about the process of dying have observed that often the patient comes to terms with the fact that she is dying before the family does.”<sup>55</sup> On such occasions, “she then finds it difficult to ‘let go’ because she senses that her

---

<sup>49</sup> Vitelli, “Rituals,” para. 5.

<sup>50</sup> Vitelli, “Rituals,” para. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Vitelli, “Rituals,” para. 14.

<sup>52</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 55.

<sup>53</sup> As quoted in Laderman, *Rest*, 165.

<sup>54</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 67.

<sup>55</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 67–68.



family is not ready to let go. In such cases, the use of a rite of commendation with the family may be a way of their giving her permission to die.”<sup>56</sup>

Further to this, “When a death is foreseen, the ritual care of the dying person’s circle of friends and/or family can start before death. One of the ways to use ritual as the focus for beginning the grieving process is to plan the funeral ahead of time.”<sup>57</sup> In fact,

Many families have found it a deeply moving experience to plan the funeral or memorial service together. It can be a time for family members and friends to say some of the things to the dying person that otherwise might not be said until the wake or funeral: what they value most about her, what their favorite memories are, why they would want to sing a certain song.<sup>58</sup>

At the same time, it is worth pointing out that, “For the circle of friends and family closest to the person who dies, the funeral is not likely to be able to help them ‘work through’ or resolve their grief, unless the death was long-expected and most of the grief has been worked through before death occurs.”<sup>59</sup> In actual fact, “For many people, the most the funeral can do is get them out of the initial state of shock, numbness, and denial, and *into* grief, that is, to help them into rather than through or out of grief.”<sup>60</sup> Or as Alan D. Wolfelt states, “The funeral is a ritual of ending, but it only marks the beginning of the healing process.”<sup>61</sup> For this reason, “the crucial moments for the family and close friends are usually the signs of finality: the closing of the casket, the lowering of the casket into the ground, the first shovel of dirt.”<sup>62</sup> It is very likely that during such moments, “The mourners will seesaw between denial and acceptance for a long time to come, but ritual honesty and care for healthy grieving both require that the funeral state

---

<sup>56</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 68.

<sup>57</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 69.

<sup>58</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 69–70.

<sup>59</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 71.

<sup>60</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 71; emphasis original.

<sup>61</sup> Wolfelt, *Ceremonies*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 71.

clearly that the one they mourn is gone from this world forever.”<sup>63</sup> Rituals consequently serve to sustain the bereaved so that they are able to cope well with their grief.

It is thus against this background that the following five compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices are developed. Couched in rituals, these practices have been deemed worthy of embodying with an eye toward the mitigation of grief, transforming it so that it becomes redemptive, and in the process, sustain and restore the soul of the mourner:

- i. Bearing the Funeral Expenses of the Poor—Extending Offers of Help
- ii. Composing and Singing Sad (and Joyful Theopoetic) Songs and Poems of Lament—Finding Emotional Catharsis through Music
- iii. Incorporating Indigenous Christian Devotional Songs (e.g., Bhajans) in the Wake/Funeral Liturgy—Tapping into the Cultural Liminal Memory of a Deep Experience of Faith
- iv. Celebrating the Life of the Deceased through Dancing and Singing Upbeat Gospel Songs—Spiritual Rejoicing for Having Arrived Home in Heaven
- v. Connecting Personal Grief Stories to God’s Sacred Story—Experiencing Hope in the Resurrected Christ

#### 6.1a. Bearing the Funeral Expenses of the Poor—Extending Offers of Help

It was VL1 who commented that, within the Vietnamese culture, “People also visit and go out with the bereaved. They also give a love gift in an envelope to the bereaved.”<sup>64</sup> In a similar vein, it was observed as being commonplace among Guyanese of an East

---

<sup>63</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 71.

<sup>64</sup> Nothing, however, was said of paying for the funeral expense in full.

Indian heritage—(but not quite as much among those of an Amerindian, African, Chinese, or European heritage)—of willingly bearing the *entire* cost of the funeral for the poor.<sup>65</sup> GL1 remarked, “Generally, especially among the Indian people more than anyone else, they will chip in to pay without being asked to pay for the funeral. They would be willing to join in and help to pay for the expenses. They would come and ask, ‘Can I help?’ But you will find this almost exclusively among the Indians.” Ince-Carvalho perceives that, “Often seeing the love, affection and sentiment that others feel can provide a great support network and a sense of togetherness, pride and kindred spirit.”<sup>66</sup> Considering the high funeral costs in Canada, such benevolent monetary aid from without the bereaved but within their immediate social or cultural circumstance, doubtless serves to assuage their financial burden, and thus sustaining them amidst their grief.<sup>67</sup>

The impetus for Christian generosity in helping to offset the financial needs of others, even their funeral expenses, especially among the less fortunate believers, is also observed in the OT, particularly in 1 Kgs 13:1–34. In this passage of Scripture, we learn that there was a man of God from Judah whom the LORD sent to Bethel for a prophetic ministry. It was his mission to announce to Jeroboam of the coming of a son to be born of the house of David, namely Josiah. At the end of his oracle, Jeroboam requested that the man of God return with him to the king’s house. Jeroboam’s request was however

---

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted here that East-Indian Guyanese Christians would come forward voluntarily asking the pastor how they can offer their help. Which infers that no solicitation is involved. It appears as though by approaching the pastor to offer help even without the mourner’s knowledge, the secret giver to gives to the poor without allowing their left hand to know what their right hand was doing (Matt 6:3). There are times, however, when giving can be done openly, as in the case of the financial donation from the Gentile churches for the Jerusalem church (Acts 11:27–30; Rom 15:26; 1 Cor 16:1–3; 2 Cor 8–9). Great care should be taken, however, to reduce the public knowledge of one’s financial help “so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you” (6:4).

<sup>66</sup> Ince-Carvalho, “The Unfortunate Reality of Grieving,” para. 5.

<sup>67</sup> Lartey, *Color*, 64.

refused as the man of God was admonished, “You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came.” (v. 9). As such, the man of God “did not return by the way which he came to Bethel” (v. 10).

As the story unfolds, we learn that the man of God was sitting under an oak tree. It is here that an old prophet from Bethel finds him and also requests that he returns with him to Bethel. Once again, the man of God explains, “I cannot return with you, nor go with you, nor will I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. For a command came to me by the word of the LORD, ‘You shall not eat bread, nor drink water there; do not return by going the way which you came’” (vv. 16–17). But when the old prophet from Bethel said, “I am also a prophet like you, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water,’” the man of God “went back with him, and ate bread in his house and drank water” (vv. 18–19).

On account of his disobedience, as the man of God made his way back to Judah, “a lion met him on the way and killed him” (v. 24) tearing his body to pieces and throwing it on the road (v. 26). Eventually the old prophet of Bethel caught wind of this fatal news. So he came to the place where the cadaver was left lying on the road, took it up, laid it on his donkey, and brought it back to Bethel. Here, the old prophet buried the man of God in his own grave, that is, “in the family sepulchre,”<sup>68</sup> and mourned his death, even while lamenting, “Alas, my brother!” (v. 30).

Within the NT, one also observes the extension of a helping hand in Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). To set the stage for the parable, a

---

<sup>68</sup> Cogan, *1 Kings*, 372.

discourse commences between Jesus and an expert in the Mosaic law. Intending to test Jesus, the lawyer said, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (10:25). In typical rabbinic fashion, Jesus responded by asking him, “What is written in the Law? How does it read?” (10:26). The lawyer retorted, saying, “You SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” (10:27). Applauding his knowledge, Jesus said, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE” (10:28). Intending to justify himself, the lawyer said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” (10:29). At this point, Jesus commences the parable of the Good Samaritan.

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on *them*; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’ (10:30–35)

After narrating this parable to the lawyer, Jesus questioned him, “Which of these do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ *hands*?” (10:36).

When the lawyer responded, “The one who showed mercy toward him,” Jesus remarked, “Go and do the same” (10:37).

Darrell L. Bock comments that, “Love for one’s neighbor is often seen as a summary of the law.”<sup>69</sup> As an expert in the law of Moses, this lawyer who attempted to test Jesus would have been familiar with the teaching in Judaism, which recognized that

---

<sup>69</sup> Bock, *Luke*, 1026.

if humans were created in God's image, then a love for God was confirmed by a love for one's fellow humans.<sup>70</sup> Some of the Jews, however, developed at least two ways in which to outwit this demonstrative love for a fellow human: (i) The isolationist approach, which could be described as "I want to be left alone, so I will not involve myself with others."<sup>71</sup> (ii) The restrictionist approach, which seeks to define and thus restrict who one's neighbor is.<sup>72</sup> In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the lawyer attempted the restrictionist approach. In contradistinction to the lawyer, however, "In Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan sees that the man on the side of the road is in need of help and he stops with active help. This is the essence of the compassionate response: *to move into the suffering of others with active help.*"<sup>73</sup>

At the heart of extending a helping hand in bearing the cost of the funeral expenses of the poor, whom Christians are called to remember (Gal 2:10),<sup>74</sup> so as to alleviate their need, however, is the fundamental human concern for the shalom or wellbeing and dignity of every person, even the dying person. The dignity of every person, even and especially the poor, finds its underpinning in the fact that every person is made in the very image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6; Ps 139:14–17 [13–16]; Jas 3:9). As Sarna asserts, "the resemblance of man to God bespeaks the infinite worth of a human being and affirms the inviolability of the human person."<sup>75</sup> This is further enriched by the fact that: (i) Jesus himself became poor for us ("For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for sake He

---

<sup>70</sup> Derrett, *Law*, 223–24.

<sup>71</sup> Bock, *Luke* 1026.

<sup>72</sup> Bock, *Luke*, 1026; Bock, however, does not use the term *restrictionist approach*, but simply gives a description of this second approach.

<sup>73</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 100.

<sup>74</sup> See also Deut 15:7, 9, 11; 24:14, 15; 1 Sam 2:8; 2 Sam 12:3–4; Isa 10:2; 58:7; Job 29:12; Jer 2:34; 5:28; Zech 7:10; Luke 4:18; 7:22; 14:13; 16:20–22; 18:22; 19:8; Jas 2:2–6.

<sup>75</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 12.

became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich” [2 Cor 8:9]); and (ii) In Jesus’ declaration in his sermon on the mount as of first importance, “Blessed *are* your *who* are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luke 6:20; cf. Matt 5:3). Turning a blind eye to the poor then is at one and the same time a turning of a blind eye to God whose preference is for the poor and to whom the inheritance of the kingdom of God belongs (Matt 25:31–40).

While it is true that burdens are lifted at Calvary, to borrow the words of John M. Moore, this ought never negate the compassionate act of extending a helping hand in bearing the burdens of another, and in the case of grief, that of covering the funeral expense of the bereaved poor. Compassionate generosity meets the needs of others, especially the poor, because they are in need of help—*our* help—the help of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ who *also* bear God’s image. By virtue of the fact that liberation theology extends preferential option for the poor, Gustavo Gutiérrez avers that, “The commitment to the poor is not ‘optional’ in the sense that a Christian is free to make or not make this option, or commitment, to the poor, just as the love we owe to all human beings, without exception is not ‘optional.’”<sup>76</sup> Alternatively stated, “an option for the poor is an option for the God of the kingdom whom Jesus proclaims to us.”<sup>77</sup>

Yet, as Gutiérrez points out, “The ultimate reason for commitment to the poor and oppressed is not to be found in the social analysis we use, or in human compassion, or in any direct experience we may have of poverty. These are all doubtless valid motives that play an important part in our commitment.”<sup>78</sup> Rather, our commitment as

---

<sup>76</sup> Gutiérrez, *Theology*, xxvi.

<sup>77</sup> Gutiérrez, *Theology*, xxvii.

<sup>78</sup> Gutiérrez, *Theology*, xxvii.

Christians to the poor “is grounded, in the final analysis, in the God of our faith. It is a theocentric, prophetic option that has its roots in the unmerited love of God and is demanded by this love.”<sup>79</sup> Yet this love and preferential option for the poor that is demanded of Christians finds its underpinning in the fact that God’s unmerited love is directed toward those who are His image bearers, and thus endowed with dignity. Small wonder that Zacharias emphasizes that, “every time the question of evil is raised, it is either by a person or about a person—and that implicitly assumes that the question is a worthy one. But it is a worthy question only if people have intrinsic worth, and the only reason people have intrinsic worth is that they are the creations of the One who is of ultimate worth. That person is God.”<sup>80</sup> Which is to say that out of God’s goodness and love, God creates humans in His image and likeness, and in this divine act, God endues each person with dignity. For this reason, human dignity, even and especially the dignity of the poor, is never divorced from God’s goodness and love.

It is therefore by virtue of the worth or dignity of the poor, a worth derivative from God their Creator, that, “The Father’s goodness and love reaches out to the simple and the unimportant, [especially the poor and the forgotten], and gives them preference.”<sup>81</sup> Puebla puts it more precisely: “The poor merit preferential attention, whatever may be the moral or the spiritual situation in which they find themselves. Made in the image and likeness of God to be his children, this image is dimmed and even defiled. That is why God takes on their defense and loves them.”<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Gutiérrez, *Theology*, xxvii.

<sup>80</sup> Zacharias, *Logic*, 16–17.

<sup>81</sup> Gutiérrez, *Job*, xiii.

<sup>82</sup> In Gutiérrez, *Job*, xiii.



This however does not negate the fact that, “solidarity with the poor and the starving, which leads to an ongoing transformation of history and requires behavior to this end, is the fruit of gratuitous love of God.”<sup>83</sup> The fruit of God’s gratuitous love will thus confirm itself in the lives of God’s image-bearing children in Christ (John 1:12–13) as they take their stand in solidarity with the poor amidst their grief, especially for the purpose of extending a helping hand in bearing their funeral expenses, thus validating their dignity.

Further to this, Wayne Grudem notes, “The fact that man is made in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.”<sup>84</sup> Alternatively stated, “The more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize, and the more fully we will understand what Scripture means when it says that man is in the image of God.”<sup>85</sup> As God’s representatives, the heart of God’s compassionate character (Exod 34:6) is revealed in the Christian’s compassion toward the poor (Luke 15:20). As a matter of fact, Scripture states that, “One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed” (Prov 19:17). Little wonder that the kingdom of heaven is granted to those who feed the hungry, satiate the thirsty, extend hospitality to the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and the imprisoned. “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even the least of them*, you did it to Me’” (Matt 25:34–40). To this, one might add the bearing of the funeral expenses of those who are poor (cf. 27:57–61) on account of God’s gratuitous and unmerited love for those who bear His image.

---

<sup>83</sup> Gutiérrez, *Job*, 99.

<sup>84</sup> Grudem, *Theology*, 442.

<sup>85</sup> Grudem, *Theology*, 444.

Supported by the magnanimous generosity of God the Father in Christ the Son, Christians are being encouraged here to perceive the needs of our less fortunate brothers and sisters amidst grief and standing in solidarity with them by extending a helping hand in bearing the cost of their funeral expenses. Empowered by the Spirit (Gal 5:22–26), such an external coping mechanism from a Guyanese Christian perspective will doubtless mitigate the grief of and sustain the bereaved, while confirming our legitimacy as God’s image-bearing children and Christ’s disciples (John 13:34–35).

#### 6.1b. Composing and Singing Sad (and Joyful Theopoetic) Songs and Poems of Lament—Finding Emotional Catharsis through Music

Here we recall the words of VL1 who noted that amidst grief, it is helpful to “Compose songs and poems, since Vietnamese music is sad music.” It is believed that the beginning of modern Vietnamese song can be traced “to a performance by Nguyen Van Tuyen of his original compositions in Hanoi on June 9, 1938.”<sup>86</sup> This is not to say that prior to him there were no other composers, but “Tuyen’s performance marks the first public, reviewed presentation of original songs.”<sup>87</sup> In more recent years, such songs “have come to be called *nhac tien chien*, or pre-war music.”<sup>88</sup> The rationale behind such an appellation can be heard in the following words: “This appellation probably came about as an imitation of genre named *tho tien chien*, or pre-war poetry, the name used in South Vietnam after 1954, where the poetry remained very popular.”<sup>89</sup> However, Gibbs states that, “Some Northern musician I met questioned the usefulness of the name ‘pre-war songs.’ One asked, ‘Which war? We’ve fought so many wars.’ One politically

---

<sup>86</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 9.

<sup>88</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 23.

<sup>89</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 23.

correct designation I heard for these songs was ‘dong am nhạc lang man truoc Cach Mang Thang Tam’ or the ‘current of romantic songs before the August Revolution.’”<sup>90</sup> Gibbs comments that, “Whatever their designation, these songs continue to be popular among Vietnamese, both overseas and in Vietnam, especially among the older generation. They are regularly performed at the concert hall of the Hoi Nhạc Sĩ Việt Nam (Vietnamese Association of Musicians) in Hanoi under the appellation *nhac truc tinh* or lyrical music. When this Association in 1994 presented a festival commemoration 50 years of Vietnamese song, these songs were well represented.”<sup>91</sup>

The ethos of these “*Nhac tien chien* songs carry with them an air of nostalgia, perhaps nostalgia for an era when Vietnam was still unified, the era preceding nearly 20 years of civil war.”<sup>92</sup> Representing the genre of *nhac tien chien*, the lyrics of “Giot Mua Thu” or “Autumn Rain Drops,” composed by Dang The Phong and Bui Cong Ky, and translated by Gibbs, is furnished below.<sup>93</sup>

Ngoài hiên giọt mưa thu thánh thót rơi	Outside on the veranda, the autumn rain is gently falling.
Trời lắng u buồn mây hắt hiu ngừng trôi	The somber sky is quieting, suspended clouds are scattering.
Nghe gió thoảng mơ hồ trong mưa thu Ai khóc ai than hờ!	Amidst the muffled wind blowing past in the autumn rain, who’s crying? Who’s grieving?
Vài con chim non chiêm chiếp kêu trên cành Như nhủ trời xanh Gió ngừng đi Mưa buồn chi	A couple of young birds chirp from the branch as if auguring blue skies:

<sup>90</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 24.

<sup>91</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 24.

<sup>92</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 25.

<sup>93</sup> Gibbs, “*Nhac Tien Chien*,” para. 27.

Cho cỡi 276rit lâm ly	“Stop wind, why bring sad rain to a plaintive heart?”
Hồn thu tới nơi đây gieo buồn lây	Autumn’s spirit arrives, announcing the sadness it brings along.
Lòng vắng muôn bề không liếp che gió về	Feelings empty on all sides, for there’s no screen to block the returning wind,
Ai nức nở thương đời Châu buồn mau Dương thế bao la sầu	Who’s sobbing, lamenting life, teardrops rush down? The world’s immeasurably sad.
Người mong mây tan cho gió hiu hiu lạnh Mây ngổ trời xanh	We hope the clouds will scatter bringing sweet gentle breezes. The clouds open up to blue sky,
Chắc gì vui Mưa còn rơi Bao kiếp sầu ta nguôi	Could such happiness be? The rain continues to fall, how many more incarnations until this melancholy subsides?
Gió xa xôi vẫn về Mưa giăng mù lê thê	The distant wind still returns, the unyielding rain spreads its gloom.
Đến bao năm nữa trời Vợ chồng Ngâu thôi khóc vì thu	Oh sky, for how many more years will tears pour from the sky because of autumn?

The composition of such sad songs/poems of the Vietnamese people are also, interestingly enough, observed within the OT Israelite context. The books of Job and Lamentations also contain sad poems and songs. Job’s laments are written in the context of the loss of his children and his livestock. Following on the heels of the destruction of Jerusalem by the cruel hands of king Nebuchadnezzar circa 586 BCE, Jeremiah penned his lament song.

But within the narrational bounds of the OT (i.e., from Genesis to Esther), one also recalls David's three elegiac laments. The first and the longest of the three, was owing to the death of Saul and Jonathan. Second Samuel 1:19–27 records the lyrics of this elegiac lament, which are proffered below.

Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen! Tell *it* not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult. O mountains of Gilboa, let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life, and in their death they were not parted; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Interestingly, David even titled this elegiac lament "The Song of the Bow," which was also recorded in the book of Jashar. And as per David's instruction, this elegiac lament was to be taught to the sons of Judah (1:17–18).

Also noted here is David's second elegy, which was occasioned by the death of Abner, a cousin of Saul and commander-in-chief of Saul's army. The lyrics of this second of David's elegiac laments are as follows: "Should Abner die as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters; as one falls before the wicked, you have fallen" (3:33–34).

The third of David's elegies followed on the heels of his son Absalom's death, the lyrics of which are noted in 18:33: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" This elegy is then echoed in David's words, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (19:4).

First Kings 13:29–30 tells of an old prophet living in Bethel who buried the man of God from Judah in his own grave. While mourning his death, the old Bethelite prophet expressed his sorrow through the following elegy: “Alas, my brother!”

Then in response to Josiah’s death, Jeremiah chanted an elegiac lament. Also noted here is the fact that, together with Jeremiah, all the male and female singers speak and write about Josiah in their lamentations (2 Chron 35:25). Lamentably, this elegy is lost to the reader.

Most often referred to as lament poems or prayers or songs, their primary locale, however, is that of the Psalter or the book of Psalms. Westermann notes that, “Each psalm had a long and extensive prehistory. Only at the very end was it fixed in written form and included in the collection. It was first prayed, sung, and spoken by many extremely different kinds of people. Only later, at the point where these many voices were gathered in worship, did it receive the form that is normative for all and accessible to all.” This is to say that, “This process of liturgical shaping of the psalm took many generations.”<sup>94</sup> In his article, “Belting Out the Blues as Believers: The Importance of Singing Lament,”<sup>95</sup> however, Robert S. Smith observes that, “A careful reading of the Psalter reveals that a large number of the psalms were intended, by their authors, to be sung. This is clear, firstly, from the content of those psalms in which we find exhortations to sing (e.g., Pss 9:11; 30:4; 68:4) or from calls to join the psalmist in singing the Lord’s praise (e.g., Pss 34:3; 95:1–2; 118:24). It is also apparent from the historical information contained in the titles of a number of psalms (e.g., Pss 7, 18).”<sup>96</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Westermann, *Psalms*, 15.

<sup>95</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 89–111.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 90.

Further to this, Smith contends that, “if not from the point of composition, certainly by the time of the Psalter’s compilation, a plethora of musical designations and liturgical directions embedded in the psalm titles.”<sup>97</sup>

Little wonder that Paul instructed, “be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father” (Eph 5:18–20). And again, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col 3:16). Such gratitude, however, usually comes by way of grief. As Westermann notes, “In Israel, all speaking to God moved between two poles. There is no petition, no pleading from the depths, that did not move at least one step (in looking back to God’s earlier saving activity or in confession of confidence) on the road to praise. But there is also no praise that was fully separated from the experience of God’s wonderful intervention in time of need, none that had become a mere stereotyped liturgy.”<sup>98</sup> Joy comes in the morning, but that after a very long night or many nights of weeping (Ps 30:6 [5]; 6:7 [6]).

John Dickson writes that, “The Bible does not overrule the question of pain. Nor does it discourage it. It invites us to come with anguished muscles fully flexed and say, ‘My God, why?’”<sup>99</sup> Further to this, Dickson avers that, “I suspect that even faithful church-going folk might feel awkward echoing the sentiment of Psalm 22 (and many

---

<sup>97</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 91.

<sup>98</sup> Westermann, *Praise*, 154.

<sup>99</sup> Dickson, *Jesus*, 95.

others like it).<sup>100</sup> Many suppose that the only response to suffering is the one found in the very next psalm, the more famous Psalm 23: ‘The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.’”<sup>101</sup> However, Dickson contests such a theological perspective as he renders the assertion that, “the presence of Psalm 22 in the Bible, immediately before Psalm 23, is a reminder that sometimes the cry, ‘My God, why?’ is just as spiritually valid as the affirmation ‘The LORD is my Shepherd.’”<sup>102</sup> Put another way, “One does not get to resurrection except through crucifixion.”<sup>103</sup>

With good reason, Brueggemann likewise remarks that, “The use of these ‘psalms of darkness’ may be judged by the world to be *acts of unfaith and failure*, but for the trusting community, their use is *an act of bold faith*, albeit a transformed faith. . . . it insists that the world must be experienced as it is and not in some pretended way. . . . it is bold because it insists that all such experiences of disorder are a proper subject for discourse with God.”<sup>104</sup> Otherwise referred to as the psalms of complaint, such psalms “are powerful expressions of the experience of disorientation. They express the pain, grief, dismay, and anger that life is not good. (They also refuse to settle for things as they are, and so they assert hope.)”<sup>105</sup> What is more, in praying these psalms of disorientation, “Such daring honesty, at God’s throne of mercy, is the only route to

---

<sup>100</sup> For one such example, see the Introduction of Harrichand, “Recovering,” 101. Allender and Longman (*Cry*, 29–39) also state that, “Some believers cringe from this language of desperation and rage, even though they have the model of the psalmist. ‘The psalmist didn’t have Christ, but we do so we can’t be lonely, angry, or afraid!’ But this is presumption, not faith. The laments of the Psalms encourage us to risk the danger of speaking boldly and personally to the Lord of the universe” (37). Lament psalms are therefore an invitation from God to question Him with our Why’s? or How long’s? as part of our worship language. “God invites us to bring before Him our rage, doubt, and terror but He intends for us to do so as part of our worship. This is the kind of emotional struggle we must engage in if we are to fathom the nature of God’s heart for us” (37).

<sup>101</sup> Dickson, *Jesus*, 95.

<sup>102</sup> Dickson, *Jesus*, 95.

<sup>103</sup> Fowler, *Ministry*, 76.

<sup>104</sup> Brueggemann, *Message*, 52; emphasis original. For Brueggemann, Ps 22 is a psalm of darkness or disorientation.

<sup>105</sup> Brueggemann, *Praying*, 19.



transformative well-being. That is the secret of the laments that cannot be hid.”<sup>106</sup> In like manner, Sigmund Mowinckel asserted that, “The psalms of lamentation trust God to do great things, and expect great things from him. Without him no rituals and ‘sacred’ words are of any use.”<sup>107</sup> The ritualistic act of lamenting therefore finds its underpinning in *God*, the one whom the lamenter trusts.

What is of particular interest here is the fact that the lament songs have “a pronounced and well-recognized ability to console,”<sup>108</sup> and by extension sustain the bereaved amidst grief. According to Ruth Bright, especially amidst the “difficulty of finding words to express one’s emotions,”<sup>109</sup> it is “Music that reaches into the person’s inner depths more easily than words. . . . and helps to resolve tension and conflict.”<sup>110</sup> Smith remarks that, “This provision is seen most powerfully in the practice of singing therapy, where singing is used to assist those suffering trauma to release suppressed emotions, and, by so doing, to help them ‘process the truth and reality behind their inner pain.’”<sup>111</sup> It was even remarked by Martin Luther that, “Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions . . . which control men or more often overwhelm them. . . . Whether you wish to comfort the sad, to subdue frivolity, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate or to appease those full of hate . . . what more effective means than music could you find.”<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Brueggemann, *Secrets*, 93.

<sup>107</sup> Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1:203.

<sup>108</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 101.

<sup>109</sup> Bright, “Music,” 497; one might think of such emotional expressions as anger, confusion, depression, heartbreak, pain, remorse, sadness, shock, and sorrow.

<sup>110</sup> Bright, “Music,” 483.

<sup>111</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 103; cf. Smith, “Music,” 469.

<sup>112</sup> Luther, “Preface,” 323.

Ramshaw avows that, “All pastoral care can be described as the effort to help people make connections between their personal story and the sacred stories carried by the community. In the context of post-mortem ritual, this means that we together with the bereaved find forms (words, actions, pictures, musical expressions) of both lament and hope that resonate with them in their particular struggle.”<sup>113</sup> Ramshaw further avers that, “Mourners have many needs that are best met by music. Music affects, calls out, expresses and enables people to share strong feelings. A ritual feels suited to a particular loss when the music speaks to what these mourners are feeling, helping them move towards pain while also sustaining them with beauty and the possibility of joy.”<sup>114</sup> Alternatively stated, “music connects with our emotions, expresses and evokes them, and makes them humanly liveable.”<sup>115</sup> Small wonder that Ramshaw observes that, “If we ask people what stands out in their memory about a particular funeral or memorial service, what touched or moved them most, very rarely will they refer to any spoken words. Occasionally they will mention a ritual action (the folding of the flag with honor, the spreading of the pall with tender care), but most often they talk about music.”<sup>116</sup> Which implies that, “Music not only helps us express difficult emotions, it also articulates or gives structure to inchoate responses.”<sup>117</sup>

Rather than suppress all grief and protest, as some contemporary funerals have managed to do, “we need to remember that biblical faith is not defined by suppressing one’s doubts and protests, but by addressing one’s trust and doubt and praise and protest

---

<sup>113</sup> Ramshaw, “Postmodern,” 177.

<sup>114</sup> Ramshaw, “Postmodern,” 176.

<sup>115</sup> Ramshaw, “Funerals,” 206.

<sup>116</sup> Ramshaw, “Funerals,” 206.

<sup>117</sup> Ramshaw, “Funerals,” 206.

to God as if it mattered supremely to do so.”<sup>118</sup> Interestingly enough, it is in such an act, that is, “It is in the dark struggles with God that we are surprised by His response to our anger and fear. What we receive from Him during our difficult battle is not what we expect. Instead, we find that He wants out passionate involvement and utter awe in the mystery of His glorious character.”<sup>119</sup> Which is to say that, rather than “hide behind trite spiritual platitudes,” it is in such lament and protest against God that one learns to trust and “love God.”<sup>120</sup>

Not surprisingly, Wolfelt avers that post-mortem rituals should help mourners begin to grieve not by avoiding pain, but rather by “moving toward the pain of loss.”<sup>121</sup> Which is another way of saying that, “While the emotional needs of the bereaved perhaps should not be the controlling factor in the shape of the liturgy, it might be argued that they should receive more attention.”<sup>122</sup> One helpful ritual that can be engaged by the bereaved in bringing his/her emotions to the fore in worship is that of ancient Israel’s psalms of lament, which “do not bid us to share the sufferer’s hate, but rather, the sufferer’s pain by allowing that pain to be expressed.”<sup>123</sup> Otherwise stated, psalms of lament “allowed for the expression of a wide range of human emotion: not merely affirmation and joy but doubt, fear, and even hostility. The liturgy not only acknowledged the reality of such emotions, but sanctioned their expression in community: defined their limits, gave them form, and guided them in meaningful directions.”<sup>124</sup> Duly noted, however, is the fact that, “While none of the psalms are

---

<sup>118</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 33.

<sup>119</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 38.

<sup>120</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 36.

<sup>121</sup> Wolfelt, *Experiences*, 18.

<sup>122</sup> Bailey, *Perspectives*, 107.

<sup>123</sup> Hopkins, *Journey*, 93.

<sup>124</sup> Bailey, *Perspectives*, 106.

funeral liturgies, they are concerned with the various manifestations of ‘death’ and rarely even with mortality (e.g., Ps. 90).<sup>125</sup> By taking into consideration the form or structure of the hymn or psalm of lament, Herbert Anderson perceives that,

The structure of lament has implications for many aspects of the ministry of care and for the link between the Bible and pastoral care. The structure of lament is an alternation between resistance and relinquishment, between protesting against injustice and trusting in the mystery of God. Resistance without relinquishment ends in bitterness and relinquishment without resistance leads to quiet powerlessness in the face of evil. The language of lament gives voice to mute pain and creates community of the suffering ones. The recovery of the language and structure of lament may be the most important aspect of connecting the Bible and pastoral care for our time.<sup>126</sup>

By employing the form or structure of the psalm of lament, one is able to “give structure to emotionally charged experiences,” and when accompanied by music, one’s song or psalm of lament becomes a “powerful aid to the process of mourning.”<sup>127</sup> Small wonder that Jeremy S. Begbie calls this “representative concentration,” as he maintains that, “in music, emotionally significant bodily movements are embodied in a concentrated (musical form), in such a way that the music can represent us and concentrate us emotionally as we are drawn into its life.”<sup>128</sup> In this respect, “music can enable a more concentrated emotional engagement with the object or objects with which we are dealing.”<sup>129</sup>

Futato adds that, when reading the songs of lament, one immediately feels their pathos.<sup>130</sup> In other words, “Feelings of grief, loneliness, perplexity, anger, frustration,

---

<sup>125</sup> Bailey, *Perspectives*, 107.

<sup>126</sup> Anderson, “Bible,” 208–9.

<sup>127</sup> Begbie, “Faithful Feelings,” 349. Agreeing with Kübler-Ross, Brueggemann (“Formfulness,” 263–75), notes that, “the grief and death process tends to follow a fairly regular form. . . . Thus it is important that Kübler-Ross has been able to establish the agenda that this human experience is inevitably *formful* and no technical claim to the contrary can deny that” (267; emphasis original). See also Capps, *Approaches*, 73–92, for the helpful role the form of a lament psalm plays in pastoral counseling.

<sup>128</sup> Begbie, “Feelings,” 349.

<sup>129</sup> Begbie, “Feelings,” 349.

<sup>130</sup> Futato, *Joy*, 50.

abandonment, despair, and more come to expression in the lyrics of these songs.

Through the songs of lament the Holy Spirit teaches us, among other lessons, that it is okay to be brutally honest with ourselves and with God when the days are dark and the nights are cold.”<sup>131</sup> The fact that the songs of lament were composed for the purpose of being sung, and not only prayed, or read, or proclaimed, is essential in light of the fact that such songs, put to music, are efficacious enough to heal and console. In this way, the songs of lament accompanied by music and thus sung, “highlights its God-given capacity of assisting us in the honest articulation of sorrow, the effective processing of pain and the awakening of genuine hope.”<sup>132</sup> As remarked by L. C. Jones, “the psalms of lament do not dismiss or deny or seek to avoid sorrow. On the contrary, they allow a grieving person to move more fully into the valley of the shadow; knowing on different levels, that no matter what, God is indeed present in the sorrow.”<sup>133</sup>

As a matter of fact, “The Psalms [of lament] help us understand that every emotion is a theological statement. All feelings reveal our attempt to maneuver into a position of regaining access to the pleasures and perfection of God. All dark emotions are rooted in our *reactive* response (flight) to being out of the Garden and our *aggressive* response (fight) to regain access to Eden.”<sup>134</sup> So then, one can aver that it is “In the darkness of our emotional wrestling with God that we grow in our understanding of Him.”<sup>135</sup> And even further to this, “In the most peculiar fashion, He chooses to reveal His perfect heart by analogy with human emotion that is stained by depravity. If we are to comprehend more richly the heart of God, it is imperative that we seek to understand

---

<sup>131</sup> Futato, *Joy*, 50–51.

<sup>132</sup> Stenhouse, “Lament,” 194–95.

<sup>133</sup> Jones, “Lament,” 47.

<sup>134</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 34; emphasis original.

<sup>135</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 39.

our internal world.”<sup>136</sup> The lament psalms therefore “propel us into the deepest questions about ourselves, about others, and about God. As we let them expose the depths of our emotion, they will lead us to the God who reveals Himself in the midst of our struggles.”<sup>137</sup> Catharsis is therefore mediated through one’s worshipful song or psalms of lament to God.

When put to music, indigenous Vietnamese Christian songs of lament therefore serve as a cathartic tool in releasing dark or negative emotions that need not be suppressed within the mourner.<sup>138</sup> The state of rest or the restoration of the soul/spirit of the bereaved “can be reached only after the mourning and/or lamenting is over.”<sup>139</sup> Which means that, “Emotional relief is not possible without a sharing of the trauma,”<sup>140</sup> and this to God, who extends healing by His wounds (Isa 53:5; cf. Matt 8:17). To conceal one’s wounds, that is, to suppress one’s dark or negative emotions, is to refuse God’s wounded healing. This is all the more important when one realizes that the Christian God does *not* identify Himself with the healthy, but rather with the sick, the broken, the wounded (Mark 2:17). As Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it, “Matt 8:17 makes it quite clear that Christ helps us, not by virtue of his omnipotence, but by virtue of his weakness and suffering.”<sup>141</sup> As a matter of fact, “Identifying with the suffering of Jesus in particular may help us place more trust in God as we mourn,”<sup>142</sup> even musically.

But as the mourner musically laments his/her situation of grief to/before God, such negativity is accepted by God as part of one’s healing process. “Music makes a

---

<sup>136</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 39.

<sup>137</sup> Allender and Longman, *Cry*, 39.

<sup>138</sup> Pham, *Mourning*, 38.

<sup>139</sup> Pham, *Mourning*, 22.

<sup>140</sup> Oates, *Grief*, 28.

<sup>141</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters*, 361.

<sup>142</sup> Cole, *Mourning*, 73.

difference. Songs can clarify our thinking or release our emotions from the deep well of the soul. . . . We do not always experience life as well ordered. Our lives are not always well oriented. ‘Disorientation’ better describes life at times. The laments or songs of disorientation were written for times such as these.”<sup>143</sup> As Smith puts it, “in such a place of dislocation and disorientation, singing praise can be (or at least feel) either impossible or inappropriate.”<sup>144</sup>

Indigenous Vietnamese Christian songs of lament therefore express the mourner’s emotions, which is akin to the psalms of lament, and of which Smith believes “Calvin’s list of ‘distracting emotions’ clearly indicates that the lament psalms were uppermost in his mind as he penned these oft-quoted words.”<sup>145</sup> Just as tears were never meant to be restrained but rather released so as to be collected in God’s bottle (Ps 56:9 [8]), negative or sad emotions were also not meant to be repressed, but rather released to/before God, even in lyrical writing, thus making it cathartic. In this act of lamenting through song, rather than moving away from God, the Vietnamese Christian mourner is thus encouraged to move toward God, before whom s/he might pour out his/her heart to God, recognizing that God alone has the balm to heal the broken-hearted and bind up their wounds (147:4 [3]).

As poetry, the psalms of lament are especially concerned “with experience.”<sup>146</sup>

Laurence Perrine states that, “Poetry takes all life as its province. Its primary concern is

---

<sup>143</sup> Futato, *Joy*, 1, 5.

<sup>144</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 93.

<sup>145</sup> Smith, “Blues,” 93. Here Smith (“Blues,” 89–111) refers to Calvin’s words: “I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, ‘An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;’ for there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated” (93).

<sup>146</sup> Villanueva, “Lament,” 66.

not with beauty, not with philosophical truth, not with persuasion, but with experience.”<sup>147</sup> The lament psalms are therefore, “depictions of the psalmists’ experiences of suffering.”<sup>148</sup> Composing one’s sad poems, as appears to be conventional among the Vietnamese people, therefore necessitates taking into account one’s life experiences of grief.<sup>149</sup> Such sad poems do not only comprise life’s tragic experiences, but like the psalms of lament, *God* is to be considered as their center point. Even what might be considered the *darkest* psalm of the Psalter (a Disorientation Stage 1 Prayer, or a pure lament prayer) commences with, “O LORD, the God of my salvation” (Ps 88:2 [1]; cf. 88:7 [6], 19 [18]). The Vietnamese Christians can thus lead the charge in the composition of such sad or lament poems in expressing their grief, yet not without assuming a *theo poetic* posture. For it is through their sad songs and poems or psalms of lament, they “become witnesses to the possibility of sustaining a relationship with the God from whom we do not have to hide anything, even our worse thoughts and feelings.”<sup>150</sup> This is all the more important as one considers that not only are Vietnamese a marginalized community, but “the poetic” is also a “marginalized epistemology.”<sup>151</sup>

Theopoetics first appeared, according to L. B. C. Keefe-Perry, “in the form of *theo poiesis*, used by Stanley Romaine Hopper in a 1971 speech.”<sup>152</sup> Theopoetics since that time “has served as a noun referring to a particular devotional quality of a text, a genre of religious writing, and a postmodern perspective on theology.”<sup>153</sup> A working

---

<sup>147</sup> Perrine, *Sound*, 9.

<sup>148</sup> Villanueva, “Lament,” 66.

<sup>149</sup> Interestingly, Fowler (*Ministry*, 1–4) notes that, “The many ways that people share with others their mourning and their spiritual life demonstrate that ultimately we all are psalmists of lament” (4). In addition, “Those who practice the ministry of lament stand with the bereaved during difficult times” (147).

<sup>150</sup> Fowler, *Ministry*, 149.

<sup>151</sup> Common, “Theopoetics,” np.

<sup>152</sup> Keefe-Perry, “Theopoetics,” 579.

<sup>153</sup> Keefe-Perry, “Theopoetics,” 579.



definition provided by Keefe-Perry is that theopoetics would be “the study and practice of making God known through text.”<sup>154</sup> Moreover, “Used as an adjective, a theopoetic text is one that reveals some aspect of the divine.”<sup>155</sup> Yet at a broader level, the meaning of the term is found in its very etymology, where *theo* and *poiein* combine to mean “a means of making God, of shaping experience of the divine, and the study of ways in which people come to know the Spirit.”<sup>156</sup> Zylla has contributed to this area of scholarship and has penned a number of poems that have now been put into book form. Zylla has also issued the clarion call for Christians suffering in affliction to put words to pen and create writing that makes God known through the medium of theopoetics.<sup>157</sup>

There is, however, a caveat for the potential poet, proffered by Gutiérrez:

God is first contemplated when we do God’s will and allow God to reign; only after that do we think about God. To use familiar categories: contemplation and practice together make up the *first act*; theologizing is a *second act*. We must first establish ourselves on the terrain of spirituality and practice; only subsequently is it possible to formulate discourse on God in an authentic and respectful way. Theologizing done without the mediation of contemplation and practice does not meet the requirements of the God of the Bible.<sup>158</sup>

Which is to say that before attempting to speak of God and one’s experience of grief poetically, the theopoet requires compassion, which begins with silent attention before God so as to reflect on one’s grief and God’s presence (or apparent absence). Only after this long silence before God amidst grief, can the potential theopoet venture to write truthfully of grief and God. In a similar vein, Zylla avows that, “If we are to speak meaningfully of the deeper experiences of God in our lives and in the lives of our congregations, we need to pay careful attention to how language may express the depth

---

<sup>154</sup> Keefe-Perry, “Theopoetics,” 579.

<sup>155</sup> Keefe-Perry, “Theopoetics,” 579.

<sup>156</sup> Keefe-Perry, “Theopoetics,” 579–80.

<sup>157</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 135–36, 138, 140–42.

<sup>158</sup> Gutiérrez, *Job*, xiii.

dimension of our searching. Poetic language moves to the depth dimension.”<sup>159</sup> In this respect, Zylla proposes three movements when it comes to capturing this depth dimension in poetic language:

(i) *Numinous Silence as Our Orientation*. As specified by Zylla, “The deepest strivings of our hearts end in God’s presence. The deepest longings of our soul require God’s touch. The center of all that we ask or imagine is found in Go. Numinous is the word we use for this unspoken longing. It beckons us to recognize that the deepest search we carry as human beings is our search for communion with God.”<sup>160</sup> Which is another way of saying that, “Mystery is the basis for our fundamental orientation in theopoetic pastoral theology.”<sup>161</sup>

(ii) *Radical Engagement of Complexity—Ministry as Disorientation*. “Life is messy and those who are called to ministry are invited into the center of this messiness to bring hope to bear on the life situations of the Church.”<sup>162</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that, “This call is to face up to the complicated aspects of ministry life is not an easy calling. It calls for the integration of *the without*—that is the external situation of complexity—and *the within*—the emergence of hope that comes from God to each situation.”<sup>163</sup> Amidst the complexity of life, Christians are called by God to deny ourselves, take up cross daily, and follow Christ (Luke 9:23; 14:27; Matt 10:38) by “entering into the affliction of others with God’s compassion and tenderness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>164</sup> In other words, “We are called to move with the Spirit into the ambiguity and

---

<sup>159</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 130–31.

<sup>160</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 132.

<sup>161</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 132. For Zylla’s poem “Numinous Faith” see “Language,” 135–36.

<sup>162</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 136.

<sup>163</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 136.

<sup>164</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 137.

the depth of life itself with all of its complexity. We are called to serve in places of beauty and moments of abandonment. We must address the fears and doubts of our congregations, along with the joys and freedoms. We are called to share in the strain of anxiety and the ministry of restoration.”<sup>165</sup> Which means that, “Our vocation is to be shepherds of the subtle persistence of hope.”<sup>166</sup>

(iii) *Ministry as Reorientation: The Birth-Hour of a New Clarity*. This is where the hard work of theopoetic articulation commences, and where the word of God governs the movement. Which means that, “The silence of the first movement of prayer and the radical engagement with the real-life experiences of ministry are brought into conversation with the Word of God.”<sup>167</sup> In other words, theopoetic articulation “is the task of pastoral theological reflection,”<sup>168</sup> otherwise referred to as, “the climatic crescendo that comes only after the word has been eaten, assimilated, lived.”<sup>169</sup> Christians, “called to speak from the depths as ‘one speaking the very words of God’ (1 Pet 4:11), we are compelled . . . to theopoetic articulation.”<sup>170</sup>

Ann Weems’ *Psalms of Lament* comprises fifty lament poems penned on account of the pointless death of her son Todd less than an hour after celebrating his twenty-first birthday on August 14, 1982.<sup>171</sup> Weems asserts that, “This book is for those who weep and for those who weep with those who weep.”<sup>172</sup> Brueggemann believes that it is through Weems’ “wounded words we may be healed”<sup>173</sup> for such “utterance is

---

<sup>165</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 138.

<sup>166</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 138. For Zylla’s poem “Longings,” see “Language,” 138.

<sup>167</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 139.

<sup>168</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 139.

<sup>169</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 139.

<sup>170</sup> Zylla, “Language,” 139. For Zylla’s poem “Baptism,” see “Language,” 140–42.

<sup>171</sup> Weems, *Lament*, xix. At the time of its publication in 1995, Weems confessed, “and still I weep” (xix).

<sup>172</sup> Weems, *Lament*, xix.

<sup>173</sup> In Weems, *Lament*, xvii.

cathartic.”<sup>174</sup> Crucial then to the task of mourning is attention to the questions of meaning that usually develop in the face of death, questions when voiced, result in healing to the grieving soul. Owing to such a cathartic nature of such lament utterance, I hereby proffer my first theological poem:

In the dark night of my soul,  
I searched aimlessly about,  
Searching for my imminent heavenly Father,  
Only to find a transcendent God!

Where have you gone, O dear heavenly Father?  
Why have you left me all alone in the dark?  
Will You ever return to me?  
Me, the one who calls you, *Abba*?<sup>175</sup>

The composition and singing of theopoetic sad or lament songs and poems, should not be an end in themselves. Taking the Psalter as our reference, we observe that it begins with a preponderance of lament but ends on a note of praise. In the middle there are songs that alternate between lament and praise, and praise and lament, but the end is always praise. “The balance between disorientation and orientation/reorientation in the final book of the Psalter is a clear reminder for the enduring need for both.”<sup>176</sup>

Vietnamese Christian theopoetic sad songs and poems of lament should thus also consider this reality especially in light of the future hope of glory in Christ their living hope (Col 1:27; 3:4; 1 Pet 1:3; 1 John 3:2). Done this way, “hymns of lament can house the questions and pain of tragic loss, as well as the hymns of resurrection hope.”<sup>177</sup>

Helpful are the words of Rolf A. Jacobson who contends that, “Cognitive dissonance theory holds that the thoughts of individuals need to be consistent and

---

<sup>174</sup> In Weems, *Lament*, xv.

<sup>175</sup> This is my first theological lament poem, which was penned at 5:17 a.m. on March 27, 2015.

<sup>176</sup> Boda, “Varied,” 75.

<sup>177</sup> Ramshaw, “Postmodern” 176.

harmonious.”<sup>178</sup> For this reason, “When a person holds two or more inconsistent thoughts, that person experiences a cognitive dissonance. . . . The person will try to resolve this uncomfortable cognitive dissonance, and some of the ways of doing so are: (i) Changing attitude; (ii) Adding new thoughts; and (iii) Changing behavior.”<sup>179</sup> This might otherwise be referred to as the power of positive thinking. Employing the theory of cognitive dissonance liturgically, he reasons, “I believe that the tension between the words that we place in worshipers mouths and the internal emotional state of the worshipers can be put to creative pastoral and theological use. And I believe that the theory of cognitive dissonance can help us explore this gap and put it to fruitful use.”<sup>180</sup>

Jacobson draws upon Brueggemann’s sequence of orientation—disorientation—reorientation in relation to the psalms, and employs them liturgically. Whereas “Brueggemann focuses on ‘matching’ the expression to the experience, I am arguing that an expression that is precisely contrary to present experiences may be introduced in order to initiate a change in experience.”<sup>181</sup> From this perspective, if a person is in a place of orientation, Jacobson contends that, “it would be pastorally irresponsible for pastors and worship leaders to abandon their congregants in this state of orientation.”<sup>182</sup> Jacobson therefore suggests that the pastor and worship leader “place words of disorientation in the mouth of the congregation by using a lament psalm liturgically. The pastoral goal here would be to introduce a dissonant cognition of disorientation into an oriented person’s mind in the hopes that this new thought would eventually be a catalyst

---

<sup>178</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 92.

<sup>179</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 92.

<sup>180</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 92.

<sup>181</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 98n7.

<sup>182</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 95.

that would cause the person to add new cognitions and new attitudes.”<sup>183</sup> In this (dis)connection, “Rather than judging sufferers or fearing them, compassion and love might take seed.”<sup>184</sup>

In the same spirit, when a mourner finds him/herself in a place of disorientation, “psalms of reorientation [can be] placed in the mouths of the disoriented in order to introduce new cognitions. . . . As words of reorientation are placed into the mouths and thus entered into the hearts and minds of the disoriented, they do more than simply teach the sufferer a new lesson, they do more than simply give expression to the sufferer’s experience.”<sup>185</sup> Which is to say that this ritual of placing the words of reorientation into the life of the mourner, can in some measure “create new life for the sufferer, [and] evoke new horizons. In the words of the New Testament, they raise the dead.”<sup>186</sup> Stated alternatively, “When the liturgy places the words of psalms of reorientation into the mouths of sufferers, it can introduce a new cognition that one hopes might destabilize the experience of the worshiper.” By implication, if the mourner is thinking of being abandoned and alone, s/he will find it helpful to employ the familiar words of Psalm 23:5 [4]: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” In so doing, “The two cognitions are dissonant—I am alone and You are with me—and the human mind will seek to resolve this dissonance: either by changing cognition, adding new cognitions, or changing attitudes.”<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 95.

<sup>184</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 96.

<sup>185</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 96.

<sup>186</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 97.

<sup>187</sup> Jacobson, “Burning,” 97.

On those grounds, the words of reorientation, or rather new orientation spiritual songs sung to the Lord,<sup>188</sup> which speak powerfully of God's redeeming love and comforting presence, can bring a disoriented mourner to a place of healing and sustainability. There might be times of returning to disorientation of course, but eventually the bereaved will also move to a place of new orientation in Christ. For it is only in Christ that the bereaved is guaranteed genuine comfort amidst mourning (Matt 5:4), even as Christ shepherds and guides and comforts the bereaved, furnishing him/her springs of the water of life, and also wiping every tear from his/her eyes (Rev 7:17; cf. Ps 23:4 [3]).

What is thus being encouraged here is that of composition of theopoetic songs and poems, of both lament *and* praise, and putting them to music before God as a means of catharsis amidst grief. Stated another way, the theological songs and poems of lament *and* praise, accompanied by music, will serve as an efficacious medium whereby those in the throes of grief can find consolation and restoration for their distressed soul, and thus, the transformation of their grief. Such wounded words have the potential of healing even those who grieve with those who grieve. As Nouwen put it, "A Christian community is therefore a healing community, not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated, but because wounds and pains become openings or occasions for a new vision. Mutual confession then becomes a mutual deepening of hope, and shared weakness becomes a reminder to one and all of the coming strength."<sup>189</sup> Such mutual

---

<sup>188</sup> Preference is here given to the words new orientation rather than reorientation since the mourner never returns to the exact place of orientation.

<sup>189</sup> Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, 100.

confession advocated here is mediated through the theopoetic poems and songs of both lament and praise to God who accepts them both as legitimate language of faith.

6.1c. Incorporating Indigenous Christian Devotional Songs (e.g., Bhajans) in the Wake/Funeral Liturgy—Tapping into the Cultural Liminal Memory of a Deep Experience of Faith

Distinct among the Guyanese of East Indian heritage is that of singing spiritual or devotional Christian songs in Hindi during a wake or funeral. Such Christian devotional Hindi songs are better referred to as *bhajans*. As noted by GL5, “And if the person who died is of an East Indian descent, we usually sing bhajans at the wake and funeral.”

Even in the midst of disorientation, spiritual or devotional songs can also be heard coming from the lips of the children of Israel. We see this especially in 2 Chron 18–19. Surrounded by distress, we read that, “Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and its inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. The Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel, with a loud voice.” Referred alternatively to as a DS6 thanksgiving praise prayer, the content of their songs of praise expressing their devotion to the LORD, even in the heart of a situation of distress, can be heard in the following lyrics: “Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting” (v. 21; see also 1 Chron 16:34, 41; 2 Chron 5:13).<sup>190</sup>

With respect to indigenous East Indian Guyanese spiritual or devotional songs, James G. Lochtefeld states that a bhajan literally means “sharing,” but it can also refer to

---

<sup>190</sup> Even in the midst of death, such lyrics can also be appropriated by Christians as part of their grief liturgy in joyful gratitude for the victory that is already theirs all because of Christ who graciously imparts abundant and eternal life to them amidst death (cf. John 11:25–26; Eph 2:1–9).



“any song with a religious theme or a spiritual idea, originating from within a regional language from the Indian subcontinent.”<sup>191</sup> Guy Beck notes that the bhajan, which describes a devotional song sung to a deity, is derived from the Sanskrit word *bhaj*, meaning to share or partake, and is thus relative to the term *bhakti*, meaning devotion.<sup>192</sup> “Bhakti is also the name for a Hindu tradition which focuses on personal, loving devotion to God. Bhajans were developed within the bhakti tradition by medieval poets such as Ramananda, Surdas, Kabir, Tukaram, and Mira Bai.”<sup>193</sup>

From a Hindu perspective, “Bhajan singing may be done individually but is more commonly a communal affair. Songs often tell stories and in general celebrate the presence or close communion of the god or lament the god’s absence. It is the singing of the words that increase their power. By singing of love to one’s god, a purification takes place. The purification then leads to a mystical union,”<sup>194</sup> according to Terry Muck. Describing this mystical union, Harold Coward and David Goa aver that both “Lover and believer become one in ecstatic song.”<sup>195</sup> What is more, Muck remarks that since each singer and listener of a bhajan are paradoxically separate from and identical with *Brahman*, the all-encompassing reality, it is believed that such a paradox can be resolved through bhajan singing.<sup>196</sup> Observed by T. R. Sharma, bhajan singing takes a person through four stages of devotion:

- Ordering of religious devotion.
- Instrumental devotion attainable by special external efforts.

---

<sup>191</sup> Lochtefeld, *Encyclopedia*, 97.

<sup>192</sup> Beck, “Devotional Music,” 254.

<sup>193</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A2.

<sup>194</sup> Muck, “Bhajan,” 11.

<sup>195</sup> Coward and Goa, *Mantra*, 61.

<sup>196</sup> Muck, “Bhajan,” 11.

- Emotional devotion resulting from spontaneous inward feeling.
- Loving devotion, maintained reciprocal devotion.<sup>197</sup>

Dating back to the early nineteenth century, however, an evolution of such devotional songs to God was inaugurated. Hindu bhajans began assuming a Christian perspective giving particular reverence to Christ. Today, bhajans sung within the context of a Guyanese-Canadian Christian of East Indian heritage, during a wake or a funeral, thus affirm a devoted love to and belief in the one, true, and living God, who bestows eternal life to all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ (John 3:36).

Adapted from Hindu bhajans, Christian bhajans have thus been especially favored by Hindu-background believers. Especially when there is difficulty adapting to “Western hymns set to Western melodies,” Hindu-background believers “may struggle to adapt to the foreignness of music in their church.”<sup>198</sup> Owing to this, “they are more stirred to reverence by their own traditional style of devotional music, a genre called *bhajan*.”<sup>199</sup> In other words, a Christian bhajan written and sung in the traditional style of devotional music taps into the cultural liminal memory of a deep experience of faith. As Ramshaw put it, “music strongly evokes the past.”<sup>200</sup> Small wonder John Bell points out that, “All of us can similarly revisit our past via songs which root us in that past. . . . We are creatures of our past. We cannot be separated from it, and although we cannot always remember it, songs will unexpectedly summon portions of it into mind.”<sup>201</sup> So it is not surprising to hear Ramshaw also aver that, “When in deep grief, spoken words

---

<sup>197</sup> Sharma, “Bhakti,” 89.

<sup>198</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A1.

<sup>199</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A1.

<sup>200</sup> Ramshaw, “Funerals,” 206.

<sup>201</sup> Bell, *Thing*, 39.

often bounce off us, but words we sing resonate within us.”<sup>202</sup> By virtue of this, Christian devotional songs such as bhajans access a former Hindu’s affective memory, resulting in them bringing memories of their former spirituality in Hinduism, while simultaneously (re)directing rather correctly a deep reverence for the one, true, and living God who alone bestows eternal life on the dead and the living (John 11:25–26).

Employing such indigenous Christian devotional songs as a bhajan in the church as a means of expressing one’s reverence to Christ, however, has not come without opposition. One objection that has been raised is that, “since the bhajan, as a musical genre, was originally developed by Hindus who used it in worship of idols, the church therefore should not write songs in that same style to worship Christ.”<sup>203</sup> Commenting on this objection, Ray Burbank notes that, “This objection is based on a genetic fallacy of rejecting something because of its origin. It fails to assess the theological validity of the actual content of Christ-centered bhajans.”<sup>204</sup> A second objection is that, “bhajans are too old-fashioned. Critics voicing this objection assert that younger generations prefer contemporary Christian music that uses electric guitars, drum sets, and the musical structure of a modern rock song.”<sup>205</sup> But as Burbank notes, “even bhajans can be adapted in instrumentation and melody and yet remain truly bhajan. Indigenous, Christ-centred bhajans in India can be used not only for the cultivation of reverent worship among Hindu-background believers but also as an instructional means of conveying biblical truth to Christ-followers.”<sup>206</sup> To this we might add not only India, but Guyana, Canada, and wherever Hindu-background believers reside today.

---

<sup>202</sup> Ramshaw, “Funerals,” 207.

<sup>203</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A1.

<sup>204</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A1.

<sup>205</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A1–A2.

<sup>206</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A2.

Amidst grief, such Christ-centered bhajans can also reinforce the biblical truth concerning Christ and his gracious gift of eternal life to all who trust in him. Eternal life, described by Jesus Christ, is knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (17:3; cf. 1 John 2:24–25). As GL5 noted, one of the most prominent bhajans that is sung during the liturgy of wakes and funerals is that of “Yishu Ne Kaha: Jiwan Ki Roti,” which means, “Jesus said: The Bread of Life.” The lyrics of this bhajan are:

*Refrain:*

Yishu Ne Kaha: “Jiwan Ki Roti”  
 “Jiwan Ki Roti Main Hi Hun.”  
 Jesus said: “The Bread of Life”  
 “I AM the Bread of Life.”

1. Yishu ne kaha: “Sachcha Garariya”  
 “Sachcha Garariya Main hi hun.”  
 Jesus said: “The Good Shepherd (True)”  
 “I AM the Good Shepherd (True).”
2. Yishu ne kaha: “Marg aur Phatak.”  
 “Marg aur Phatak Main hi hun.”  
 Jesus said: “The Way and the Door.”  
 “I AM the Way and I AM the Door.”
3. Yishu ne kaha: “Jiwan-Data”  
 “Jiwan-Data Main hi hun.”  
 Jesus said: “The Giver of Life”  
 “I AM the Giver of Life.”
4. Yishu ne kaha: “Jagat Ka Ujyala”  
 “Jagat ka Ujyala Main hi hun.”  
 Jesus said: “The Light of the World”  
 “I Am the Light of the World.”

Underpinning this bhajan are a few well-known passages particularly from the fourth Gospel. These are: John 6:35 (“Jesus said, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.’”); John 10:11 (“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”); John 14:6 (“Jesus said, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through

Me.”); John 10:9 (“I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”); John 11:25–26 (“Jesus said to her [Martha], ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die.’”); and John 8:12 (“Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’”). Which is to say that from beginning to end, this bhajan is infused with the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Each stanza echoes with an emphatic asseverative or truth statement from the lips of Jesus himself, the only one who could say with all honesty, “because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19). Bhajans such as this reinforce the hope of the Christian in the resurrection of Jesus and all those who trust in him, and in so doing, sustains the bereaved amidst their grief.

Which is why such Christ-centered bhajans should not be marginalized in favor of our more popular Western Christian music. Room should be allowed for such Christ-centered cultural expressions to God within our intercultural evangelical settings. Christopher D. Hale thus remarks that, “by and large, a bhajan is ‘live’ and sung in the context of a *satsang*, or religious meeting where a preacher expounds Scripture with bhajans interspersed throughout keeping the devotees actively involved.”<sup>207</sup> Sung in the context of a *satsang*, or religious meeting, or a wake, or a funeral, a Christian bhajan can thus be “conducive to biblical meditation. First, there is the exposition of the passage by the preacher which enlightens the understanding through the Holy Spirit. Then there is the repetition of the Biblical thought through the singing of the bhajan and the thought

---

<sup>207</sup> Hale, “Reclaiming,” 16.

goes from the mind into the heart and touches the emotions and the will.”<sup>208</sup> When employed within the liturgy of a wake or funeral, Christ-centered bhajans can therefore serve as faith-strengthening tool to the Hindu-background believer in Christ who continues to hold fast to the solid biblical truth that Christ has indeed conquered death and promised life eternal (John 11:25–26). At the same time, Christ-centered bhajans can serve as a welcomed evangelistic tool for Hindu-background Christians attempting to reach their current Hindu family and friends. Small wonder that Hale asserts,

What we need, then, is for people to begin learning and using the traditional forms and arranging them musically using a combination of Indian and Western instruments. By and large, the first part must be done by Indian poets and Indian musicians. Foreigners can help especially with the packaging because of their access to quality electronic musical equipment and their familiarity with its use. With God’s help, there is much that can be done with music to communicate the message of the Gospel.<sup>209</sup>

Though Hale makes the case for only *Indian* poets and *Indian* musicians learning and using the traditional bhajan forms, here I make the case for *all* East Indian background poets and musicians, including those of an East Indian Guyanese heritage, to collaborate with Western evangelical musicians to put bhajans to music. However, it must be noted that, “Those who wish to sing bhajans with Hindu friends must do the hard work of learning the songs well enough to able to genuinely worship Jesus while singing them.”<sup>210</sup> But as Burbank asserts, “The way bhajans engage the heart and mind helps the truths of God’s word penetrate a person’s heart. When a believer helps a Hindu friend learn Yeshu bhajans that sing of the atonement, the incarnation, the salvation in Jesus’s

---

<sup>208</sup> Hale, “Reclaiming,” 17.

<sup>209</sup> Hale, “Reclaiming,” 17.

<sup>210</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A10.

name alone, and the living water of Christ, the Hindu experiences Christ in a way that allows him or her to ‘see’ Christ more clearly.”<sup>211</sup>

At the same time, if such Christ-centered bhajans are indeed powerful to traverse the mind to the heart so that even the emotions and will are touched, then the bereaved can continue to sense Christ’s ever-abiding presence and glorious return for them (John 14:1–6, 13–16, 18, 19; cf. Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5), which will sustain them amidst their grief. What is more, such Christ-centered evangelistic bhajans will aid in the transformation of grief as Hindu-background believers observe, by God’s amazing and irresistible grace, their Hindu family and friends take the step out of the dominion of darkness and into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col 1:13; cf. 1 Pet 2:9). Taking this step of salvation will doubtless occasion further and even complete joy amidst grief for grieving Hindu-background believers (1 John 1:1–4).

#### 6.1d. Celebrating the Life of the Deceased through Dancing and Singing Upbeat Gospel Songs—Spiritual Rejoicing for Having Arrived Home in Heaven

When it comes to grief, what appears to be distinctly cultural from an African-Guyanese-Canadian perspective, is that of the incorporation of the ritual *Kweh-kweh*, which encompasses singing upbeat gospel songs such as “Mansion Over the Hilltop.” On a similar note, such upbeat songs can also be heard breaking loose from the mouths of the Levites, particularly those of the sons of the Kohathites, and also those of the sons of the Korahites, even as they stood up to harmoniously doxologize the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice (2 Chron 20:19). Expressed in the midst of a situation of disorientation, the lyrics of such an upbeat song of thanksgiving praise, which also

---

<sup>211</sup> Burbank, “Bhajans,” A10.

happens to be a DS6 thanksgiving praise prayer, are euphonicly voiced along the following lines: “Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting” (v. 21; see also 1 Chron 16:34, 41; 2 Chron 5:13).<sup>212</sup>

In her article “Come to My Kwe-Kwe,” Richards-Greaves speaks of the evolution of the traditional African-Guyanese *Kweh-Kweh* ritual underscored by multiple interpretations of authenticity,<sup>213</sup> which is being re-enacted annually in New York for the purpose of not only bringing together the African-Guyanese-American community “for one night of performance, unification, and community building.”<sup>214</sup> More than this, she notes that, “like African Guyanese in Guyana, expatriates in the United States who are nostalgic for their former homeland, as well as those who seek to reconstruct differential ethnic identities in the new homeland, are increasingly embracing traditional *kwek-kweh*.”<sup>215</sup> So on the one hand, these US African-Guyanese expatriates possess a nostalgia for their *immediate* former homeland of Guyana, and on the other hand, they also possess a nostalgia for their *distant* former homeland of Africa.

But as observed within the African-Guyanese Canadian context, the *Kweh-Kweh* ritual, which includes the upbeat song “Mansion Over the Hilltop,” alludes to another homeland—a *future* homeland called *heaven*. So while the African-Guyanese can look back with nostalgia for their two former homelands (Africa and Guyana), they can also look forward with greater nostalgia for their forthcoming homeland, their permanent

---

<sup>212</sup> While this upbeat doxological song of thanksgiving praise can be understood as a battle cry voiced in the context of a warfare (see Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 231), Christians can also appropriate these lyrics as part of their grief liturgy in grateful and joyful anticipation of the victory that Christ their Redeemer has already wrought over death on their behalf (cf. 1 Cor 15:54–57).

<sup>213</sup> Richards-Greaves, “Kwe-Kwe,” 93; she employs the spelling *kweh-kweh* when referring to the traditional (wedding-based) *kweh-kweh*, and *Come to my Kwe-Kwe* when discussing the re-enactment of the ritual (93n1).

<sup>214</sup> Richards-Greaves, “Kwe-Kwe,” 87.

<sup>215</sup> Richards-Greaves, “Kwe-Kwe,” 93.



homeland called heaven. Singing such songs with reference to this future homeland of heaven therefore enables the transformation of grief as they remind the bereaved that the deceased is beyond question, in a better place, in that mansion over the hilltop, to borrow the language of the upbeat gospel song penned by Ira F. Stanphill. For such Guyanese-Canadians of an African heritage, “to be absent from the body [is] to be at home with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:8). This calls for immediate celebration of the life of the deceased, which has crossed over the rolling Jordan today, and entered into the Promised Land of heaven, to appropriate the words of the African spiritual writer Erskine Peters. Small wonder that Wayne E. Oates asserts that, “The funeral itself is a time of mourning and a time of celebration of the life of the deceased with the accent on the celebration.”<sup>216</sup>

Also, if the *Kweh-kweh* ritual within the African-Guyanese Canadian context still retains any connection to its traditional function as a medium for matrimonial instruction for soon-to-be-married couples, then it is from this mansion over the hilltop that the current bereaved person<sup>217</sup> can anticipate the return of their groom—the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:1–6; Rev 19:7). At Christ’s return, an extravagant meal will be shared among the invited guests in the kingdom of God (Luke 14:15). *Kweh-kweh* ritual within an African-Guyanese Canadian context therefore anticipates this grander wedding, inclusive of which is that lavish meal. “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb! (Rev 19:9).

---

<sup>216</sup> Oates, *Grief*, 27.

<sup>217</sup> All Christians collectively belong to the church of Jesus Christ, which is also referred to the bride of Christ (John 3:29; Matt 25:1–13; Eph 5:22–33; Rev 21:2, 9–10; 22:17).

So while it is true that there is “A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance” (Eccl 3:4), for Guyanese-Canadians of African heritage, weeping and laughing, as well as mourning and dancing, can occur within the *same* life setting of grief. Grounded in the firm belief that the spirit and/or soul is immediately transported to the very presence of Christ upon death, and thus simultaneously takes up new residence in heaven (Phil 1:23), it is therefore not uncommon to see those in grief among Guyanese-Canadians of African heritage actually express joy *amidst* mourning. They are, as the apostle Paul puts it: “sorrowful yet always rejoicing” (2 Cor 6:10). Sorrow and grief do not have to be sombre, but celebratory as well.

On several occasions the Bible speaks of the performance of dancing. After crossing the Red Sea, Exod 15:20 says, “Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing.” There was even dancing at the foot of Mount Sinai, but not to God. Rather it was to a golden calf, which Aaron made from the gold of the people, saying, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt” (32:4, 19). First Samuel 18:6 says, “It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments.” When the ark of God was brought to Jerusalem, we read in 2 Sam 6:14, “And David was dancing before the LORD with all *his* might, and David was wearing an linen ephod” (cf. 6:16). One psalmist invites the sons of Zion, saying, “Let them praise His name with dancing; let them sing praises to Him with timbrel and lyre” (Ps 149:4 [3]). The final psalm, 150:5 [4] says, “Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.” And while Lam 5:15 says, “The joy of our hearts has ceased; our

dancing has been turned into mourning,” Ps 30:12 [11]) says, “You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.”

Richards-Greaves notes that, “*Kweh-kweh* music includes singing and often dancing and playing musical instruments. *Kweh-kweh* singing is a communal enactment, performed in Creolese (Guyanese Creole language) in call-and-response form. . . . address[ing] a wide range of conjugal matters.”<sup>218</sup> As a communal act, “participants sing *kweh-kweh* songs in the communal circles, they perform the ritual dance, composed of choreographed stomping, shuffling, and kicking of the feet, contorting the upper body, and in the case of women, swaying maxi skirts from side to side.”<sup>219</sup> During the *Kweh-kweh* ritual, “While the contact of the feet against the floor or ground offers rhythmic accompaniment to the singing, drums and makeshift instruments, like bottles and spoons and buckets and sticks, provide the primary musical instruments.”<sup>220</sup>

Kimerer LaMothe in her article “Dancing in the Face of Death,” speaks of the dance piece *Santuario* (Sanctuary) that was inspired by the deadly shootings of forty-nine people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida on June 11, 2016. Speaking of her experience as an observer of this dance piece by the Philadelphia based company, Kun-Yang Lin/Dancers, LaMothe avers that, “Dance has agency in its ability to stir and catalyze acute awareness of pain and a loving, whole human response to it at the same time. The very movements that make our pain evident, visceral, and communal are the same movements that exercise our only hope of acting otherwise.”<sup>221</sup> LaMothe goes on

---

<sup>218</sup> Richards-Greaves, “Kwe-Kwe,” 87.

<sup>219</sup> Richards-Greaves, “Kwe-Kwe,” 87.

<sup>220</sup> Richards-Greaves, “Kwe-Kwe,” 87.

<sup>221</sup> LaMothe, “Dancing,” para. 16.

to add that, “At one level, a dance tells a story, in this case, loosely acting out a tragic event, not literally, but in an abstract, symbolic manner. Yet dance is never just telling a story. Because there, in front of you, are bodily selves—whole humans—beautiful, strong, lithe, expressive bodily selves. And they are moving. They are pouring their attention, their time, their energy, their love into making these kinetic images. The pain they depict bleeds out in their sweat and our tears.”<sup>222</sup> Small wonder LaMothe asserts that, “dancing serves, perhaps uniquely, to buoy and nurture humanity in the face of tragedy.”<sup>223</sup>

If looking back on a tragic event by means of a symbolic dance appears to have some redemptive quality to it as it fosters communal support for the wounded thus furnishing a sense of buoyancy amidst grief, how much more is symbolic dancing to upbeat gospel songs? Without factoring in God into the frame, dancing as a symbolic expression of a tragic event, will nevertheless fall short of *full* redemption. With the inclusion of God within one’s worldview, however, tragedy is made bearable, grief is made manageable, and the bereaved can continue to live an abundant life on account of the confident hope that such tragedy and grief find their answers in Christ. Only in Christ, the God who suffers for us and with us, can the bereaved really find sustainability amidst grief (Matt 5:4). Comforted truly by God that is predicated upon the future hope of eternal life with Him who *will* terminate death, mourning, crying, pain, and tears (Rev 21:4), grieving Christians can employ dance as a symbolic expression as they look back *and* forward, not only to the tragedy of the deceased, but

---

<sup>222</sup> LaMothe, “Dancing,” para. 11–12.

<sup>223</sup> LaMothe, “Dancing,” para. 2.

more so to the crucified-yet-resurrected Christ who is the only sure hope who redeems *all* tragedies.

Jürgen Moltmann states it more specifically when he says, “The history of the suffering, forsaken and crucified Christ is so open that the suffering, forsakenness and anxieties of every loving man or woman find a place in it and are accepted. If they find a place in it and are accepted, it is not in order to give them permanence, but in order to transform and heal them.”<sup>224</sup> Stated alternatively, “In Christ’s death on the cross, God took evil, sin and rejection of himself, transforming it into goodness, grace and election in the sacrifice of his infinite love. All evil, all sin, suffering and damnation is ‘in God’. They have been endured by him, abolished in him, transformed by him. These are ‘the benefits of his passion’ for us.”<sup>225</sup> In Christ the God who suffers for and with us, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory” (1 Cor 15:54). With the apostle Paul, grieving Christians can thus joyfully say, “‘O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (15:55–57). Moltmann, in *The Crucified God*, emphasized it like this,

The death of Jesus on the cross is the *centre* of all Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but it is in effect the entry to its problems and answers on earth. All Christian statements about God, about creation, about sin and death have their focal point in the crucified Christ. All Christian statements about history, about the church, about faith and sanctification, about the future and about hope stem from the crucified Christ. The multiplicity of the New Testament comes together in the event of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and flows out again from it. It is one event and one person. . . . Thus the centre is occupied not by ‘cross and resurrection,’ but by *the resurrection of the crucified Christ*, which qualifies his death as something that has happened for us,

---

<sup>224</sup> Moltmann, *Experiences of God*, 75.

<sup>225</sup> Moltmann, *Experiences of God*, 79.

and *the cross of the risen Christ*, which reveals and makes accessible to those who are dying his resurrection from the dead.<sup>226</sup>

The problems of tragedy, death, and grief therefore find their answers on earth in the God made flesh. To furnish answers to life's most difficult questions while rejecting any discussion on the resurrection of the crucified Christ *and* the cross of the risen Christ will undoubtedly fail to touch the mind and heart of the bereaved. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer asserted, "Only the suffering God can help us."<sup>227</sup> In the God who suffers for and with us are we made alive by grace through faith in Christ (Eph 2:1–9). Stated positively, because Christ lives, all who place their faith in Christ *will* surely live (John 14:19). Tragedy, death, and grief are therefore transformed in the crucified-yet-resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. Or else, the cross without the resurrection of Christ "is quite simply a tragedy and nothing more than that."<sup>228</sup> But as Paul stated, "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3–4). In Christ, death will be abolished, and all will be made alive (15:22, 26).

African-Guyanese-Canadian Christians stand firm on these biblical truths as they dance to upbeat gospel songs even in the midst of tragedy as a symbolic expression of one's love for the deceased and for Christ in whose heavenly presence the deceased now resides (2 Cor 5:8). "For when we use a symbol, we do not speak; we let an object or gesture speak for us. This is precisely how we proceed in the liturgy; symbolic language is the language of a love that transcends words."<sup>229</sup> As a symbolic gesture of love, *Kweh-*

---

<sup>226</sup> Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 204; emphasis original.

<sup>227</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters*, 361.

<sup>228</sup> Moltmann, *Experiences*, 53.

<sup>229</sup> Gutiérrez, *Job*, xiv.

*kweh* dancing accompanied by upbeat gospel songs amidst grief are undergirded by the theological truths of Scripture, which speak of a loving God who alone offers redemption in the crucified-yet-resurrected Christ. It is this Christ who is in the process of making all things new (Rev 21:5), inclusive of which is the liberation from death, mourning, crying, and pain (21:4). Only in Christ then our tragedies and griefs can truly and fully be redeemed. As Zacharias avers,

Love is the supreme ethic. Where there is the possibility of love, there must be the reality of free will. Where there is the reality of free will, there will inevitably be the possibility of sin. Where there is sin, there is the need for a Savior. Where there is a Savior, there is the hope for redemption. Only in the Judeo-Christian worldview does this sequence find its total expression and answer. The story from sin to redemption is only in the gospel with the ultimate provision of a loving God.<sup>230</sup>

For some folks, dancing to and singing upbeat gospel songs might be countercultural. But says Nouwen, “when we have finally found the anchor place for our lives within our center we can be free to let others enter into that space created for them, and allow them to dance their own dance, sing their own song, and speak their own language without fear. Then our presence is no longer threatening and demanding, but inviting and liberating.”<sup>231</sup>

Within an African-Guyanese-Canadian context of grief, *Kweh-kweh* dancing to and singing upbeat gospel music appears therefore to be a mixture of confidence and thanksgiving to the loving God who alone furnishes redemption for all sinners and innocent sufferers. Like the psalms of thanksgiving, such dancing and singing acknowledges or confesses the good things that God has done on behalf of the believers, both deceased and bereaved, even their redemption. In this *Kweh-kweh* celebration, the

---

<sup>230</sup> Zacharias, *Logic of God*, 3.

<sup>231</sup> Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, 98.

bereaved are granted the opportunity to share their sorrows and their joys, their defeats and their victories, their doubts and their faith, their selves, and their God.<sup>232</sup> During this celebratory time, it is acknowledged that God has indeed been loyal to the deceased, delivering him/her from the troubles of life, and has now taken him/her to be with Him forever in glory land, beyond the Jordan, in the Promised Land of heaven. As such, *Kweh-kweh* dancing and singing upbeat gospel songs in thanks and praise to God, serves as a sign of one's positive outlook on life that is heralded by God's messengers, and grounded in God's redemptive acts in support of His people, as recorded in the Bible. Just as God redeemed His people Israel from the cruel bondage in Egypt, so too He has already redeemed His people from the bondage of death, even though this redemption awaits its actualization (Rom 8:18–25).

*Kweh-kweh* dancing and singing are almost certainly bound to have holistic healing properties amidst grief. With their eyes transfixed upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of their faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb 12:2), Guyanese-Canadians of African heritage, can lay aside every encumbrance, even the burden of grief, and the sin which so easily entangles, and run with endurance and joy, the race set before them (12:1). In other words, they follow the exhortation of Paul in rejoicing in the Lord always (2 Cor 6:10; 7:4; Phil 4:4). As such, when it comes to mourning, based on the confident belief that the departed soul and/or spirit is with Jesus the crucified-yet-resurrected Lord and King, dancing and singing in celebration of a life well lived for God's renown, can definitely serve as a powerful tool in the transformation of grief.

---

<sup>232</sup> Cf. Futato, *Joy*, 80.



### 6.1e. Connecting Personal Grief Stories to God's Sacred Story— Experiencing Hope in the Resurrected Christ

Here we are reminded of the words of VL2 following the death of VL2's mother's: "I gathered my brothers and sisters together in the hallway of the hospital and reminded them that the most important thing was my mother had put her faith in God through the blood of Christ. Her life was in God's hands." In other words, "We believe in the eternal life that God has promised to those who put their faith in Him. Since we are believers in Christ, we believe we will meet our mother again." VL2 also stated that, "We reminded ourselves of all the good things she had done, and the good life she had lived. We needed to encourage one another to keep on with her legacy of love, dedication to the family, and faithfulness to God, which she adopted in her later years." In such comments one observes that each bereaved person had a grief story to tell of their mother, but their personal grief stories were connected to God's grand sacred story. In this connection, each mourner, being a believer in Christ, found hope: "Since we are believers in Christ, we will meet our mother again." And in so doing, they are able to sorrow with hope.

Affirming his belief in the reality of heaven, Lam recalls a snippet of the last days in the life of a gentleman who was a non-Christian but who made the decision to follow Christ just prior to his cancer-related death.

Mr. Nguyen, forty-one years old, was sick with nose cancer. As he lay in the hospital, he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. The next Saturday, his wife called [me] to come see him because he was dying. He was dead for eleven minutes but came back to life. I drove to see him the next day, and he told me that on the previous night he had gone to a very beautiful place and met his father, who had died four months prior. When I asked him if he was afraid of death, he said no.

Lam's knowledge of Mr. Nguyen (and other Vietnamese Christians who have had visions of heaven, e.g., Mr. Tran and Mrs. Vo), and hearing them speak of heaven the ways in which they did (i.e., as a beautiful place full of diamonds) furnished him ample

evidence that, “they had seen it. This gave me a strong trust in God’s miracles. They guaranteed me that I’ve been saved and am God’s child, who inherits heaven.”<sup>233</sup> In the case of Mr. Nguyen, heaven is a place where he will see his father again.

In the OT, one also hears such a note of hope sounded from the lips of David in the story of the death of his and Bathsheba’s unnamed son. Second Samuel 12 furnishes a record of what one might refer to as some countercultural actions on David’s part upon learning of his son’s death. Verse 20 reads this way: “So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed *himself*, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came into his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.” Confused by such expressions, David’s servants inquired of him, saying, “What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food” (v. 21). Then came David’s hopeful response: “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? *I will go to him*, but he will not return to me” (vv. 22–23; emphasis mine). The words “I will go to him” collectively sound an echo of hope from the perspective of David. Otherwise stated, “There is to be heard a note of consolation in David’s words ‘I will go to him.’”<sup>234</sup> With this hope, David is able to move from a state of mourning to a state of normalcy, or even a state of joy. This is made clear from the words of Anderson. “This joyous state meant that the mourner had to bathe, put on fresh clothes and scented oil, eat and drink, and

---

<sup>233</sup> Lam, *God’s Miracles*, 200. For Mr. Tran, heaven “was so beautiful,” while for Mrs. Vo, heaven is “full of diamonds” (200).

<sup>234</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 376.

even (according to some) resume sexual relations.”<sup>235</sup> By doing each of these (see 2 Sam 12:13–25), David’s grief narrative had thus turned into one of hopeful joy.<sup>236</sup>

Each person has a story to tell and every story is equally significant because every person is sacred to God (Gen 1:26–27; 5:1; 9:6; Ps 139:14–17 [13–16]; Jas 3:9). At the same time, no one story is *more* important than another. All stories of all peoples are significant in their own right, even the stories of faithful believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Although the deceased is no longer physically present with us, the story of his/her life still remains a significant part of the community of faith. Compassionate pastoral care will give room for such stories of the departed believer to be shared and appreciated. As a matter of fact, As Ramshaw avers, “All pastoral care can be described as the effort to help people make connections between their personal story and the sacred stories carried by the community.”<sup>237</sup>

Also worthy of emphasising here are the words of Hopkins, who avers that, “Pastoral care and counseling, at its heart, is about *storytelling*.”<sup>238</sup> This means that, “Stories center the pastoral care encounter, offering points of reflection for self-perception and understanding. Pastoral caregivers do not engage in ‘extreme makeovers’ of the psyche, but rather help organize and frame our understanding of ourselves, the world, the way we speak about it, and the way we relate to God.”<sup>239</sup> Speaking of her

---

<sup>235</sup> Anderson, *Time*, 50. See 2 Sam 12:24 for David’s resumption of sexual relations with his wife Bathsheba.

<sup>236</sup> It should be noted here once again that while it is possible for one to read David’s unconventional grief expressions as cold-hearted, it is also possible that David exhibits a capacity to grief resiliently: “David may experience a resilient grief trajectory that does not reflect monstrous callousness or unconcern for his baby” (Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119). Which implies that, “David need not be judged so harshly by scholars or presented as a normative model to bereaved parents. The description of David’s behavior seems to be used in the Bible to characterize David, not to tell other parents how to mourn” (Bosworth, “Understanding Grief,” 119).

<sup>237</sup> Ramshaw, “Postmodern,” 177.

<sup>238</sup> In Hopkins and Koppel, *Grounded*, 6; emphasis mine.

<sup>239</sup> In Hopkins and Koppel, *Grounded*, 6.

constructive experience during a workshop at a denominational evangelism conference she attended wherein stories were shared, Hopkins offers the following description: “The stories of our experience of God and of community formed the core of our Christian self-identity and bound us together in that workshop. Our shared stories were ‘privileged and imaginative acts of self-interpretation’<sup>240</sup> that invited our pastoral caring for one another.”<sup>241</sup> Yet one wonders what would happen if such a pastoral care practice would take root in, and become part of the life of the local faith community of Christ followers so that it becomes a ritual of great import for pastoral care? This is what is being advocated here.

Stories of the departed faithful believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can inspire contemporary Christians to imitate our brothers/sisters in Christ who have gone before us as they help us to keep our eyes on Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:1–2). On the flip side, the sharing of stories of the deceased can also elevate the status of the deceased faithful believer to that of a *god*. Knowledge of such a subsisting undercurrent should serve as a warning for every Christian sharing his/her story of their deceased loved one. Avoiding this danger zone therefore compels the mourner to temper each rendition of the story of the faith of the deceased with that of the story of the faithfulness of God. Care should therefore be taken to avoid idealizing and idolizing such familial persons that the story of our faithful high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, appears to pale in comparison. It is therefore essential to the life of the Christian mourning storyteller to acknowledge explicitly or implicitly during the storytelling that there is only one God who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, from

---

<sup>240</sup> Anderson and Foley, *Stories*, 5.

<sup>241</sup> In Hopkins and Koppel, *Grounded*, 6; see also Hopkins, *Journey*, 1–2.

whom the deceased derives his/her very existence. It should then follow that the deceased is *never* to be viewed as being on par with the triune God. The mere fact that s/he is deceased, should be indicative of the reality that the deceased is *not* to be idolized, especially in the form of ancestral worship, or even bordering on, the divine (Exod 20:3–5; Lev 26:1; Deut 4:15–19).

Though a necessity in our grief process, stories of our deceased loved ones, however, ought to be subservient to the story of the gospel of Jesus Christ without whom there would be no story of faith. Thus, Zylla's remark that, "Pastoral theology has always attempted to bridge the complex world of experience with the deepest roots of the gospel."<sup>242</sup> All our faith-ful stories fall under the umbrella of God's grand metanarrative and His dealings with this world that He created by His word *ex nihilo*, that is, out of nothing (Heb 11:3). Without the metanarrative of God's story, the stories of our deceased loved ones make absolutely no sense. Faith and hope thrive in the root of God's metanarrative. Of import at this juncture are the words of Paul M. Beckingham who averred that,

Faith is a journey of discovering ultimate value—and we are all on it. Some choose to ground their experience under the umbrella of truth that is God's story, outlines in His dealings with His biblical people. When I read my own narrative, and weigh the text of my life, I deliberately place it within that meta-narrative, or the overarching story of the nature of God—His acts of love in dealing with His people. The writings of those biblical authors record His tender involvement with His world. Hope grows as we read our own story in that light, and against the backdrop of this bigger story in which we find ourselves. Our story is caught up within it as it becomes part of the ultimate resolution of our pain, and healing for our brokenness. This is the hope towards which God is moving us, if we will let Him.<sup>243</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> Zylla, "Language," 129.

<sup>243</sup> Beckingham, *Walking Towards Hope*, 145.

This is especially true in the light of the faith chapter of Heb 11 which shadows Heb 12. In the former, the writer shares his rendition of the stories of the multiple giants of the faith, but in r, he ultimately cautions and challenges the faithful readers and hearers of his letter to transfix their eyes upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who is none other than the author or pioneer and perfecter of their faith (Heb 12:2). Stated alternatively, the legacy of the faith of the human deceased loved one, profound as it may be, is always hinged upon, and is thus subordinate to, the faith of Jesus Christ, the One of whom Scripture emphatically declares, “great is Your faithfulness” (Lam 3:23). Like the faith chapter in the sermon-epistle of Hebrews, while the faith of each of the giants of the faith are ascribed ample recognition for their faith in the Lord, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is always the main character of faith. Mourning storytellers should never lose sight of Jesus Christ who is the point of every story. Of utmost importance then to the mourner is the acknowledgement that, naked the deceased came from his/her mother’s womb, and naked s/he shall return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD (cf. Job 1:21). The accent therefore falls not on the deceased loved one, but on the LORD who loves the deceased perfectly (1 John 4:18).

Therefore, in speaking of the deceased loved one, although strongly encouraged as part of the grief and healing process, it is much more important to stress, as a Christian, that the life of the deceased is wrapped up in the life of the faithful One, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow (Jas 1:17), and of whom the Scripture says, “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever (Heb 13:8). It is this faithful One who brought the deceased into existence, privileged him/her with a lifespan (short or long; 70 is the average number proffered in Ps 90:11 [10]), and thereafter, carried him/her back into the arms of father Abraham (Luke 16:23), and more so, at

home with Him (2 Cor 5:8). Further to this, “Jesus Christ [is] the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead” (Rev 1:5a). And as a consequence of this historical reality, those whom Jesus Christ has released from “sins by His blood” (1:5b), even the faithful deceased loved one, will doubtless be guaranteed a place among the second-born of the dead in Christ who is the resurrection and the life (John 11:25; Rev 20:4–6).

At the same time, acquainted with grief in their own lives, communal pastoral caregivers become fellow wounded healers. Rather than the unwounded (e.g., Job’s friends), it is the wounded healers who are virtually always in a better position to heal the wounded. It is also likely that the deceased is known within the community of pastoral caregivers so that they too can join in the sharing of their own stories with the faithful one who is now deceased as a way to encourage the immediate mourner.

But even when the communal pastoral caregivers share an acquaintance with the deceased, and are thus able to relate their stories of the deceased with the mourning loved one, it is also ultimately the story of the One who died and rose again that needs to be highlighted by all pastoral caregivers. And this for the very fact that it is the story of the life of Jesus Christ that gives credence to the story of the life of the faithful deceased. Bereft of the story of God’s faithful Son, Jesus Christ, and his death and triumphant resurrection, the faith stories of the deceased carry very little significance. Apart from the rising Sun of Righteousness who brings healing on his wings (Mal 4:2) to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke 1:79; cf. Isa 9:2), the stories of the dead remain simply that, dead, lifeless, and lacking in vigor to inspire the living faithful witness of Christ who is called to live for the glory of God in every possible way (1 Cor 10:31).

So while one may share the stories of the faithful human deceased loved one, it is of chief importance that the story of the faithful divine-human Son of God, Jesus Christ, be shared all the more and above all. Sharing the story of the deceased human loved one can thus serve as an evangelistic tributary that flows from the mouth of the mourner into the river of God's metanarrative, pointing fellow humans ultimately to the living hope of the world, namely, Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father (Rom 15:12; 1 Pet 1:3; 3:15; 1 John 3:3). It is therefore in sharing the stories of both the faithful human, who has joined the great cloud of witnesses of and to the faithfulness of God (Heb 12:1), and more crucially the faithful divine-human Son of God, Jesus Christ, that faith can leap in the heart of an unbeliever, and all this only by the grace of God (Eph 2:8–9).

The story of the deceased therefore serves as helpful segue into the ultimate framework of the grand metanarrative of God, within which the story of the deceased finds its true meaning,<sup>244</sup> and in so doing, the mourning storyteller acknowledges him/herself as a living testimony and witness of and to the faithfulness of God (cf. Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 1:9). In a nutshell then, that grand metanarrative of God can be drafted along these lines:

After God created the world and human rebellion marred it, God set out to restore what he had made: God did not turn his back on a world bent on destruction; he turned his face toward it in love. He set out on the long road of

---

<sup>244</sup> Similarly, Newbigin (*The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 14–26) states, “The way we understand human life depends on what conception we have of the human story. What is the real story of which my life story is part?” (15). MacIntyre (*After Virtue*, 204–25) also maintains that, “I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question, ‘Of what story do I find myself a part?’” (216). Bartholomew and Goheen (*The Drama of Scripture*, 15–28) affirm that, “In order to understand our world, to make sense of our lives, and to make our most important decisions about how we ought to be living, we depend upon some story. . . . Individual experiences make sense and acquire meaning only when seen within the context or frame of some story we believe to be the true story of the world: each episode of our life stories finds its place there. . . . biblical Christianity claims that the Bible alone tells the true story of our world” (18, 20). Otherwise stated in the words of Wright (*The New Testament and The People of God*, 38–43) “The whole point of Christianity is that it offers a story which is the story of the whole world. It is public truth” (41–42). Sire (*The Universe Next Door*, 15–24) also states that a ministry of the Christian is that of “encouraging people to think in terms of worldviews, that is, with a consciousness of not only our own way of thought but also that of other people, so that we can first understand and then genuinely communicate with others in our pluralistic society” (17).



redemption to restore the lost as his people and the world as his kingdom.’ The Bible narrates the story of God’s journey on that long road of redemption. It is a unified and progressively unfolding drama of God’s action in history for the salvation of the whole world.<sup>245</sup>

Storytelling then from the lips of the mourner concerning the deceased loved one and follower of Jesus Christ, although encouraged as part of the grieving and healing pastoral care process, should *never* take precedence over the story of God’s grand metanarrative, of whom Jesus Christ is the central character. And if Carrie Doehring is correct in stating that, “Caregiving involves constructing meaning and practices that can deepen a sense of connection with God/the sacred and the web of being that includes self, others, and all of creation,”<sup>246</sup> then what better place to find meaning with each of these than in God’s grand metanarrative, at the heart of which is Jesus the crucified-yet-resurrected, reigning, and returning Lord and King?

Edward P. Wimberly, in his *African American Pastoral Care*, suggests that, “Indeed, the metaphor ‘indigenous storyteller’ still remains powerful for giving guidance to constructive approaches for recreating village functions in contemporary black churches.”<sup>247</sup> The origin of this metaphor can be heard in the following words: “eschatological indigenous African American storytelling is an artistic and imaginative practice of meaning-making that, although derived from necessity [amidst slavery], focused on God’s presence. What grief and sorrow African Americans experienced in the present was, in all actuality, being ameliorated or improved by God’s glorious, unfolding story.”<sup>248</sup> What is more, “They witnessed God creating a new world that was

---

<sup>245</sup> Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 11–12; internal quotation from Contemporary Testimony Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, *Our World Belongs to God*, paragraph 19.

<sup>246</sup> Doehring, *Practice*, 180.

<sup>247</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, x.

<sup>248</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, xii.

present but not yet. They encountered what the Gospel stories were telling them about the coming of a new age called the kingdom of God.”<sup>249</sup> And as a consequence of this, “through their own creative encounters with God, they created an imaginative set of practices known as storytelling that form a master narrative or eschatological plot ‘best exemplified in the stories of the exodus of the Hebrew children from Egypt and of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.’”<sup>250</sup>

This indigenous storytelling approach to grief has a plot to it, which Wimberly refers to as the “eschatological plot.”<sup>251</sup> It is this eschatological plot that, “envisions hope in the midst of suffering and oppression, because God is working out God’s purposes in life on behalf of persons. The eschatological plot takes suffering and oppression very seriously without minimizing their influence in life. Yet despite the prevalence of suffering and oppression, God’s story of hope and liberation is unfolding.”<sup>252</sup> What then is the goal of this indigenous storytelling or narrational approach to pastoral care? According to Wimberly, especially within the black church, it is that of “link[ing] persons in need to the unfolding of God’s story in the midst of life. The African American pastor has narrated, and continues to narrate, stories that help people catch a glimpse of hope in the midst of suffering.” Which is another way of saying that, “It is by identifying with the story that Christians have linked themselves to purposeful directions in life, despite suffering and pain.”<sup>253</sup>

Wimberly therefore proposes the “Telling and retelling stories from the Bible, from our faith communities, and from our everyday lives as people of faith evoke

---

<sup>249</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, xii.

<sup>250</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, xii.

<sup>251</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 4.

<sup>252</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 4.

<sup>253</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 4–5.

concrete images and memories that propel us into imaginatively recreating our village connections.”<sup>254</sup> So in the case of a death of a parishioner, an African pastor “trained lay people to share stories from their own lives to encourage the bereaved to share their stories of hurt and pain. He informed them that a brief story from the lives of the caregivers could assist the bereaved to review their relationships with the deceased and enable feelings of bereavement to be expressed. The pastor warned them, however, to tell their stories in ways that kept the bereaved person’s needs for grieving central.”<sup>255</sup> In the process of sharing their stories of bereavement in their own lives, however, the caregivers “included testimonies of God’s presence in the midst of death.”<sup>256</sup> What is missing from this pastoral encounter, however, is that of the bereaved *not* given another chance to retell his/her grief story in light of the grief stories of the lay caregivers. As such, it would have been helpful for the bereaved to retell his/her grief story, especially after being reminded of such a story that is part and parcel of God’s grander redemptive story of the Bible, which encompasses the ongoing and ever-abiding presence of God amidst grief, even in and through the presence of the caregivers. Subsequently, this shared support system would have a common faith story, which, when shared, would hold out hope in the midst of tragedy.<sup>257</sup>

Together with the wake and funeral, the African pastor made a concerted effort to include “Images of God’s presence in the lives of those who were bereaved in Scripture [which] held out hope for developing new life scenarios. The liturgy of the funeral gave the message that God will assist you in fashioning a new story without the

---

<sup>254</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, x–xi.

<sup>255</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 36.

<sup>256</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 38.

<sup>257</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 38.

presence of the deceased.”<sup>258</sup> In other words, “Through the funeral and wake, they could encounter the spacious resources of God’s story of grace and hope.”<sup>259</sup> Wimberly’s reflection on this method of storytelling, inclusive of which is story-listening, as well as story-retelling, as a way of offering hope to the bereaved, is summarized in the following statement:

Essential to the narrative understanding of caring ministry to the bereaved is the envisioning of the funeral and the caring as being linked to God’s unfolding drama in our lives. God’s unfolding story is a drama made up of episodes, scenes, chapters, and a plot. The funeral and the ministry of caring in God’s name are miniplots in the midst of God’s unfolding macroplot. The macroplot of God involves death and rebirth made possible by Jesus Christ. The salvation drama is made up of dying with Christ and rising with Christ. Therefore, in ministry to the dying and the bereaved, the task is to draw the people into God’s salvation drama of death and rebirth.<sup>260</sup>

Of import here is the fact that compassionate storytelling *necessitates* compassionate story-listening, on both the part of the immediately bereaved, as well as the previously bereaved lay caregivers. Otherwise there will be a breakdown in the narrational cycle. This process of compassionate storytelling, story-listening, and then story-retelling within God’s grander kingdom story of the defeat of sin and death through the triumphal resurrection of Jesus Christ, and thus liberation, healing, and wholeness,<sup>261</sup> “reinforces relational ties that sustain grieving persons in integrity.”<sup>262</sup>

While common among the African American black church, this compassionate narrational or indigenous storytelling approach of the deceased, is also shared among the Vietnamese-Canadian leaders. Speaking of the days leading up to and also following the death of his uncle to cancer, Hoang notes that, “Close friends and relatives came and

---

<sup>258</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 38.

<sup>259</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 38.

<sup>260</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 39.

<sup>261</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 19.

<sup>262</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 13.

went frequently during [his] last week. Each used their talent to ‘serve’ uncle.”<sup>263</sup> For Hoang, a registered nurse, this meant providing “some morphine to relieve his pain,” while one of his cousins, a medical doctor, “came daily to take uncle’s blood pressure and give medical advice.”<sup>264</sup> Hoang further adds that, “We spent very brief moments with uncle, mindful of his diminishing strength. We spent most of the time with each other. Later, we reminisced about the events of uncle’s last week and what each surviving family was able to do for him.”<sup>265</sup> Hoang also indicates that following the funeral of his uncle, “for the next 49 days the family held a memorial service every seven days. Again, they shared meals with close friends and relatives and reminisced about events of uncle’s passing as well as everything else in their lives.”<sup>266</sup> According to Hoang, “Each memorial forced the family to burden others with their sorrow so that they could grieve fully.”<sup>267</sup> Such reminiscing doubtless involved both compassionate storytelling and story-listening.

Interestingly, Vieira also notes that, “To healthily grieve, we take all the time we need. Do not let anyone tell you when you should be ‘over it’. . . . Accept support when offered—there’s no need to put on a brave face. Talk regularly about the loss with those closest to you.”<sup>268</sup> In other words, talk about your grief stories. Vieira then goes on to add that, “There are things that we can do for others who are grieving. We can ask about their feelings and be present.”<sup>269</sup> What Vieira means by this is spelled out in the following words: “be good listeners. You can ask them to share good memories of the

---

<sup>263</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 4.

<sup>264</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 4.

<sup>265</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 5.

<sup>266</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 18.

<sup>267</sup> Hoang, “Death Rituals,” para. 18.

<sup>268</sup> Vieira, “Grief and Mental Health,” para. 12.

<sup>269</sup> Vieira, “Grief and Mental Health,” para. 13.

loss they experienced.”<sup>270</sup> Compassionate grief storytelling therefore also implies compassionate grief story-listening. At the same time, Vieira also offers the following caveat: “If they do not want to speak, just visit them. Of course, everyone is busy and have their own lives so if you can’t be with them daily, make simple phone calls.”<sup>271</sup>

From a Christian perspective, however, compassionate pastoral care is deprived of its efficaciousness where only storytelling and story-listening are present. Which therefore implies that compassionate pastoral care necessitates both storytelling and story-listening, but to the accompaniment of story-retelling, and that in light of God’s grander redemptive story. What is thus being advocated here can be heard in the following statement: By telling and retelling one’s grief story, in collaboration with the grief stories of other lay Christians, and this in connection to that of the metanarrative of God’s sacred or redemptive story, the grieving person is sustained in integrity, and finds hope. Compassionate storytelling and story-retelling, together with the compassionate act of story-listening of each other’s grief stories, therefore, are empty without the inclusion of God’s grander salvific story, which does not minimize, but rather embraces death and grief. Yet God’s redemptive story encompasses a subsequent resurrection triumph after death, and as such, serves as the most powerful tool in the transformation of grief. The reason being is that it holds out a sure and certain hope for the bereaved so that s/he is able “to see reality the way it is shaped by God’s hand and teachings.”<sup>272</sup> The story of the bereaved therefore does not end with *death*. Rather, since the final word in God’s metanarrative is *life* (Isa 25:8; Rev 21:4), the personal stories of every grieving

---

<sup>270</sup> Vieira, “Grief and Mental Health,” para. 13.

<sup>271</sup> Vieira, “Grief and Mental Health,” para. 13.

<sup>272</sup> Wimberly, *Care*, 19.

born again child of God ends on a note of *life*. By virtue of the fact that Christ is “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25; 14:19; 20:30–31), and the Christian’s “living hope” (1 Pet 1:3; 1 John 3:3), the Christian mourner confidently concurs with N. T. Wright that, “Resurrection means bodily life *after* ‘life after death’, or, if you prefer, bodily life after the *state* of ‘death.’”<sup>273</sup>

## 6.2. Summary

By way of summary, in this section there was a presentation and development of five ways pastoral care practitioners can lend aid to those in grief so that the bereaved might be able to handle and transform their grief. These five compassionate, liberative intercultural expressions were deemed worthy of transforming grief and thus sustaining the bereaved:

- i. Bearing the Funeral Expenses of the Poor—Extending Offers of Help
- ii. Composing and Singing Sad (and Joyful Theopoetic) Songs and Poems of Lament—Finding Emotional Catharsis through Music
- iii. Incorporating Indigenous Christian Devotional Songs (e.g., Bhajans) in the Wake/Funeral Liturgy—Tapping into the Cultural Liminal Memory of a Deep Experience of Faith
- iv. Celebrating the Life of the Deceased through Dancing and Singing Upbeat Gospel Songs—Spiritual Rejoicing for Having Arrived Home in Heaven
- v. Connecting Personal Grief Stories to God’s Sacred Story—Experiencing Hope in the Resurrected Christ

---

<sup>273</sup> Wright, *Resurrection*, 108–9; emphasis original.

From this list it is observed that each of these five compassionate pastoral care practices are both liberative and intercultural, and couched within ritual. By virtue of this, “The hope for the church’s life is that we might all live the truth of the mutuality of service in love so well that we enact it unconsciously in our liturgies, transforming them into rituals of liberation for individuals and for the world.”<sup>274</sup> What is more, it is also hoped that these compassionate, liberative pastoral care practices will sensitize pastoral caregivers in their God-empowered endeavors to bring healing and sustainability to those in grief, and with God-centred, cultural integrity.

---

<sup>274</sup> Ramshaw, *Ritual*, 114.



## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

### 7.1. Summary

Anthony C. Thiselton avers that, “God created humankind because God loves us and chose to reach forth, as it were, out of himself, to create beings ‘other’ than himself, to commune with them and to enjoy fellowship with them.”<sup>1</sup> Part of this communion and fellowship involves what is referred to as prayer, that is, the dialogic encounter between the divine and the human. Recognizing what Henry A. Murray and Clyde Kluckhohn refer to as the ‘Trinitarian’ formulation of personhood in regards to pastoral care, which is constructed on the premise that, “Every human person is in some respects (a) like all others, (b) like some others, and (c) like none other,”<sup>2</sup> has spurred the two central theological questions addressed in this dissertation. Question number one was as follows: Within the prosaic sections of the OT (i.e., Genesis to Esther), does the potential exist for one to discover, in association with lament and praise, various modes of expression communicated during the lived context of disorientation to/before God (verbal, physical and emotional) by faithful pray-ers? Encouraged by the first, question

---

<sup>1</sup> Thiselton, *Systematic Theology*, 102.

<sup>2</sup> Murray and Kluckhohn. “Personality,” 15; cf. Lartey, *Color*, 34. The following Guyanese proverb seems fitting to note: “All cassava get same skin but nah all taste de same way.” Translated from creole English, “Though people may look alike because of their mode of dress, they are different in their ways.” In this dissertation, such a difference can be seen from the diverse verbal, physical, and emotional expressions conveyed to/before God especially amidst grief.

number two was thus: Amidst the phenomenon of grief, and in association with praise and lament, does the possibility exist for one to discover other modes of expression communicated during the lived context of grief to/before God (verbal, physical, and emotional) within a contemporary Christian intercultural context outside-yet-inside of the West (i.e., principally among Canadian immigrants from Guyana and Vietnam)?

In addressing these two central theological questions, the prosaic prayers of the OT (Genesis to Esther) within the lived context of disorientation, were placed under investigation for the purpose of attending to their multivalent anthropological expressions (verbal, physical, and emotional) and significance to/before God within an Israelite OT context. At the same time, expressions (verbal, physical, and emotional) and their significance were also observed within a contemporary intercultural Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian context. Below is an itemization of the full gamut of anthropological expressions otherwise referred to as the *Expressive Domain of Disorientation* from within the three aforementioned contexts.

Verbal Anthropological Expressions	
<i>Categories</i>	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Prayers or DS1 Lament Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation accompanied by the stinging questions of “Why?” and “How long?” or even simply groans, and sometimes weeping.
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Prayers or DS2 Imprecatory Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within the context of disorientation that call for a divine judgment or curse upon one’s enemies.
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Prayers or DS3 Vow Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and which promise God something, that is, “If . . . then.”
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Prayers or DS4 Penitential Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation, and which convey penitence over one’s sins.

<i>Disorientation Stage 5 Prayers or DS5 Confidence Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation confident of God's presence and anticipating His deliverance.
<i>Disorientation Stage 6 Prayers or DS6 Thanksgiving Praise Prayers</i>	Prayers uttered within a context of disorientation confident of God's presence and anticipating His deliverance.
<i>Disorientation Stage 7 or DS7 Death-Related-Words</i>	Complaint; Contrition and/or Confession; Instructions [Assassination; Burying; Embalming; Holiness; For a Woman on Returning Home and Remarrying; and Transporting Cadaver for Burial]; Interrogation and Rejoinder; Promise; Lament Elegy and Loud Cries for Help/Weeping/Wailing/Screaming/Shouting; Sharing Stories of Each Other's Grief.

Physical Anthropological Expressions	
Categories	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Gestures or DS1 Lament Ritual</i>	Inclusive of which are anointing oneself, blowing [silver] trumpets, changing clothes, covering/hiding one's face, eating, fasting, offering burnt and peace offerings, shedding tears, sacrificing through supernatural fire [building altar, making trench, arranging wood, cutting ox, laying ox on wood], rising from the ground, sitting, washing, and worshiping God.
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Gestures or DS2 Imprecatory Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which is prostrating oneself.
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Gestures or DS3 Vow Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which are offering human sacrifice and standing.
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Gestures or DS 4 Death Rituals</i>	Inclusive of which are burning, burying [and purchasing land], chambering [privacy/isolation], deep moving [trembling], donning and removing widow's clothes, donning sackcloth, erecting gravestones [monuments], falling on and kissing the dead, funeral processioning, honoring [through spice-fire], placing in coffin, spreading sackcloth, and transporting cadaver for burial; Avoiding Food and People [Silence and Solitude]/Isolation; Bearing the Cost of the Funeral; Celebrating the Life of the Deceased Annually with Lots of Food; Celebrating the Life of the Deceased through a Eulogy, a Shared Meal, and Singing Psalms, Hymns, and Songs of the Spirit to the

	Lord, such as Upbeat Songs or Bhajans, while also Proclaiming an Evangelistic Message of Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and the Comforting Presence of the Holy Spirit; Composing Vietnamese Songs and Poems; Deep Breath; Embracing the Deceased's Cadaver; Fainting; Keeping Memorabilia; Keeping Wake (with <i>Kweh-kweh</i> ); Kissing the Deceased; Lying Down on the Casket/Hitting Oneself; Reading through the Bible; Sitting beside the Tomb while Thinking about the Lost Loved One; Visiting the Grave and Carrying Flowers; Wearing a White Band; and Writing Letters of Comfort to the Bereaved.
--	---

Emotional Anthropological Expressions	
Categories	Description
<i>Disorientation Stage 1 Emotions or DS1 Distress</i>	Inclusive of which are displeasure, struggling spirit/bitterness of soul, and fear of God and humans
<i>Disorientation Stage 2 Emotions or DS2 Dismay</i>	Inclusive of which is dismay
<i>Disorientation Stage 3 Emotions or DS3 Appalment</i>	Inclusive of which are embarrassment / shame, guilt, and troubled or conscience-stricken heart
<i>Disorientation Stage 4 Emotions or DS4 Death Emotions</i>	Inclusive of which is grief; Anger/Heartbreak/Shock; Confusion/Depression; Comfort/Joy/Happiness; Pain/Sadness/Sorrow/Listlessness/Guilt/Regret; Stress/Bogged Down/Mourning.

The fact that there was such a plethora of grief expressions only reaffirms the fact that grief is handled differently by different people. Of course, there were a few expressions that overlapped and thus were considered universal. Despite that, grief is never always processed the same, even by peoples of the same culture. Grief takes time; sometimes longer than one night (Ps 30:6 [5]). As such, people should be allowed to grieve without being coerced to get over it. Such coercion has the potential to make matters worse, complicating rather than mitigating one's grief. As part of embodying the gospel of God,

Christians should endeavor to draw near to those who grieve so as to grieve *with* them, while also rejoicing with them when they do rejoice (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26). At the same time, however, as was observed in this dissertation, depending on the cultural context, some will grieve amidst grief (cf. Eccl 3:4), while others will rejoice amidst grief (cf. 2 Cor 6:10; 7:4). Cultural sensitivity is therefore encouraged at *all* times.

Achieving each of these expressions, however, involved the employment of the *Renewed Form Criticism* in relation to the OT prosaic prayers of disorientation and their auxiliary expressions within the Israelite OT context of distress, and the *Liberative Intercultural Praxis* coupled with the *Hermeneutical Phenomenology* with regards to the expressions communicated to/before God amidst grief within both a contemporary Guyanese-Canadian and a Vietnamese-Canadian context. As to the operationalization of the *Revisionist Method of Mutual Critical Correlation*, following their discovery, each of these expressions was placed in a dialectic correlation with each other thereby producing expressions that were deemed worthy of mitigating grief. Subsequent to this, through the application of *Ritual Theory*, five compassionate, liberative intercultural practices, couched within rituals, were proposed owing to their potential to mitigate grief making it manageable so as to sustain the bereaved while restoring their soul (Ps 23:4a [3a]). These were:

- i. Bearing the Funeral Expenses of the Poor—Extending Offers of Help
- ii. Composing and Singing Sad (and Joyful Theopoetic) Songs and Poems of Lament—Finding Emotional Catharsis through Music
- iii. Incorporating Indigenous Christian Devotional Songs (e.g., Bhajans) in the Wake/Funeral Liturgy—Tapping into the Cultural Liminal Memory of a Deep Experience of Faith

- iv. Celebrating the Life of the Deceased through Dancing and Singing Upbeat Gospel Songs—Spiritual Rejoicing for Having Arrived Home in Heaven
- v. Connecting Personal Grief Stories to God’s Sacred Story—Experiencing Hope in the Resurrected Christ

It is my prayer and hope that these five compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices, which are couched in ritual, will find a home within our Christian churches where they might be engaged for the purpose of fostering sustainability for those within a life context of grief. While each of these rituals has the potential of becoming “a procrustean bed,” according to Ramshaw, “When a religious community is fully alive, its traditional ritual patterns are more like water flowing on land, taking the contours of each particular piece of earth it sinks into, enlivens, and transforms. It is such living water that people need in the desert of grief.”<sup>3</sup>

In light of the foregoing work, I hereby proffer a working definition of disorientation. Disorientation can be defined as a distressful situation that encompasses, yet is not limited to, physical pain, psychological anguish, social degradation, and spiritual despondency. Disorientation is also three-dimensional in its anthropological (i.e., human) expressiveness even as it incorporates the verbal (i.e., from lament to thanksgiving praise), the physical (i.e., from anointing oneself to worship), and also the emotional (i.e., from displeasure to shame).

---

<sup>3</sup> Ramshaw, “Postmodern,” 177–78.

### ***7.2. Projected Potential Studies Relative to Expressive Modalities of Disorientation***

Taking into consideration that not all the prosaic sections of the OT wherein disorientation is experienced were examined, a potential study could be that of identifying the multifaceted anthropological expressions of disorientation from within such contexts. At the same time, another potential study could be that of the anthropological expressions of disorientation from within the *poetic* portions of the OT where disorientation is experienced. This will thus further expand the expressive domain of anthropological expressive modalities of disorientation. At the same time, biblical theology could continue to engage in dialectic correlation with that of pastoral theology examining multiplex anthropological expressions from non-Western cultures (African, Asian, First Nations). Both differences and similarities in anthropological expressions of disorientation will thus be observed. Subsequently, the universal church of Jesus Christ will continue to learn and employ other additional compassionate, liberative intercultural pastoral care practices for coping with grief and restoring the soul of the bereaved.

From a heavenly perspective, the question concerning expressions that *God* has communicated to His people in the midst of His affliction, can be given attention. For example, on several occasions when the children of Israel rebelled against God, the Scripture says that God's *emotive* anger burned against His people (Num 12:9; 32:13; Isa 5:25). In the case of the Numbers text, the consequence of His burning anger resulted in the almost forty years of restless wandering in the wilderness, so that finally, their corpses littered the wilderness (Num 14:32–35; cf. 32:13; Deut 2:7; Ps 107:4). Another example comes from the fact that when the God's anger is kindled, He also *verbalizes* that He will forsake His people and even hide His face from them (Deut 31:17–18; cf. Ps

104:29; Isa 8:17).<sup>4</sup> Constructing a divine expressive domain might help us correlate what verbal and physical expressions occur when certain emotions are evoked.

As I come to the close of this dissertation, I quote this short story concerning the reality and impact of the resurrection of Christ.

An atheist committed disciple of the ‘truth’ of Communism, once gave a speech to an enormous crowd in the former Soviet Union. He mocked the Christian faith, saying it was all mere fantasy. It was not Jesus but the program of Marx and Lenin that was destined to bring history to its appointed purpose. The atheist was eloquent and withering in his scorn for Christianity. When he finished, an Orthodox priest asked if he could say just two words in reply (his two Russian words are translated by three words in English). The priest shouted, ‘*Christ is risen!*’ and the crowd roared back the response carried with them from childhood: ‘*He is risen indeed!*’ For a world so twisted by evil and enslaved by sin, what other message could there be? *Christ is risen*. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a new world is dawning. The night of evil has ended. The light of God will fill the whole earth again. The resurrection stands at the center of the Christian faith.<sup>5</sup>

Underpinning the confident hope of eternal life for humans deserving of death (Ezek 18:4, 20; Rom 6:23a) is the resurrection of the crucified Christ and the cross of the risen Christ. Christ then is humanity’s only living hope (1 Pet 1:3). Death and grief are swallowed up in the resurrection of Christ, so that all who exercise their faith in Christ have died and their lives are now hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3). When Christ, who is their life, is revealed, then they also will be revealed with Him in glory (3:4). In the meantime, grieving Christians can endeavor to sustain other grieving Christians (2 Cor 1:3–4), especially the poor and marginalized, through the instrumentality of bearing their funeral costs, composing and singing sad (and joyful theopoetic) songs and poems of lament, singing indigenous Christian devotional songs (e.g., bhajans), celebrating the life

---

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, upon the recognition of their sin, Adam and Eve hide themselves from God (Gen 3:8, 10).

<sup>5</sup> Bartholomew and Goheen, *Drama of Scripture*, 165.



of the deceased through *Kweh-kweh* dancing and singing of upbeat gospel songs, and connecting one's personal grief story with God's sacred story. At the same time, we should also consider the biblical truth that our present griefs are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us (Rom 8:18), the glory of the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). It is therefore my hopeful prayer that Christians living within an intercultural society like that of the Greater Toronto Area, may continue to express themselves before God verbally, physically, and emotionally, while praying, *Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!*

APPENDIX 1:  
CHART OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPRESSIVE MODALITIES OF DISORIENTATION  
IN THE PROSAIC SCOPE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT— GENESIS TO ESTHER<sup>1</sup>

<b>Scripture Passage</b>	<b>Disorientation Description</b>	<b>Disorientation Theme</b>	<b>Verbal Expression Description</b>	<b>Verbal Expression Category</b>	<b>Physical Expression Description</b>	<b>Physical Expression Category</b>	<b>Emotional Expression Description</b>	<b>Emotional Expression Category</b>
Gen 4:1–15	Cain kills his brother Abel (4:8).	Death (Manslaughter)	The voice of Abel’s blood metaphorically cries out to the LORD from the ground (4:10)	Lament (DS1)				

---

<sup>1</sup> Not all situations of disorientation (i.e., a situation of distress) are examined within the prosaic (i.e., narrative) scope of Genesis to Esther. Preference is given only to those wherein there is: (i) an occurrence of, or reference to, a prayer of disorientation (especially those accompanied by either physical and/or emotional expressions); and (ii) a physical death among an Israelite (especially those accompanied by either verbal, physical, or emotional grief and/or mourning expressions). As a consequence of this, situations of disorientation excluded are: (i) a potential cry of distress (Exod 22:21–24); (ii) the physical death of an Israelite that is bereft of any verbal, physical, or emotional grief and/or mourning expressions, e.g., “So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died” (Gen 5:27); (iii) a hypothetical death, e.g., Joseph’s (Gen 37:18–36; cf. 2 Sam 14); (iv) a near-death experience, e.g., the LORD’s endeavor to kill Moses for his refusal to circumcise his son Gershom (Exod 4:24–26), or the potential annihilation of the Jews in Persia, even though several expressions surface therein (Esth 4:1, 3; 9:31); and (v) a spiritual death, e.g., Adam and Eve’s expulsion from Eden (Gen 3:22–24). This narrowing of focus stems from a desire to dialectically correlate biblical theology with pastoral theology wherein the latter focuses on verbal (vertical [to God] and horizontal [to people]), physical, and emotional expressions amidst grief and/or mourning within the context of a physical human death among Guyanese-Canadian and Vietnamese-Canadian leaders. For more details on how to read and interpret this chart, please refer to Key below.

Gen 15:1-7	God promises Abram a son amidst the barrenness of his wife Sarai.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Abram petitions the LORD saying, "O LORD God, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" (15:2).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 17:15-22	In lieu of Isaac, disbelieving Abraham pleads with God for his firstborn son Ishmael to live before Him, i.e., that God would establish His covenant with Ishmael.	Doubt	Abraham petitions God saying, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You" (17:18).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 18:22-33	Resolving to destroy the twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah owing to their exceedingly grave sin, the LORD shares His plan with Abraham.	Divine Threat	Abraham intercedes for Sodom and Gomorrah, particularly for the righteous therein, while also affirming his belief in God's righteousness saying, "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (18:25).	Lament (DS1)				

Gen 20:8–18	God strikes Abimelech and his wife and his maids with barrenness.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Abraham intercedes for God’s healing upon Abimelech, and especially his wife and maids whose wombs the LORD had closed fast (20:17).	Confidence (DS5)				
Gen 21:9–19	Conflict arises between Hagar and Sarah so that Abraham is forced to send Hagar away with the potential death of Ishmael.	Strife (Owner-Slave) and Death (Malnutrition)	After Hagar intercedes for Ishmael, saying, “Do not let me see the boy die,” she lifts up her voice and weeps (21:16).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 21:9–19	Conflict arises between Hagar and Sarah so that Abraham is forced to send Hagar away with the potential death of Ishmael.	Death (Malnutrition)	Ishmael cries out to God (21:17).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 23:1–20	The death of Abraham’s wife Sarah in Ephron’s field of Machpelah.	Death (Natural)	Abraham weeps for Sarah (23:2).	Weeping	Abraham mourns for Sarah (23:2)	Mourning Ritual (Mourning)		

Gen 23:1–20	The death of Abraham’s wife Sarah in Ephron’s field of Machpelah.	Death (Natural)			Abraham purchases Ephron’s field in Machpelah for four hundred shekels of silver, and buries Sarah in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) (23:16, 19).	Mourning Ritual (Purchasing Land; Burying)		
Gen 24:1–67	Abraham’s servant (perhaps Eliezer [cf. 15:2]) sets out for Aram to secure a wife for Isaac.	Marriage (Bridal Search)	Abraham’s servant petitions the LORD saying, “O LORD, the God of my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; now may it be that the girl to whom I say, ‘Please let down your jar so that I may drink,’ and who answers, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’ — may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master” (24:12–14).	Lament (DS1)				

Gen 25:7–11	The death of Abraham.	Death (Natural)			Isaac and Ishmael bury their father Abraham in the cave of Machpelah with his first wife Sarah (25:8-10).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Gen 25:19–26	Rebekah is barren.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Isaac prays to the LORD on behalf of Rebekah because of her barrenness (25:21).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 25:19–26	Rebekah is barren.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Rebekah inquires of the LORD concerning the children struggling in her stomach (25:22)	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 30:14–18	Leah desires another child.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Leah petitions to God for another child (30:17).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 30:22–24	Rachel is barren.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Rachel petitions God for a child (30:22).	Lament (DS1)				
Gen 32:3–12	The ominous meeting between Jacob and Esau.	Position (Rendezvous)	Jacob petitions God, saying, “O God of my father Abraham and my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,’ I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff <i>only</i> I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I	Lament (DS1)			Jacob is greatly afraid and distressed (32:7, 11).	Fear (Human); Distress

			pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me <i>and</i> the mothers with their children. For You said, ‘I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered’” (32:9-12).					
Gen 35:8	The death of Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse.	Death (Natural)			Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse dies, and she is buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Gen 35:16–20	The death of Rachel.	Death (Unfortunate)			Rachel is buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Jacob sets up a pillar over Rachel’s grave (35:20).	Mourning Ritual (Burying; Grave-Stoning)		
Gen 35:28–29	The death of Isaac.	Death (Natural)			Esau and Jacob bury their father Isaac after he breathes his last, dies,	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

					and is gathered to his people (35:29).			
Gen 38:1–30	Er and Onan (Tamar’s husbands; Onan through Levirate marriage [cf. Deut 25:5–10]), die owing to their displeasure before the eyes of the LORD (38:7, 10).	Death (Divine Judgment)	Judah instructs Tamar to “Remain a widow in your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up” (38:11).	Instruction (Returning Home and Remarrying)	Tamar mourns the death of her husbands by wearing her widow’s garments (38:14)	Mourning Ritual (Donning Widow’s Clothes)		
Gen 38:1–30	The death of Judah’s wife, the daughter of Shua (38:12).	Death (Natural)			Judah mourns for his wife (38:12).	Mourning Ritual (Mourning)		
Gen 49:29—50:21	The death of Jacob/Israel.	Death (Natural)	Jacob/Israel charges his sons as to his burial location saying, “I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from	Instruction (Burial)	Jacob’s/ Israel’s sons carry his body to the land of Canaan and bury him in the cave in the field of Machpelah	Mourning Ritual (Transporting Body; Funeral Processioning; Burying)		



			Ephron the Hittite for a burial site” (49:29–30).		before Mamre (50:13).			
Gen 49:29—50:21	The death of Jacob/Israel.	Death (Natural)	Joseph weeps over his father (50:1).	Weeping	After Jacob draws his last breath, and is gathered to his people, Joseph falls on his father’s face (49:33).	Mourning Ritual (Falling on the Deceased)		
Gen 49:29—50:21	The death of Jacob/Israel	Death (Natural)	Joseph commands his physicians to embalm his father (50:2).	Instruction (Embalming )	Joseph kisses his father (50:1).	Mourning Ritual (Kissing the Dead)		
Gen 49:29—50:21	The death of Jacob/Israel.	Death (Natural)	The Egyptians weep for Jacob/Israel seventy days (50:3).	Weeping				
Gen 50:22–26	The death of Joseph.	Death (Natural)	Joseph makes the sons of Jacob/Israel swear concerning his body upon his death saying, “I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. . . . and you shall carry my bones up from here” (50:24, 25).	Instruction (Burial)	Joseph is embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt (50:26).	Mourning Ritual (Embalming; Laying Body in Coffin)		

Exod 2:23–25	The Egyptians oppress the Hebrews.	Slavery	The sons of Israel sigh because of the bondage, and they cry out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rise up to God (2:23).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 3:7–9	The taskmasters continue to oppress the sons of Israel.	Slavery	The LORD's people cry out to Him because of the oppression of the Egyptians, particularly of their affliction from the hands of their taskmasters (3:7, 9).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 3:1–22	God calls Moses to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage.	Incompetence	Moses expresses reticence in obeying God's call to deliver the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt interrogating God saying, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (3:11).	Lament (DS1)	Moses removes his sandals from his feet since the place he stands on is holy ground (3:5).	Posture (Removing Footwear)		
Exod 3:1–22	God calls Moses to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage.	Incompetence	Moses expresses reticence in obeying God's call to deliver the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt questioning God saying, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" (3:11).	Lament (DS1)	Moses hides his face before God (3:6).	Face (Hiding)	Moses is afraid to look at God (3:6).	Fear (Divine)
Exod 4:1–17	Moses is given signs by God to show to Pharaoh to convince him to deliver God's people.	Slavery	Moses questions God about the potential doubts of the sons of Israel (4:1).	Lament (DS1)				

Exod 4:10–13	Moses continues to express his inability to speak to Pharaoh to convince him to deliver God's people from bondage.	Incompetence	While acknowledging that he has never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since God has spoken to him, since he is slow of speech and tongue, Moses pleads with the LORD saying, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will" (4:10, 13).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 5:1–23	Moses is disappointed that Pharaoh does not deliver God's people, but instead intensifies their labor.	Slavery	Moses questions God saying, "O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all" (5:22–23).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 6:1–13	The LORD instructs Moses once more to go and speak to Pharaoh so that he can set God's people free from bondage.	Slavery	The sons of Israel groan before God (6:5).	Lament (DS1)				

Exod 6:1–13; 28–30	The LORD instructs Moses once more to go and speak to Pharaoh so that he can set God’s people free from bondage.	Incompetence	Moses questions God, saying, “Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?” (6:12; cf. 6:30).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 8:1–15	The LORD unleashes the plague of frogs over the land of Egypt (except Goshen).	Plagues	Moses cries to the LORD concerning the removal of the frogs, which He inflicted upon Pharaoh (8:12).	Confidence (DS5)				
Exod 8:20–32	The LORD unleashes great swarms of flies over the land of Egypt (except Goshen).	Plagues	Moses supplicates the LORD concerning the removal of the swarms of flies (8:30).	Confidence (DS5)				
Exod 10:3–20	The LORD unleashes the plague of locusts over the land of Egypt (except Goshen).	Plagues	Moses supplicates thee LORD for the shifting of the wind from east to west, and with it, the locusts (10:18).	Confidence (DS5)				

Exod 14:1–30	Pharaoh and his army pursue the sons of Israel to the Red Sea.	Water (Obstacle)	The sons of Israel cry out to the LORD (14:10).	Lament (DS1)			The sons of Israel become very frightened as they look and behold the Egyptians marching after them (14:10).	Fear (Human)
Exod 14:1–30	Pharaoh and his army pursue the sons of Israel to the Red Sea.	Water (Obstacle)	Moses cries out to the LORD (14:15).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 15:22–27	The sons of Israel come to Marah and find the waters bitter and undrinkable.	Water (Bitterness)	The people grumble at Moses saying, “What shall we drink?” (15:24).	Interrogation				
Exod 15:22–27	The sons of Israel come to Marah and find the waters bitter and undrinkable.	Water (Bitterness)	Moses cries out to the LORD (15:25).	Lament (DS1)				

Exod 16:1–36	Amidst their hunger in the wilderness, the sons of Israel grumble against Moses and Aaron.	Hunger	The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumble against the LORD (16:7–8, 11).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 17:1–7	The sons of Israel thirst.	Water (Thirst)	The people test the LORD as they quarrel with Moses saying, “Give us water that we may drink” (17:2).	Complaint				
Exod 17:1–7	The sons of Israel thirst.	Water (Thirst)	The people thirst for water, grumble against Moses, and question him, saying, “Why now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” (17:3).	N				
Exod 17:1–7	The sons of Israel thirst.	Water (Thirst)	Moses cries out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me” (17:4).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 17:1–7	The sons of Israel thirst.	Water (Thirst)	The sons of Israel test the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us, or not?” (17:7).	Lament (DS1)				
Exod 32:1–24	The LORD’s people worship a golden calf.	Sin (Idolatry)	Interceding on behalf of the children of Israel, Moses entreats the LORD, saying, “O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With	Lament (DS1)	Moses throws the tablets of stone from his hands and shatters them at the foot of	Posture (Destroying of Stone Tablets)	Moses’ anger burns within him (32:19).	Anger

			evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about doing harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever' (32:11-13).		Mount Sinai (32:19).			
Exod 32:30-35	Moses asks God to forgive the idolatrous sin of His people.	Sin (Idolatry)	Interceding on behalf of the children of Israel, Moses petitions God saying, "Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves. But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!" (32:31-32).	Penitence (DS4)				
Exod 34:1-9	Moses pleads with the LORD to go with His people once more.	Position (Sojourning)	Moses petitions the Lord, saying, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession" (34:9).	Penitence (DS4)	Moses bows low toward the earth and worships the Lord (34:8).	Posture (Prostrating)		

Lev 10:1–20	Offering of strange and unauthorized fire before the LORD, which resulted in death.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Upon the death of Nadab and Abihu, Moses tells Aaron, saying, “It is what the LORD spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored’” (10:3).	Instruction (Holiness)				
Lev 10:1–20	Offering of strange and unauthorized fire before the LORD, which resulted in death.	Death (Divine – Judgment)	Moses calls Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron’s uncle Uzziel, and says to them, “Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp” (10:4).	Instruction (Transporting Cadaver)	Mishael and Elzaphan come forward and carry the bodies of Nadab and Abihu, (still in their tunics), to the outside of the camp (10:5).	Mourning Ritual (Transporting Body)		
Lev 10:120	Offering of strange and unauthorized fire before the LORD, which resulted in death.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Moses instructs Aaron, and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, “Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which the LORD has brought about. You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for the LORD’s anointing oil is upon you” (10:6–7).	Instruction (Holiness)				



Lev 10:1–20	Offering of strange and unauthorized fire before the LORD, which resulted in death.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Moses also commands Aaron, saying, “Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die— it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations—and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses” (10:8–11).	Instruction (Holiness)				
Lev 10:1–20	Offering of strange and unauthorized fire before the LORD, which resulted in death.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Moses questions Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, “Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD. Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside, into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded” (10:16–17).	Interrogation	Moses searches carefully for the goat of the sin offering, but it had been consumed by thee fire of the LORD (10:16).	Posture (Searching)	Moses is angry at Eleazar and Ithamar for not eating the goat of the sin offering (10:16).	Anger
Lev 10:1–20	Offering of strange and unauthorized fire before the LORD, which resulted in death.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Aaron speaks to Moses, saying, “Behold, this very day they [Eleazar and Ithamar] presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of the LORD?” (10:19).	Response				

Num 10:35–36	Moses and the people of Israel journey from mount of the LORD seeking a resting place.	Position (Sojourning)	Moses prays an imprecation to the LORD, saying, “Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You” (10:35).	Imprecation (DS2)				
Num 10:35–36	Moses and the people of Israel journey from mount of the LORD seeking a resting place.	Position (Sojourning)	Moses petitions the LORD, saying, “Return, O LORD, to the myriad thousands of Israel.”	Lament (DS1)				
Num 11:1–3	The children of Israel grow hungry for meat, which kindles God’s anger so that He consumes some of the outskirts of the camp.	Hunger	The people complain of their adversity in the hearing of the LORD (11:1).	Lament (DS1)				

Num 11:1–3	The children of Israel grow hungry for meat, which kindles God’s anger so that He consumes some of the outskirts of the camp.	Hunger	The people cry out to Moses (11:2a).	Complaint				
Num 11:1–3	The children of Israel grow hungry for meat, which kindles God’s anger so that He consumes some of the outskirts of the camp.	Hunger	Moses prays to the LORD and the fire dies out (11:2b).	Lament (DS1)				
Num 11:10–15	The children of Israel weep throughout their families, and once more kindle greatly the anger of the LORD.	Hunger	Hearing the people weeping, Moses questions the LORD, saying, “Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people on me? Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You swore to their	Lament (DS1)			Moses is displeased over the LORD’s anger and the weeping of the people who desire meat to eat, and not just manna	Displeasur e

			fathers?' Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, Give us meat that we may eat!' I alone cannot able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me. So if you are going to deal thus with me, please kill me at once, if I have found favor in Your sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness" (11:10, 11–15).				(11:10, 13; cf. 11:4–6).	
Num 11:16–30	The children of Israel weep in the ears of the LORD for meat.	Hunger	Doubting the LORD's power, Moses questions Him, saying, "The people, among whom I am, are 600,000 on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, so that they may eat for a whole month.' Should flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to be sufficient for them? Or should all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to be sufficient for them?" (11:21–22).	Lament (DS1)				
Num 11:31–35	The children of Israel finally eat meat in the form of quail, but encounter a severe plague when the LORD's anger kindles	Death (Divine Judgment)			The people who suffer death due to their greed are buried in Kibroth-hattaavah (11:34).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

	against them.							
Num 12:1–15	When Miriam expresses displeasure over Moses' Cushite wife, the LORD causes her to become leprous.	Illness (Divine Judgment)	Aaron pleads with Moses for forgiveness, saying, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account this sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!" (12:11–12).	Contrition				
Num 12:1–15	When Miriam expresses displeasure over Moses' Cushite wife, the LORD causes her to become leprous.	Illness (Divine Judgment)	On account of Aaron's confession, Moses petitions God for Miriam's healing from leprosy, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!" (12:13).	Lament (DS1)				

Num 14:11–25	The LORD’s people grumble against Moses and Aaron, even as they desire to return to Egypt lest they should die in the wilderness. This kindles the LORD’s anger so that He desires to smite His people with pestilence and dispossess them.	Position (Reversion)	Moses intercedes for the LORD’s people, saying, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought this people from their midst, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if You slay this people as one many, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, ‘Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.’ But now, I pray, let the power of the LORD be great, just as You have declared, ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations.’ Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now” (14:13-19).	Penitence (DS4)				
-----------------	---	-------------------------	---	--------------------	--	--	--	--

Num 16:1–40	God executes His wrath upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for their sin against Moses and Aaron, that is, accusing them of exalting themselves above the assembly of the LORD.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Moses petitions to LORD on behalf of Dathan and Abiram, saying, “Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them” (16:15; cf. 16:35).	Imprecation (DS2)			Moses is very angry at Dathan and Abiram for refusing to come up and present themselves before the LORD (16:12–15).	Anger
Num 16:1–40	God executes His wrath upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for their sin against Moses and Aaron, that is, accusing them of exalting themselves above the assembly of the LORD.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Interceding on behalf of the entire congregation, Moses and Aaron petition God, saying, “O God, God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation?” (16:22).	Lament (DS1)	Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before God (16:22).	Posture (Prostrating)		

Num 16:1–40	God executes His wrath upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, for their sin against Moses and Aaron, that is, accusing them of exalting themselves above the assembly of the LORD.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Moses instructs Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, to scatter the burning coals abroad, but to take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and hammer them into sheets for a plating of the altar, so that they might serve as a sign to the sons of Israel (16:36–38).	Instruction (Holiness)	Eleazar the priest takes the bronze censers, which were offered by the two hundred and fifty men who were consumed by the LORD, and had them hammered out as plating for the altar, as a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron should come near to burn incense before the LORD; so that he will not become like Korah and his company (16:39–40).	Altar (Plating)		
----------------	---	-------------------------	---	------------------------	---	-----------------	--	--



Num 20:1	The death of Miriam.	Death (Natural)			Miriam dies and is buried in the wilderness of Zin.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Num 20:23–29	Israel mourns the death of Aaron.	Death (Natural)			Moses strips Aaron of his priestly garments and places them on his son Eleazar (20:28)	Clothes (Stripping; Donning)		
Num 20:23–29	Israel mourns the death of Aaron.	Death (Natural)	The house of Israel weeps for Aaron for thirty days (20:29).	Weeping				
Num 21:1–3	The Canaanites come against Israel.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Israel makes a vow to the LORD, saying, “If You will deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities” (21:2).	Vow (DS3)				
Num 21:4–9	The LORD sends fiery serpents to bite and kill some of the people of Israel who speak against both God and Moses concerning food and water.	Death (Divine Judgment)	Moses intercedes for the people who acknowledge their sin against the LORD and Moses (21:7).	Penitence (DS4)				

Num 22:1–35	Balak sends for Balaam to curse the sons of Israel.	Imprecation	Balaam confesses his sin to the angel of the LORD, saying, “I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will return back” (22:34).	Penitence (DS4)	Balaam bows all the way to the ground before the angel of the LORD (22:31).	Posture (Bowing)		
Num 27:1–7	Following their father’s death, the daughters of Zelophehad ask for a possession among their father’s brothers.	Death (Natural)	Moses brings the case of Zelophehad’s daughters before the LORD (27:5)	Lament (DS1)				
Num 27:15–23	Since Moses will not lead the congregation of the LORD over the Jordan and into the Promised Land, Moses asks God to select his successor.	Leadership	Moses petitions the LORD, saying, “May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD will not be like sheep which have no shepherd” (27:15–17).	Lament (DS1)				

Deut 3:23–29	Moses recounts how, in His anger, the LORD refused to allow him the opportunity to enter into the Promised Land.	Unanswered Prayer	Before the children of Israel, Moses recounts his plea to the LORD to enter into the Promised Land, saying, “O LORD God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours? Let me, I pray, cross over and see the fair land that is beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon” (3:23–25).	Lament (DS1)				
Deut 9:6–21	Moses recounts how Israel provoked God to anger owing to their forging and worshiping of the molten calf at Mount Sinai.	Sin (Idolatry)	Moses recounts his intercession at Mount Sinai for the children of Israel, and also for Aaron who forged the molten calf (9:18–19).	Penitence (DS4)	Moses recounts how he took hold of the two stone tablets, and threw them from his hands, so that they were smashed before the eyes of the children of Israel (9:17).	Stone (Destruction of Tablets)	Moses recounts how he was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was wrathful against the children of Israel to destroy them and also to destroy Aaron (9:19–20).	Fear (Divine)

Deut 9:6–21	Moses recounts how Israel provoked God to anger owing to their forging and worshiping of the molten calf at Mount Sinai.	Sin (Idolatry)	Moses recounts his intercession at Mount Sinai for the children of Israel, and also for Aaron who forged the molten calf (9:18–19).	Penitence (DS4)	Moses recounts how he fell down before the LORD for forty days and nights, neither eating bread nor drinking water (9:18).	Mourning Ritual (Prostrating; Fasting)		
Deut 9:6–21	Moses recounts how Israel provoked God to anger owing to their forging and worshiping of the molten calf at Mount Sinai.	Sin (Idolatry)	Moses recounts his intercession at Mount Sinai for the children of Israel, and also for Aaron who forged the molten calf (9:18–19).	Penitence (DS4)	Moses recounts how he burned the molten calf with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust, and then throwing its dust into the brook that came down the mountain (9:21).	Reformation		

Deut 9:22–29	Moses recounts how Israel rebelled against the LORD when He sent them out from Kadesh-barnea to possess the land He was giving them.	Land (Rebellion)	Moses recounts his intercession at Kadesh-barnea for the children of Israel who did not believe in the LORD, nor listen to His voice to go and possess the land of Canaan, praying to the LORD, saying, “O Lord God, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look at the stubbornness of this people or at their wickedness or their sin. Otherwise the land from which You brought us may say, ‘Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them and because He hated them He has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.’ Yet they are Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have brought out by Your great power and Your outstretched arm” (9:26–29).	Lament (DS1)	Moses recounts how he fell down before the LORD for forty days and nights (9:25).	Posture (Prostrating)		
Deut 34:1–8	The death of Moses.	Death (Natural)			The LORD buries Moses in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor (34:6).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

Josh 5:13–15	The captain of the host of the LORD appears to Joshua.	Theophany	Joshua questions the captain of the host of the LORD, “Are you for us or for our adversaries?” (5:13).	Lament (DS1)	Joshua falls on his face to the earth, and bows down (5:14).	Posture (Prostrating)		
Josh 5:13–16	The captain of the host of the LORD appears to Joshua.	Theophany	Joshua questions the captain of the host of the LORD, “What has my lord to say to his servant?” (5:14).	Lament (DS1)	Joshua removes his sandals (5:15).	Posture (Removing Footwear)		
Josh 7:1–26	Achan acts unfaithfully toward the LORD in regard to the ban, which results in the men of Ai striking down about thirty-six of the sons of Israel.	Sin (Coveting)	Joshua questions the LORD God, saying, “Alas, O LORD God, why did You ever bring this people over the Jordan, only to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? If only we had been willing to dwell beyond the Jordan! O Lord, what can I say since Israel has turned their back before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and they will surround us and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do for Your great name?” (7:7–9).	Lament (DS1)	Joshua and the elders of Israel tear their clothes and fall to the earth on their face before the ark of the LORD until evening; they also put dust on their heads (7:6).	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes; Prostrating; Sprinkling Dust on Head)		

Josh 7:1–26	Achan acts unfaithfully toward the LORD in regard to the ban, which results in the men of Ai striking down about thirty-six of the sons of Israel.	Sin (Coveting)	Joshua questions Achan in regard to his sin, saying, “My son, I implore you, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me” (7:19).	Interrogation				
Josh 7:1–26	Achan acts unfaithfully toward the LORD in regard to the ban, which results in the men of Ai striking down about thirty-six of the sons of Israel.	Sin (Coveting)	Achan answers Joshua, saying, “Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight, then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it” (7:20–21).	Contrition				

Josh 7:1–26	Achan acts unfaithfully toward the LORD in regard to the ban, which results in the men of Ai striking down about thirty-six of the sons of Israel.	Sin (Coveting)	Joshua informs Achan of his imminent death, saying, “Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day” (7:25).	Curse	Joshua and all Israel with him, take Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that belongs to him; and they bring them up to the valley of Achor where they stone them with stones, and burn them with fire (7:24).	Sacrifice		
Josh 10:1–43	Joshua and all Israel come to the aid of the Gibeonites to fight against the five kings of the Amorites	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Joshua speaks to the LORD, saying, “O sun, stand still at Gibeon, and O moon in the valley of Aijalon” (Josh 10:12).	Lament (DS1)				



	and their armies.							
Josh 24:29–30	Joshua dies.	Death (Natural)			Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, dies, and is buried in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-serah, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, on the north of Mount Gaash.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Josh 24:32	Joseph's bones are laid to rest.	Death (Natural)			Israel buries the bones of Joseph at Shechem, in the piece of ground, which Jacob purchased from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

Josh 24:33	Eleazar dies.	Death (Natural)			Eleazar the son of Aaron dies, and is buried at Gibeah of Phineas his son, in the hill country of Ephraim.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Judg 1:1–7	Judah is the first tribe chosen by the LORD to go out to do battle against the Canaanites.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	The sons of Israel inquire of the LORD, saying, “Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?” (1:1).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 3:7–11	The sons of Israel do evil in the sight of the LORD, forgetting the LORD their God, and serving the Baals and the Ashtoreth, thus kindling the LORD’s anger.	Sin (Cycle)	The sons of Israel cry to the LORD for deliverance from servitude to Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia (3:9).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 3:12–30	The sons of Israel again do evil in the	Sin (Cycle)	The sons of Israel cry to the LORD for deliverance from servitude to Eglon the king of Moab (3:15).	Lament (DS1)				

	sight of the LORD.							
Judg 4:1–3	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	The sons of Israel cry to the LORD for deliverance from the oppression of Jabin king of Canaan (4:3).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 6:1–10	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	The sons of Israel cry out to the LORD for deliverance from the oppression of Midian (6:6).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 6:11–27	Gideon expresses skepticism over the presence of the LORD among the sons of Israel.	Doubt	Gideon questions the angel of the LORD, saying, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hands of Midian” (6:13).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 6:11–27	Gideon expresses skepticism over the presence of the LORD among the sons of Israel.	Doubt	Gideon questions the angel of the LORD again, saying, “O Lord, how shall I deliver Israel? Behold my family is the least in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house” (6:15).	Lament (DS1)				

Judg 6:11–27	Gideon expresses skepticism over the presence of the LORD among the sons of Israel.	Doubt	Gideon once again speaks to the angel of the LORD, saying, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before you” (6:17–18).	Lament (DS1)	Gideon prepares a young goat and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour, puts the meat in a basket and the broth in a pit, and brings it, and presents it to the angel of the LORD under the oak (6:19).	Posture (Offering Food)		
Judg 6:11–27	Gideon expresses skepticism over the presence of the LORD among the sons of Israel.	Doubt	Gideon once again speaks to the angel of the LORD, saying, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who speak with me. Please do not depart from here, until I come back to You, and bring out my offering and lay it before you” (6:17–18).	Lament (DS1)	Gideon takes the meat and the unleavened bread and lays them on a rock, and pours out the broth (6:20).	Posture (Offering Food)		
Judg 6:11–27	Gideon expresses skepticism over the presence of the LORD among the sons of Israel.	Doubt	Gideon exclaimed, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face” (6:22).	Lament (DS1)				

Judg 6:33–40	Gideon prepares to do battle with the Midianites and the Amalekites.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)			The Spirit of the LORD comes upon Gideon so that he blows a trumpet calling upon the Abiezrites to assemble together to follow him (6:34).	Trumpet (Leadership)		
Judg 6:33–40	Gideon prepares to do battle with the Midianites and the Amalekites.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Gideon prays to God, saying, “If You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that You will deliver Israel through me, as You have spoken” (6:36–37).	Lament (DS1)	After Gideon places a fleece of wool on the threshing floor overnight, he awakes early the next morning, and squeezes the fleece, draining dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water (6:38).	Testing		

Judg 6:33–40	Gideon prepares to do battle with the Midianites and the Amalekites.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Gideon once again prays to God, saying, “Do not let Your anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground” (6:39).	Lament (DS1)	After Gideon places a fleece of wool on the threshing floor overnight, he awakes the next morning to find the fleece dry and the ground full of dew (6:40).	Testing		
Judg 8:32	The death of Gideon.	Death (Natural)			Gideon the son of Joash dies at a ripe old age and is buried in the tomb of his father Joash, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Judg 10:1–2	The death of Tola.	Death (Natural)			Tola dies and is buried in Shamir (10:2).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Judg 10:3–5	The death of Jair.	Death (Natural)			Jair dies and is buried in Kamon (10:5).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

Judg 10:6–16	The sons of Israel do evil in the sight of the LORD, forsaking the LORD their God, and serving the Baals, the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, the sons of Ammon, and the Philistines, thus kindling the LORD's anger.	Sin (Cycle)	The sons of Israel cry to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, for indeed, we have forsaken our God and served the Baals" (10:10).	Penitence (DS4)				
Judg 10:6–16	The sons of Israel do evil in the sight of the LORD, forsaking the LORD their God, and serving the Baals, the Ashtaroth, the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, the	Sin (Cycle)	The sons of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned, do to us whatever seems good to You; only please deliver us this day" (10:15).	Lament (DS1)	The sons of Israel put away the foreign gods from among them and serve the LORD (10:16a).	Reformation		

	sons of Ammon, and the Philistines, thus kindling the LORD's anger.							
Judg 11:29-40	Jephthah does battle with the sons of Ammon.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Jephthah makes a vow to the LORD, saying, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering" (11:30-31).	Vow (DS3)	Jephthah tears his clothes (11:35).	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes)		
Judg 11:29-40	Jephthah does battle with the sons of Ammon.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Jephthah makes a vow to the LORD, saying, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD's, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering" (11:30-31).	Vow (DS3)	Jephthah fulfills his vow of sacrificing his virgin daughter as a burnt offering to the LORD (11:39).	Sacrifice (Human)		
Judg 12:7	The death of Jephthah.	Death (Natural)			Jephthah dies and is buried in one of the cities of Gilead.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Judg 12:10	The death of Ibzan.	Death (Natural)			Ibzan dies and is buried in Bethlehem.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		



Judg 12:12	The death of Elon.	Death (Natural)			Elon dies and is buried at Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
Judg 13:1–20	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	Manoah entreats the LORD, saying, “O Lord, please let the man of God whom You have sent come to us again that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born” (13:8).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 13:1–20	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	Manoah entreats the man of God, saying, “Now when your words come to pass, what shall be the boy’s mode of life and his vocation?” (13:12).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 13:1–20	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	Manoah entreats the angel of the LORD, saying, “Please let us detain you so that we may prepare a young goat for you” (13:15).	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 13:1–20	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	Manoah entreats the angel of the LORD, saying, “What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?” (13:17).	Lament (DS1)	Manoah takes a young goat with grain offering and offers it on the rock to the LORD (13:18).	Sacrifice (Grain Offering)		
Judg 13:1–20	The sons of Israel again do evil in the sight of the LORD.	Sin (Cycle)	Manoah entreats the angel of the LORD, saying, “What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?” (13:17).	Lament (DS1)	Manoah and his wife fall on their faces to the ground (13:20).	Posture (Prostrating)		

Judg 15:1–20	Samson grows thirsty from slaughtering a thousand Philistines.	Water (Thirst)	Samson calls upon the LORD, saying, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant, and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?” (13:18).	Lament (DS1)	Samson drinks water from the hollow place that God split, which is in Lehi (13:19).	Posture (Drinking)		
Judg 16:23– 30bc	The Philistines capture Samson whom they call to amuse them.	Captivity	Samson calls to the LORD, saying, “O Lord GOD please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes” (16:28).	Imprecation (DS2)	Samson grasps the two middle pillars on which the house rests, and braces himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left (16:29).	Posture (Grasping)		
Judg 16:23– 30bc	The Philistines capture Samson whom they call to amuse them.	Captivity	Samson calls to the Lord GOD, saying, “Let me die with the Philistines!” (16:30a).	Imprecation (DS2)	Samson bends with all his might so that the house falls on the lords and all the people who were in it, including himself (16:30bc).	Posture (Bending)		

Judg 16:30bc– 31	The death of Samson	Death (Suicide)			Samson’s brothers and all his father’s household come down, take him, bring him up, and bury him between Zoran and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father.	Mourning Ritual (Trans porting Body; Burying)		
Judg 20:1–28	The death of the Levite’s concubine, and the decision to destroy the tribe of Benjamin or not.	Death (Unfortunate)	The sons of Israel inquire of God, saying, “Who shall go up first for us to battle against the sons of Benjamin?” (20:18)	Lament (DS1)				
Judg 20:1–28	The death of the Levite’s concubine, and the decision to destroy the tribe of Benjamin or not.	Death (Unfortunate)	The sons of Israel “wept before the LORD until evening,” and also inquire of the LORD, saying, “Shall we again draw near for battle against the sons of my brother Benjamin?” (20:23).	Lament (DS1)				

Judg 20:1–28	The death of the Levite’s concubine, and the decision to destroy the tribe of Benjamin or not.	Death (Unfortunate)	The sons of Israel “wept before the LORD,” and particularly Phinehas the son of Eleazar, inquire of the LORD, saying, “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the sons of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?” (20:26, 27–28).	Lament (DS1)	The sons of Israel remain in Bethel before the LORD, fasting that day until evening. They even offer burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD (20:26).	Mourning Ritual (Sitting; Fasting; Sacrificing)		
Judg 21:1–25	The people of Israel mourn over the tribe of Benjamin since it has been cut off from Israel.	Death (Manslaughter)	The people of Israel “lifted up their voices and wept bitterly,” and also question the LORD, saying, “Why, O LORD, God of Israel, has this thing come about in Israel, so that one tribe should be missing today in Israel?” (21:2–3).	Lament (DS1)	The people of Israel sit before God at Bethel until evening; they build an altar, and offer burnt and peace offerings (21:4).	Mourning Ritual (Sitting; Altar Building; Sacrificing)		
Ruth 1:1–22	The deaths of Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion.	Death (Natural)	Naomi commands Ruth and Orpah, saying, “Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband” (1:8–9).	Instruction (Returning Home and Remarrying)	Naomi kisses Ruth and Orpah, and they weep together (1:9).	Posture (Bidding Farewell)		

1 Sam 1:9–28	Hannah is unable to bear a child for her husband Elkanah.	Childbearing (Barrenness)	Hannah weeps bitterly before the LORD, and prays with a vow to the LORD, saying, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head” (1:10–11).	Vow (DS3)			Hannah is greatly distressed (1:10) and oppressed in spirit (1:15).	Distress; Struggling Spirit
1 Sam 4:19–22	Phineas’ wife dies while giving birth to her son.	Death (Childbirth)	Phineas’ wife names her son Ichabod, saying, “The glory of God has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken” (4:20–22).	Name (Person)				
1 Sam 7:5–6	The house of Israel sin against God.	Sin (Idolatry)	Samuel and all Israel pray to the LORD, saying, “We have sinned against the LORD” (7:6).	Penitence (DS4)				
1 Sam 7:7–14	The Philistines come against the people of Israel at Mizpah.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Samuel cries to the LORD for Israel (7:9).	Lament (DS1)	Samuel takes a suckling lamb and offers it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD (7:9).	Sacrifice (Burnt Offering)	The sons of Israel are afraid of the Philistines (7:7)	Fear (Human)

1 Sam 8:1–9	The elders of Israel ask Samuel to appoint for them a king to judge them like all the nations.	Sin (Leadership)	Samuel prays to the LORD (8:6).	Lament (DS1)				
1 Sam 12:12–25	The people of Israel admit to their sin against the LORD in asking for a king.	Sin (Leadership)	Samuel calls to the LORD for thunder and rain (12:18).	Lament (DS1)				
1 Sam 14:24–30, 36–46	Jonathan inadvertently disobeys Saul’s command to not eat food before evening.	Sin (Food)	Saul inquires of the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, “Give a perfect lot” (14:41).	Lament (DS1)	Saul casts lots twice: once between himself and the people, and then again between himself and his son Jonathan (14:41–42).	Posture (Casting Lots)		

1 Sam 15:1–35	Saul disobeys God's command to totally destroy everything that belongs to the Amalekites, thus coveting the spoil.	Sin (Coveting)	After learning from the LORD of His regret in making Saul king, Samuel cries out to the LORD all night (15:11)	Lament (DS1)	Samuel grieves over Saul (15:35).	Mourning Ritual (Grieving)	Samuel is distressed (15:11).	Distress
1 Sam 15:1–35	Saul disobeys God's command to totally destroy everything that belongs to the Amalekites, thus coveting the spoil.	Sin (Coveting)	Saul confesses to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. Now please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD" (15:24–25).	Penitence (DS4)	Saul seizes the edge of Samuel's robe, and it tears, which becomes a symbolic act of God tearing the kingdom from Saul and giving it to his neighbor who is better than him (15:27–29).	Clothes (Seizing; Tearing)		

1 Sam 15:1–35	Saul disobeys God's command to totally destroy everything that belongs to the Amalekites, thus coveting the spoil.	Sin (Coveting)	Saul confesses to Samuel, saying, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God" (15:30).	Penitence (DS4)	Saul worships the LORD (15:31).	Worship		
1 Sam 16:1–13	While Saul is still reigning as king over Israel, the LORD instructs Samuel to go to the house of Jesse of Bethlehem and anoint for Him one of Jesse's sons to be the succeeding king of Israel.	Leadership	Samuel asks the LORD, saying, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me" (16:2).	Lament (DS1)	Samuel grieves over Saul (16:1).	Mourning Ritual (Grieving)		
1 Sam 23:1–5	The Philistines attack and plunder the	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	David inquires of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" (23:2, 4).	Lament (DS1)				



	people of Keilah.							
1 Sam 23:6–14	Saul seeks out David to kill him while he stays in Keilah.	Strife (Familial)	David inquires of the LORD, saying, “O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant” (23:10-11).	Lament (DS1)				
1 Sam 25:1 (cf. 28:3)	The death of Samuel.	Death (Natural)			All Israel gathers together and mourns for Samuel, and buries him at his house in Ramah.	Mourning Ritual (Mourning; Burying)		
1 Sam 28:3–25	The Philistines once again come against the Israelites.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Saul inquires of the LORD (28:6).		Saul’s heart trembles greatly (28:5).	Posture (Trembling)	Saul is afraid in his heart (28:5)	Fear (Human)
1 Sam 28:3–25	The Philistines once again come against the Israelites.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Saul tells Samuel, “I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do” (28:15).	Lament (DS1)	Saul falls full length upon the ground (28:20)	Posture (Prostrating)	Saul is greatly distressed (28:15) and very afraid (28:20).	Distress; Fear (Divine)

1 Sam 30:1–10	The Amalekites destroy the city of Ziklag, and take captive David’s two wives (Ahinoam and Abigail) as well his men’s wives, sons, and daughters, and all who were in Ziklag.	Captivity	After weeping alongside the people present with him, by means of the ephod, David inquires of the LORD, saying, “Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?” (30:4, 8).	Lament (DS1)			David is greatly distressed because the embittered people speak of stoning him because of their sons and daughters (30:6).	Distress
1 Sam 31:1–13	The death of Saul and his three sons – Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.	Death (Warfare)			The inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead burn Saul and his three sons, then bury their bones under a tamarisk tree, and fast for seven days (31:12–13).	Mourning Ritual (Burning; Burying; Fasting)		

2 Sam 1:1-16	The death of Saul and Jonathan, the people of the LORD, and the house of Israel (1:12).	Death (Warfare)			“David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him. They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.”	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes; Mourning; Weeping; Fasting)		
2 Sam 1:1-27	The death of Saul and Jonathan.	Death (Warfare)	David chants a lament over Saul and his son Jonathan, calling it the song of the bow: “Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult. O mountains of Gilboa, let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was defiled,	Elegy				

			<p>the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, and the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in life, and in their death they were not parted; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!" (1:17-27).</p>					
2 Sam 2:1-7	<p>Following the death of Saul and his three sons, David asks the LORD if he should go up to a particular city of Judah.</p>	Doubt	<p>David inquires of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah? . . . Where shall I go up?" (2:1).</p>	Lament (DS1)				

2 Sam 3:22–39	The death of Abner at the avenging hands of Joab and Abishai for putting their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.	Death (Vengeance)	David declares, “I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. May it fall on the head of Joab and on all his father’s house; and may there not fail from the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or who is a leper, or who takes hold of a distaff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread” (3:28–29).	Imprecation (DS2)				
2 Sam 3:22–39	The death of Abner at the avenging hands of Joab and Abishai for putting their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.	Death (Vengeance)	David instructs Joab and all the people with him to, “Tear your clothes and gird on sackcloth and lament before Abner” (3:31).	Instruction (Funeral)	David and all the people with him tear their clothes and gird on sackcloth before Abner. David also walks behind the bier. They bury Abner in Hebron (3:31–32).	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes; Donning Sackcloth; Funeral Procession- ing; Burying)		

2 Sam 3:22–39	The death of Abner at the avenging hands of Joab and Abishai for putting their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.	Death (Vengeance)	David and all the people with him weep before Abner (3:32).	Weeping				
2 Sam 3:22–39	The death of Abner at the avenging hands of Joab and Abishai for putting their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.	Death (Vengeance)	David chants a lament for Abner: “Should Abner die as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters; as one falls before the wicked, you have fallen” (3:33–34).	Elegy				
2 Sam 3:22–39	The death of Abner at the avenging hands of Joab and Abishai for putting their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.	Death (Vengeance)	David states, “May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil” (3:39).	Imprecation (DS2)				

2 Sam 4:1–12	Ish-bosheth the son of Saul is assassinated by Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite.	Death (Assassination)			The young men take the head of Ish-bosheth and bury it in the grave of Abner in Hebron (4:12).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Sam 4:12	The death of Rechab and Baanah.	Death (Human Judgment)	David commands the young men with him to kill Rechab and Baanah.	Instruction (Assassination)	The young men kill Rechab and Baanah, cut off their hands and feet, and hang them up beside the pool in Hebron.	Position (Derogatory Corpse Exposure)		
2 Sam 5:17–21	The Philistines advance on David and his men in the valley of Rephaim.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	David inquires of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You give them into my hand?” (5:19).	Lament (DS1)				
2 Sam 5:22–25	The Philistines once again advance on David and his men in the valley of Rephaim.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	David inquires of the LORD (5:23).	Lament (DS1)				

2 Sam 11:1–27	The death of Uriah.	Death (Warfare)			Bathsheba mourns for her husband (11:26).	Mourning Ritual (Mourning)		
2 Sam 12:1–15	Nathan the prophet rebukes David for his adultery with Bathsheba and also the death of Uriah the Hittite whom David had assassinated.	Sin (Adultery)	David confesses his sin to Nathan, saying, “I have sinned against the LORD” (12:13).	Penitence (DS4)				
2 Sam 12:15–17	The LORD strikes the child of David and Bathsheba with sickness.	Illness (Divine Judgment)	David inquires of God for the child, and also and also weeps for his son (12:16, 21).	Lament (DS1)	David fasts and lies on the ground all night for seven nights (12:16; 20).	Mourning Ritual (Fasting; Prostrating)		
2 Sam 12:18–23	The first child born to David and Bathsheba eventually succumbs to his illness.	Death (Divine Judgment)	David explains his unusual mourning rituals to his servants, saying, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child my live.’ But not he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (12:22–23).	Rejoinder	David rises from the ground, washes, anoints himself, changes his clothes, enters the house of the LORD to	Mourning Ritual (Rising; Washing; Anointing; Changing Clothes; Worshiping; Eating)		



					worship, returns to his house, and eats food (12:20).			
2 Sam 13:1–39	The death of Amnon at the avenging hands of Absalom and his men for violating Tamar.	Death (Vengeance)			David mourns the death of his son Amnon by tearing his clothes and lying down on the ground; his servants also stand beside him with torn clothes (13:31).	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes; Prostrating)		
2 Sam 15:1–12	Absalom conspires against his father David the king.	Strife (Familial)	Absalom apparently makes a vow to the LORD, saying, “If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD” (15:7-8).	Vow (DS3)				
2 Sam 15:13–37	David learns that Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.	Strife (Familial)	David and all the people with him weep (15:30).	Lament (DS1)				

2 Sam 15:13–37	David learns that Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.	Strife (Familial)	David petitions the LORD, saying, “O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness” (15:31).	Imprecation (DS2)	David and all the people with him ascend the Mount of Olives with covering over their heads; David also walks bare feet (15:30)	Mourning Ritual (Covering Head; Walking Bare Feet)		
2 Sam 18:1— 19:8	The death of Absalom.	Death (Warfare)			Joab and the people with him take Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erect over him a very great heap of stone (18:17).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Sam 18:1— 19:8	The death of Absalom.	Death (Warfare)	David weeps and laments the death of Absalom his son, saying, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (18:33).	Elegy	David is deeply moved (18:33), and mourns for Absalom (19:1).	Mourning Ritual (Deep Moving; Mourning)	David is grieved (19:2).	Grief
2 Sam 18:1— 19:8	The death of Absalom.	Death (Warfare)			All the people mourn with	Mourning Ritual (Mourning)		

					David (19:2).			
2 Sam 18:1—19:8	The death of Absalom.	Death (Warfare)	David cries out in a loud voice, “O my son, Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (19:4).	Elegy	David covers his face in grief (19:4)	Mourning Ritual (Covering Face)		
2 Sam 21:1–1	Three year famine in the land owing to Saul and his bloody house since he put the Gibeonites to death.	Food (Famine)	David seeks the presence of the LORD (21:1).	Lament (DS1)				
2 Sam 21:1–14	The deaths of seven of Saul’s sons to make atonement for the people of Israel.	Death (Human Judgment)			The Gibeonites hang seven of Saul’s sons (the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah – Armoni and Mephibosheth — and also the five unnamed sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to	Sacrifice (Atoning)		

					Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite) (21:9).			
2 Sam 21:1-4	The deaths of seven of Saul's sons to make atonement for the people of Israel.	Death (Human Judgment)			Rizpah mourns the deaths of her two sons – Armoni and Mephibosheth — by taking sackcloth and spreading it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of the harvest until it rained on them from the sky (21:10).	Mourning Ritual (Spreading Sackcloth on Rock)		
2 Sam 21:1-14	The deaths of seven of Saul's sons to make atonement for the people of Israel.	Death (Human Judgment)			David goes to Jabesh-gilead for the bones of Saul and Jonathan, gathers them together with the bones of the	Mourning Ritual (Transporting Body; Burying)		

					seven sons of Saul who were hanged by the Gibeonites, and transports them for burial in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the grave of Kish the father of Saul (21:13–14).			
2 Sam 24:1–25 // 1 Chron 21:1-30	David sins by taking a census of Israel and Judah.	Sin (Census)	David confesses his sin to the LORD, saying, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly” (24:10).	Penitence (DS4)			David’s heart is troubled (24:10).	Troubled
2 Sam 24:1–25 // 1 Chron 21:1-30	David sins by taking a census of Israel and Judah.	Sin (Census)	David tells Gad his seer and the prophet of the LORD, “I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man” (24:14).	Penitence (DS4)			David is in great distress (24:14).	Distress
2 Sam 24:1–25 // 1 Chron 21:1–30	David sins by taking a census of Israel and Judah.	Sin (Census)	Seeing the angel striking down the people, some seventy thousand, David speaks to the LORD, saying, “Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who	Penitence (DS4)				

			have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house" (24:17).					
1 Kgs 2:10	The death of David.	Death (Natural)			David sleeps with his fathers and is buried in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
1 Kgs 2:13-25	The death of Adonijah by means of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada falling upon him.	Death (Assassination)	Speaking to his mother Bathsheba, Solomon swears by the LORD, saying, "May God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life. Now therefore, as the LORD lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of David my father and who has made me a house as He promised, surely Adonijah shall be put to death today" (2:23-24).	Promise				
1 Kgs 2:28-35	The death of Joab by means of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada falling upon him.	Death (Assassination)	Solomon sends Benaiah the son of Jehoiada to Joab, saying, "Go, fall upon him" (2:29).	Instruction (Assassination)	Joab is buried at his own house in the wilderness (2:34).	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
1 Kgs 11:43 // 2 Chron 9:31	The death of Solomon.	Death (Natural)			Solomon sleeps with his fathers and is buried in the city of	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

					his father David.			
1 Kgs 13:1–34	The death of the man of God.	Death (Divine Judgment)	The old prophet living in Bethel laments the death of the man of God from Judah, saying, “Alas, my brother!”	Elegy				
1 Kgs 13:1–34	The death of the man of God.	Death (Divine Judgment)	The old prophet living in Bethel gives instructions to his sons concerning his burial upon his death, saying, “When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the thing shall surely come to pass which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria” (13:31–32).	Instruction (Burial)	The prophet takes the body of the man of God, lays it on a donkey, brings it back, buries it in his own grave, and mourns for him (13:29–30).	Mourning Ritual (Burying; Mourning)		
1 Kgs 14:31	The death of Rehoboam.	Death (Natural)			Rehoboam sleeps with his fathers and is buried with his fathers in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
1 Kgs 15:8 // 2 Chron 14:1	The death of Abijah.	Death (Natural)			Abijah sleeps with his fathers and is buried in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

1 Kgs 15:24 // 2 Chron 16:13-14	The death of Asa.	Death (Illness)			Asa sleeps with his fathers and is buried in his own tomb, which he had cut out for himself in the city of David his father. Asa is laid in the resting place, which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by perfumers' art. A great fire is also made in honor of Asa.	Mourning Ritual (Burying; Spicing; Honorable Fire)		
1 Kgs 16:6	The death of Baasha.	Death (Natural)			Baasha sleeps with his fathers and is buried in Tirzah.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
1 Kgs 16:28	The death of Omri.	Death (Natural)			Omri sleeps with his fathers and is buried in Samaria.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		



1 Kgs 17:17–24	The death of the son of the widow at Zarephath.	Death (Illness)	Elijah calls out to the LORD, saying, “O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?” (17:20).	Lament (DS1)				
1 Kgs 17:17–24	The death of the son of the widow at Zarephath.	Death (Illness)	Elijah calls out to the LORD, saying, “O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child’s life return to him” (17:21).	Lament (DS1)	Elijah stretches himself upon the child three times (17:21).	Posture (Stretching Out Body)		
1 Kgs 18:20–40	Elijah attempts to prove that the LORD is the true God rather than Baal.	Strife (Religious)	Elijah the prophet comes near the altar and prays, “O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and that You have turned their heart back again” (18:36–37).	Lament (DS1)	Elijah repairs the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. He takes twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob. With the twelve stones he builds an altar in the name of the LORD, makes a trench around it	Altar (Animal Sacrifice)		

					large enough to hold two measures of seed. He then arranges the wood and cut the ox in pieces and lays it on the wood. Four pitchers of water are poured on the burnt offering and on the wood three times filling the trench with water (18:30–34).			
1 Kgs 19:1–8	Elijah is afraid of Jezebel’s threat upon his life.	Strife (Religious)	Elijah petitions the LORD, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers” (19:4).	Lament (DS1)	Elijah sits down under a juniper tree (19:4).	Posture (Sitting)	Elijah is afraid of Jezebel (19:3).	Fear (Human)
1 Kgs 22:37	The death of Ahab.	Death (Warfare)			Ahab dies, and his body is brought up and buried in Samaria.	Mourning Ritual (Transporting Body; Burying)		

1 Kgs 22:50 // 2 Chron 21:1	The death of Jehoshaphat.	Death (Natural)			Jehoshaphat sleeps with his fathers and is buried with his fathers in the city of his father David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 4:8-37	The death of the son of the Shunammite woman.	Death (Illness)	Elisha prays to the LORD (4:33).	Lament (DS1)	Elisha lies on top of the child, puts his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands, and he stretches himself on the child. After feeling warmth from the flesh of the child, Elisha walks in the house back and forth, and then once again, stretches himself on the child (4:34-35).	Posture (Stretching Out Body; Walking)		

2 Kgs 6:8–23	The Arameans war against Israel.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Elisha prays to the LORD, saying, “O LORD, I pray, open his [Elisha’s servant’s] eyes that he may see” (6:17).	Lament (DS1)				
2 Kgs 6:8–23	The Arameans war against Israel.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Elisha prays to the LORD, saying, “Strike this people [the Arameans] with blindness, I pray” (6:18).	Imprecation (DS2)				
2 Kgs 6:8–23	The Arameans war against Israel.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Elisha prays to the LORD, saying, “O LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see” (6:20).	Lament (DS1)				
2 Kgs 8:24	The death of Jehoram.	Death (Natural)			Jehoram sleeps with his fathers, and is buried with his fathers in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 10:35	The death of Jehu.	Death (Natural)			Jehu sleeps with his fathers, and is buried in Samaria.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 13:9	The death of Jehoahaz.	Death (Natural)			Jehoahaz sleeps with his father, and is buried in Samaria.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 13:13 // 14:16	The death of Joash also known as Jehoash.	Death (Natural)			Joash sleeps with his fathers, and is buried in Samaria with the	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

					kings of Israel.			
2 Kgs 14:20–22	The death of Amaziah.	Death (Warfare)			Amaziah is brought on horses from Lachish to Jerusalem where he is buried with his fathers in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Transporting Body; Burying)		
2 Kgs 15:7 // 2 Chron 26:23	The death of Azariah also known as Uzziah.	Death (Illness)			Azariah sleeps with his fathers, and is buried with his fathers in the field of the grave, which belongs to the kings in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 15:38 // 2 Chron 27:9	The death of Jotham.	Death (Natural)			Jotham sleeps with his fathers, and is buried with his fathers in the city of David his father.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 16:20 // 2 Chron 28:27	The death of Ahaz.	Death (Natural)			Ahaz sleeps with his fathers, and is buried	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		

					with his fathers in the city of David, though not in the tombs of the kings of Israel.			
2 Kgs 19:1–37 // Isa 37:1–38	Sennacherib threatens Hezekiah and the people of Judah.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Hezekiah prays before the LORD, saying, “O LORD, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. Now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God” (2 Kgs 19:14–19 // Isa 37:15–20).	Lament (DS1)	Hezekiah tears his clothes, covers himself in sackcloth, enters the house of the LORD, and spreads out the letter from Sennacherib before the LORD (2 Kgs 19:1, 14 // Isa 37:1, 14).	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes; Donning Sackcloth; Spreading Out Letter)	Hezekiah is distressed and afraid of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:3, 6 // Isa 37:6).	Distress; Fear (Human)
2 Kgs 20:1–11 // Isa 38:1–22	Hezekiah falls ill.	Illness (Natural)	Hezekiah weeps and prays to the LORD, saying, “Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth	Lament (DS1)	Hezekiah turns his face to the wall and sheds tears	Mourning Ritual (Turning Face;		

			and with a whole heart and have down what is good in Your sight” (20:2, 3 // Isa 38:2, 3).		(2 Kgs 20:2, 3, 5 // Isa 38:2, 3, 5).	Shedding Tears)		
2 Kgs 20:1–11 // Isa 38:1–22	Hezekiah falls ill.	Illness (Natural)	Isaiah the prophet cries to the LORD (2 Kgs 20:11).	Lament (DS1)				
2 Kgs 21:18 // 2 Chron 33:20	The death of Manasseh.	Death (Natural)			Manasseh sleeps with his fathers, and is buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Kgs 22:1–20	Josiah fears that the LORD’s wrath might burn against him and the people of Judah owing to the sin of their fathers.	Sin (Idolatry)	Through Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, Josiah inquires of the LORD for himself and the people and all Judah concerning the words of the book of the law. Josiah also weeps before the LORD (22:13–14, 19).	Lament (DS1)	Josiah tears his clothes (22:11).	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes)	Josiah’s heart is tender toward the LORD (22:19).	Tender-hearted
2 Kgs 23:29–30 // 2 Chron 35:23–25	The death of Josiah.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Jeremiah chants a lament for Josiah. All the male and female singers speak and write about Josiah in their lamentations (2 Chron 35:25).	Elegy	Josiah’s lifeless body is transported in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem, and is buried	Mourning Ritual (Transporting Body; Burying)		

					in his own tomb (2 Kgs 23:30).			
1 Chron 4:10	Jabez prays for God's blessings and protection from danger.	Danger	Jabez calls on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that You would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep me from harm that it may not pain me!"	Lament (DS1)				
2 Chron 12:16	The death of Rehoboam.	Death (Natural)			Rehoboam sleeps with his fathers and is buried in the city of David.	Mourning Ritual (Burying)		
2 Chron 13:1–20	Warfare between Abijah king of Judah and Jeroboam king of Israel.	Strife (Familial)	Judah cries to the LORD (13:14).	Lament (DS1)	The priests blow the trumpets (13:14).	Posture (Trumpeting)		
2 Chron 13:1–20	Warfare between Abijah king of Judah and Jeroboam king of Israel.	Strife (Familial)	The men of Judah raise a war cry (13:15).	War Cry				
2 Chron 14:9–15	Warfare between Zerah the Ethiopian and Asa.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Asa calls to the LORD his God and says, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us,	Lament (DS1)				



			O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You” (14:11).					
2 Chron 18:28–34	Battle between Israel, Judah, and Ramoth-gilead.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Jehoshaphat cries out to the LORD for help (18:31).	Lament (DS1)				
2 Chron 20:1–30	The sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some of the Meunites make war against Jehoshaphat.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	Jehoshaphat seeks the LORD for help, saying, “O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You. Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying, ‘Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (For Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver us.’ Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of	Imprecation (DS2)	Jehoshaphat fasts; he also stands in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court (20:5).	Mourning Ritual (Fasting; Standing)	Jehoshaphat is afraid and dismayed (20:15).	Fear (Human); Dismay

			Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them), see how they are rewarding us by coming to drive us out from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance. O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You” (20:6–12).					
2 Chron 20:1–30	The sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some of the Meunites make war against Jehoshaphat.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	The Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice (20:19).	Thanksgiving Praise (DS6)	Jehoshaphat bows his head with his face to the ground; the Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites stand up to praise the LORD (20:18–19).	Posture (Bowing; Standing)		
2 Chron 20:1–30	The sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some of the Meunites make war against Jehoshaphat.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	The Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites praise the LORD, singing, “Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting” (20:21–22).	Thanksgiving Praise (DS6)	Jehoshaphat stands as he appoints those who sing to the LORD and those who praise Him (20:20–21).	Posture (Standing)		

2 Chron 20:1–30	The sons of Moab, the sons of Ammon, and some of the Meunites make war against Jehoshaphat.	Strife (Enemy Warfare)	The Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites praise the LORD, singing, “Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting” (20:21–22).	Thanksgiving Praise (DS6)	The Levites of the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites dress themselves in holy attire (20:21).	Clothes (Donning Holy Attire)		
2 Chron 30:1–27	A multitude of people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, was not pure enough to partake in the Passover meal.	Danger	Hezekiah prays for the multitude of people, saying, “May the good LORD pardon everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary” (30:18–19).	Penitence (DS4)				
2 Chron 32:33	The death of Hezekiah.	Death (Natural)			Hezekiah sleeps with his fathers, and is buried in the upper section of the tombs of the sons of David, and is honored at his death.	Mourning Ritual (Burying; Honoring)		

2 Chron 33:10–17	Manasseh is taken into captivity on account of his persistent idolatry.	Captivity	Manasseh entreats the LORD his God (33:12).	Lament (DS1)			Manasseh is in distress (33:12).	Distress
Ezra 8:21–36	Ezra and the family heads return to Jerusalem.	Sojourning	Ezra seeks God for protection on the journey (8:21, 23).	Lament (DS1)	Ezra fasts and humbles himself before God to seek from Him a safe journey (8:21).	Mourning Ritual (Fasting)	Ezra is ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect them from the enemy on the way (8:22).	Shame
Ezra 9:1— 10:6	The people of Israel continue to engage in unlawful intermarriage with the peoples of the land—the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians,	Sin (Intermarriage)	Ezra prays to the LORD his God, and makes confession, saying, “O my God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face to You, my God, for our iniquities have risen above our heads and our guilt has grown even to the heavens. Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt, and on account of our iniquities we, our kings and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity and to plunder and to open shame, as it is this day. But now for a brief moment grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave	Penitence (DS4)	Ezra tears his garment and robe, pulls some of the hair from his head and beard, and sits down; he then falls on his knees and stretches out his hands to the LORD his God in prayer (9:3, 5). Ezra also prostrates	Mourning Ritual (Tearing Clothes; Pulling Hair; Sitting; Kneeling; Hands Out- stretching; Prostrating; Fasting)	Ezra is appalled, ashamed, embarrassed, and in great guilt at the news of this unfaithfulness of the exiles (9:3–4, 6).	Appall; Shame; Embarrassment; Guilt

	<p>and Amorites.</p>		<p>us an escaped remnant and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and grant us a little reviving in our bondage. For we are slaves; yet in our bondage our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. Now our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, which You have commanded by Your servants, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from end to end and with their impurities. So now do not give your daughters to their sons nor take their daughters to your sons, and never seek their peace and prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your sons forever.' After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and our great guilt, since You our God have requited us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us an escaped remnant as this, shall we again</p>		<p>himself before the house of God (10:1), and does not eat bread nor drink water (10:6).</p>			
--	----------------------	--	--	--	---	--	--	--

			<p>break Your commandments and intermarry with the peoples who commit these abominations? Would You not be angry with us to the point of destruction, until there is no remnant nor any who escape? O LORD God of Israel, You are righteous, for we have been left an escaped remnant, as it is this day; behold, we are before You in our guilt, for no one can stand before You because of this” (9:6–15). He also weeps before the LORD (10:1).</p>					
Ezra 10:2–44	The people of Israel continue to engage in unlawful intermarriage with the peoples of the land – the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites.	Sin (Intermarriage)	<p>Shecaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, confesses his sin to Ezra, saying, “We have been unfaithful to our God and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope for Israel in spite of this. So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise! For this matter is your responsibility, but we will be with you; be courageous and act” (10:2–4).</p>	Penitence (DS4)				

Neh 1:1-11	Nehemiah receives the sad news that the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and the gates have been burned with fire.	Destruction	Nehemiah weeps and prays before the God of heaven, saying, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. Remember the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples; but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell.' They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power	Penitence (DS4)	Nehemiah sits down and mourns and fasts for days (1:4).	Mourning Ritual (Sitting; Mourning; Fasting)		
---------------	--	-------------	---	--------------------	---	--	--	--

			and by Your strong hand. O Lord, I beseech You, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and make Your servant successful today and grant him compassion before this man [the king]" (1:5–11).					
Neh 2:1–8	Nehemiah is saddened over the condition of the city of Jerusalem.	Destruction	Nehemiah prays to the God of heaven (2:4).	Lament (DS1)			Nehemiah's face is sad, which is an outward expression of the sadness of his heart; he is also very much afraid (2:2).	Sadness; Fear (Human)
Neh 4:1–5	Trouble develops between the Jews rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem and Sanballat and Tobiah who mock the Jews.	Strife (Neighbor)	Nehemiah prays, "Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity. Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders" (4:4–5).	Imprecation (DS2)				



Neh 4:7–9	Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites conspire against the Jews who are repairing the walls of Jerusalem.	Danger	Nehemiah prays to God (4:9).	Lament (DS1)				
Neh 5:14–19	The previous governors place heavy burdens upon the Jews, but not Nehemiah.	Injustice	Nehemiah petitions God, saying, “Remember me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people” (5:19).	Lament (DS1)			Nehemiah fears God (5:15).	Fear (Divine)
Neh 6:1–9	Sanballat and Geshem the Arab conspire to harm Nehemiah, and also discourage the work of rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.	Danger	Nehemiah petitions God, saying, “But now, O God, strengthen my hands” (6:9).	Lament (DS1)				

Neh 6:10–14	Tobiah and Sanballat hire Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, to frighten Nehemiah so that he might sin, and they could have an evil report concerning him.	Danger	Nehemiah petitions God, saying, “Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these works of theirs, and also Noadiah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets were trying to frighten me” (6:14).	Imprecation (DS2)				
----------------	--	--------	--	-------------------	--	--	--	--

Neh 9:1–38	A national day of mourning for Israel.	Sin (Disobedience)	The descendants of Israel confess their sins and the iniquities of their fathers, read from the book of the law of the LORD their God, and confess and worship the LORD their God. The Levites (Jeshua, Bani, Karmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani) cry with a loud voice to the LORD their God. The Levites (Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahian), say, “Arise, bless the LORD your God forever and ever! O may Your glorious name be blessed and exalted above all blessing and praise! You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You. You are the LORD God who chose Abram and brought him out from Ur of the Chaldees, and gave him the name Abraham. You found his heart faithful before You, and made a covenant with him to give him the land of the Canaanite, of the Hittite and the Amorite, of the Perizzite, the Jebusite and the Girgashite – to give it to his descendants. And You have fulfilled Your promise, for You	Penitence (DS4)	The sons of Israel assemble with fasting, in sackcloth and with dirt upon them, separate themselves from all foreigners and stood before God (9:1–2).	Mourning Ritual (Fasting; Donning Sackcloth; Pouring Dirt upon Oneself; Separation; Standing)		
---------------	---	-----------------------	---	--------------------	---	--	--	--

			<p>are righteous. You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heard their cry by the Red Sea. Then You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his servants and all the people of his land; for You knew that they acted arrogantly toward them, and made a name for Yourself as it is this day. You divided the sea before them, so they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground; and their pursuers You hurled into the depths, like a stone into raging waters. And with a pillar of cloud You led them by day, and with a pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go. Then You came down on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven; You gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments. So You made known to them Your holy sabbath, and laid down for them commandments, statutes and law, through Your servant Moses. You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger, You brought forth water from a rock for them for their thirst, and You told them to enter to possess the land which You swore to give them. But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; they became stubborn and would not listen to Your</p>					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

			<p>commandments. They refused to listen, and did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You performed among them; so they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; and You did not forsake them. Even when they made for themselves a calf of molten metal and said, 'This is your God who brought you up from Egypt,' and committed great blasphemies, You, in Your great compassion, did not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, to guide them on their way, nor the pillar of fire by night, to light them the way in which they were to go. You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, and You gave them water for their thirst. Indeed, forty years You provided for them in the wilderness and they were not in want; their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell. You also gave them kingdoms and peoples, and allotted them to them as a boundary. They took possession of the land of Sihon the king of Heshbon and the land</p>					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

			<p>of Og king of Bashan. You made their sons numerous as the stars of heaven, and You brought them into the land which You had told their fathers to enter and possess. So their sons entered and possessed the land. And You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and You gave them into their hand, with their kings and the peoples of the land, to do with them as they desired. They captured fortified cities and a fertile land. They took possession of houses full of every good thing, hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees in abundance. So they ate, were filled and grew fat, and reveled in Your great goodness. But they became disobedient and rebelled against You, and cast Your law behind their backs and killed Your prophets who had admonished them so that they might return to You, and they committed great blasphemies. Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their oppressors who oppressed them, but when they cried to You in the time of their distress, You heard from heaven, and according to Your great compassion You gave them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors. But as soon as</p>					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

			<p>they had rest, they did evil again before You; therefore You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they ruled over them. When they cried again to You, You heard from heaven, and many times You rescued them according to Your compassion, and admonished them in order to turn them back to Your law. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Your commandments but sinned against Your ordinances, by which if a man observes them he shall live. And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen. However, You bore with them for many years, and admonished them by Your Spirit through Your prophets, yet they would not give ear. Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless, in Your great compassion You did not make an end of them or forsake them, for You are a gracious and compassionate God. Now therefore, our God, the great and mighty, and awesome God, who keeps covenant and lovingkindness, do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before You, which has come upon us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers and on</p>					
--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--

			<p>all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria to this day. However, You are just in all that has come upon us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly. For our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers have not kept Your law or paid attention to Your commandments and Your admonitions with which You had admonished them. But they, in their own kingdom, with Your great goodness which You gave them, with the broad and rich land which You set before them, did not serve You or turn from their evil deeds. Behold, we are slaves today, and as to the land which You gave to our fathers to eat of its fruit and its bounty, behold, we are slaves in it. Its abundant produce is for the kings whom You have set over us because of our sins; they also rule over our bodies and over our cattle as they please, so we are in distress. Now because of all this we are making an agreement in writing; and on the sealed document are the names of our leaders, our Levites and our priests” (9:2-38).</p>					
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Neh 13:23–31	Some of the Jews are reprimanded for engaging in intermarriage, or more precisely, interreligious marriage, which is unlawful for God’s holy people.	Sin (Intermarriage)	Nehemiah petitions God, saying, “Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites” (13:29).	Imprecation (DS2)				
-----------------	--	------------------------	---	----------------------	--	--	--	--

**Key:**

- **Disorientation Categories:** Captivity; Childbearing (subcategories: Barrenness; Pregnancy); Danger; Death (subcategories: Assassination; Childbirth; Divine Judgment; Human Judgment; Illness; Manslaughter; Natural; Unfortunate; Vengeance; Warfare); Destruction; Divine Threat; Doubt; Dreams; Hunger; Imprecation; Injustice; Judgment; Land (subcategories: Possession; Rebellion); Leadership; Marriage (subcategories: Bridal Search; Interracial; Interreligious); Offering; Plagues; Position (sub categories: Rendezvous; Reversion; Sojourning); Sin (subcategories: Adultery; Census; Coveting; Cycle; Disobedience; Food; Idolatry; Interreligious Marriage; Leadership); Slavery; Strife (subcategories: Familial; Kings; Neighbor; Owner-Slave; Religious; Sibling Rivalry; Enemy Warfare); Unanswered Prayer; Water (subcategories: Bitterness; Obstacle; Thirst).

- **Verbal Expression Categories to/before God:** Lament (DS1); Imprecation (DS2); Vow (DS3); Penitence (DS4); Confidence (DS5); Thanksgiving Praise (DS6).
- **Verbal Expression Categories to/before Humans:** Complaint; Contrition; Curse; Elegy; Instruction (Assassination; Burying, Embalming; Holiness; For a Woman on Returning Home and Remarrying; and Transporting Cadaver for Burial); Interrogation and Rejoinder; Promise; War Cry; Weeping.
- **Physical Expression Categories:** Altar (subcategories: Animal Sacrifice; Anointing; Atoning; Burnt Offering; Destruction; Invocation; Mediating; Memorial; Peace Offering; Plating; Thank Offering); Clothes (subcategories: Donning Holy Attire; Donning Sackcloth; Seizing; Stripping; Tearing); Hands (subcategories: Commissioning; Grasping; Holding; Killing; Lifting Up; Outstretched); Leadership Anointing; Mourning Ritual (subcategories: Anointing; Burning; Burnt Offering; Burying; Covering Face; Covering Head; Deep Moving; Donning Sackcloth; Donning Widow's Clothes; Embalming; Falling on the Deceased; Fasting; Funeral Processioning; Grave-stoning; Grieving; Honorable Fire; Honoring; Kissing the Deceased; Laying Body in Coffin; Mourning; Peace Offering; Pouring Dirt upon Oneself/Sprinkling Dust on Head; Prostrating; Pulling Hair; Purchasing Land; Separation; Shedding Tears; Sitting; Spicing; Spreading Out Letter; Spreading Sackcloth on Rock; Standing; Tearing Clothes; Transporting Cadaver; Walking; Walking Bare Feet; Worshiping); Posture (subcategories: Anointing; Atoning; Bending; Bidding Farewell; Casting Lots; Consecrating; Stretching Out Body; Bowing; Casting Lots; Dedicating;

Destroying of Stone Tablets; Offering Food; Removing Footwear; Prostrating; Mediating; Kneeling; Rising; Sitting; Standing; Strengthening; Walking); Position (subcategories: Alongside; Beside; Derogatory Corpse Exposure; Returning); Reformation; Sacrifice (subcategories: Animal; Burnt Offering; Human); Testing; Theophany; Trumpet (subcategories: Call to War; Leadership).

- **Emotional Expression Categories:** Anger; Appalment; Dismay; Displeasure / Distress; Embarrassment and Shame; Fear (subcategories: Divine and Human); Grief; Guilt; Sadness; Tender-heartedness; Troubled Heart.

APPENDIX 2:

 <p><b>McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)</b>          c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca</p>		<p align="center"><b>CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH</b></p>	
<p><b>Application Status:</b> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Addendum <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Project Number:</b> 2018 169</p>			
<p><b>TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:</b></p> <p align="center">Expressions Communicated to/before God amidst Grief</p>			
<b>Faculty Investigator(s)/ Supervisor(s)</b>	<b>Dept./Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>
Mark J. Boda	Divinity	24095	mjboda@mcmaster.ca
<b>Co-Investigators/ Students</b>	<b>Dept./Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>
James J. S. Harrichand	Divinity	6472040517	harricjj@studentmail.os.mcmast
<p>The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification.  <input type="checkbox"/> The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification.</p> <p>The application protocol is cleared subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below:</p>			
<p><b>COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and cleared before any alterations are made to the research.</b></p>			
		Nov-14-2019	
<b>Reporting Frequency:</b> Nov-14-2018	<b>Annual:</b>		<b>Other:</b>

**Date:** Chair, Dr. S. Bray

APPENDIX 3:  
TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH GUYANESE-CANADIAN LEADERS

**Transcript of Interview with GL1**

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

Well, the word grief refers to a time of loss, a time of pain and sorrow; someone is nursing the death of a love one or friend. And I also strangely believe that the word grief is a love word in the sense that you can only grieve those whom you love, and you can only be grieved by those who love you. And the deeper the love, the deeper the grief. For example, if someone that you really, genuinely care for and love dies, or is going through a time of great sickness, you will grieve because of the depth of love that you have for that person. If you do not have that depth of love, it would not affect your grief. So grief in a strange way has a connection to love.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Yes, one of my first most grieving experiences was losing my brother, my eldest brother, thirty-five years ago. We grew up together; we were just two years apart. I don't think that I knew before that the pain of losing someone that was really close to you, that you really love. It was deep; it hurt. It hurt me more because he didn't know Jesus, and he wasn't serving the Lord. And that was even more painful for me. He was the only member of my family that didn't know the Lord, and wasn't serving the Lord, and that

compounded the grief. But when I saw him, his body, I released my grief by crying and expressing it in tears, and I felt so much better. I still remember him fondly, I still remorse over it, and wish it never happened. But that was my first experience of the power of grief and how it can really affect you.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Well, there are all kinds of expressions. There's tears, there's wailing, there's mourning. People can faint. It is normal for people to faint and have to be revived in our culture. It is normal for people to wail and weep so much that they actually pass out. It is normal sometime for people to scream. It is not uncommon to hear loud wails from those stricken by grief. Often accompanying wailing, which is a loud cry, some mourners scream and shout virtually at the top of their lungs all while beating their chest. You see that at some funerals. But it has a deep emotional impact.

People in the Guyanese culture are not afraid to express their emotion and especially among Indian people, old Indian people who were Hindus. They will just express it, and sometimes they will express it in singing. Wailing singing would be like a funeral dirge. They might express it by saying things related to the past. They might repeat words that were told them by the deceased, and sometimes it could be really humorous, and you probably have to put your hand on your mouth. I was at one funeral where a lady said to the deceased, "I know you used to tell me that my family is ugly, and your family is nice. Yeah, that's true, you know. But you're taking all your niceness with you right now."

In our culture, people really do express their grief in those ways I mentioned. And sometimes it can be physical. I have seen occasions when people try to comfort those who are expressing their grief and they could be violent if they try to comfort them. I've seen occasion where people would lash back saying, "Please leave me alone," and you had to actually back away because they were in such sorrow that your attempt to comfort them might look like you're trying to prevent them from expressing their emotion. And there have been cases where I've seen it actually as close to being very violent. In this one occasion where this guy I was involved at his funeral, and his brother was really wailing at the casket, and somebody went to comfort him. And he actually pushed the man away, and he said, "Leave me alone, this is my brother." Some have even moved to kissing the dead, and when at the cemetery, some have even chosen to lie down on top of the grave.

So you can get all kinds of expressions. You can get angry expressions and not just grief. But it can come out in anger, and it can even get to the point of being violent. So you do have to be sensitive to those moments.

In terms of the significance, I think it is the culture that people grew up in, and what they saw that is just what they continue to do, especially among Indian people. Indian people felt that if you do not do that, you were not actually showing that you love that person. And it would come over to their family that you really didn't care about that person. So in many cases, the wailing, the weeping, the fainting, were ways of telling their people that we also love this person. If they didn't do something like that, it might be conceived that they didn't really love the person.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

In many cases, people wouldn't even think about it before they do it. But in some cases they would. They would carefully think about it before they actually do it, because they know that they need to make some kind of expression, and they need to reveal some affection this way. So sometimes they would not think about it. Others might be standing there and they might be inspired by those who are doing it. They may not have had a feeling that I would really break down. But then when they see other friends and other family doing it, they just join in the whole thing. Again, it's very common among West Indian people, Guyanese people.

One of the things that they do is they will hold a wake. We have a funeral this week at church. And it's somebody who has been in the church for over thirty years, and has served very well, but is an aged, elderly person in their nineties. On Thursday night there will be a wake here. But the family is asking for the way things were done in Guyana in singing. There is a style of singing called *Kweh-kweh*. *Kweh-kweh* really was something that was done on the night before the wedding, where they had a certain kind of food that they would eat. They would eat cook-up rice and they would sing. So when they said to me yesterday, "We want to have *Kweh-kweh* singing," they meant not sad songs. They want to have upbeat Christian songs, such as, "When We All Get to Heaven," or "Mansion Over the Hilltop." They want to have a real time of expressing. So yesterday morning at the end of the service, I led in "When We All Get to Heaven," and it was great. And they said, "That is what we want. Pastor, that is what we want." So I said, "Okay. Alright."



There is going to be a wake, which is very common among Guyanese people. And when there is a wake, it is a gathering before the funeral, and no one has to be invited. It's open to everybody. And in the Guyanese culture, anybody can come. They have food, and you don't invite anybody, they just come, and that's the culture. Once they know it's somebody that they know, or somebody knows them, they come along.

I was told by a funeral home director that when there's a Guyanese funeral, you can expect any number of people because it is not an invitation. If it's someone from Windsor Forest, the whole Windsor Forest will come. If it's someone from Leonora, the whole Leonora will come. If it's somebody from Anna Catherina, then everybody from Catherina will come. And that's how it goes. Once you know it's somebody from Windsor Forest that's dead, we got to go.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

Wow! I've overcome any of it. I don't have any lingering pains of any grieving situation. Memories I cannot erase. Memories are there. Memories will always be there. My mom, memories of my brother, my father, I can't erase that. But it has not affected my life in any way. I've long overcome any of that. I accept it as a fact of life. And you have to keep going.

Even though I say that, I still remember them fondly on the anniversary of their passing, and I will always remember them. One amazing thing happened to me. My father died fifty-seven years ago. He was carrying some preachers across the Demerara River with a fishing boat; he was a fisherman. And they were involved in an accident and three people died that night. I was ten years old, and that's fifty-seven years ago.

And I had never seen the newspaper report on the incident. I made several attempts over the years to find it, but I couldn't.

But when I was in Guyana last month, I had to speak at the police headquarters on a Friday morning service. And then I thought to myself, "I'm going to go to the museum." So I went to the museum, and I asked them. And they said, "Well, all those things are now kept at another building at the back of the Cultural Center. It is called the Walter Rodney's Archive." When I looked there, there were three ladies, and I said, "I'm looking for the newspaper clipping for July 6, 1962." And they said, "We have it." And I said, "You do?" And they said, "Well, wait right here." And here it is, they're wheeling out the newspaper from 1962 British Guiana.

I knew it happened on a Friday night, the sixth of July, late in the night. So there was no way it would make the Saturday paper. When I turned those two newspapers, which at that time was the Guiana Graphic and the Daily Chronicle, I turned to the Sunday, July 8 of 1962, and on the front page was the story. I never thought that it would have had an emotional impact. I stepped away for a bit. I went to the window, and looked outside for half a minute. And I didn't believe that there would have been some tears welling up in my eyes. And I wiped my eyes and went back to the paper, and I thought, "Wow! This is fifty-seven years ago, and this is the first time I'm seeing this."

I was able to take pictures of it, and take copies of it to share with my siblings, and read the story. I knew there would not be any picture of my father. There is a picture of the missionary, and three other preachers; their pictures are on there. But my father had no picture that we knew of, just a family picture that we were able to get. So I was not surprised that there was no picture, but I wanted to read it. I read both stories and I have copies of them. That was an amazing experience after fifty-seven years, and here

they are. This is the newspaper. This was a young preacher named D1, and he died on his birthday; he would have been seventy something now. This was the American missionary, the superintendent of the Assemblies of God in British Guiana; he's now in his nineties. This fellow, H1 became my pastor; he's now close to eighty years old. And this was another young man that went over with them, D2. And if you look, it's the Sunday newspaper, it will tell you the date: it was July 8, 1962, "Three Died in River Collision." It was the Sunday Graphic of Guiana.

But I never thought that something that happened fifty-seven years ago would have had an emotional impact momentarily, and it did for a few minutes. I could not believe that it would happen to me. But it was something I wanted to see, and I've made many attempts in the past, but was the first time I succeeded. So I asked the lady, "Now I've tried many times, why didn't I ever get this?" Then she explained to me that, "Some were kept in the museum, some were kept in the City Hall, and some were kept in the Gazette Department. But now that there is a building, everything is held in one place."

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

Well, the culture believes that you should grieve, and that you should mourn the loss of a loved one. The cultural belief is that you should pull together at that time, and do your very best in expressing your final respects for the deceased. And consequently, members of that community will on the wake prepare food: they will prepare sandwiches. No one has to ask, they will bring stuff. Generally, especially among the Indian people more than anyone else, they will chip in to pay without being asked to pay for the funeral. They would be willing to join in and help to pay for the expenses. They would often

come and ask, "Can I help?" But you will find this almost exclusively among the Indians.

You don't find that generally among the blacks from Guyana. You will find the opposite of that. The opposite is that most of the time they would dress better than anybody, they would speak more elegant than anyone else, but they will make it clear that they don't have any money. And in some cases, I have had to be involved in funerals where they would ask me to talk to this family member. And in those cases I would have to tell them, "Those are the cases that I don't get involved in; I don't get involved in family issues." There have been cases where one would come and say, "I'm left alone to do it." Others tell me that they have no money.

But among the Indians, Indian people feel that it is part of their duty to take care, especially of their parents. They feel that it is part of their obligation, and in many cases, their culture will teach them that if they don't, they will have a curse on them. So they feel that if they don't do their best for their parents, they'll be bringing a curse upon their own family. So they gladly do it because that's part of their culture, among Indian people especially.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Well, our church follows biblical standards. We allow as much expression of grief. We don't tell people, "Don't cry." We tell people, "Cry. If you have to, release it." My own belief is that it's better for people to express their emotion than to stifle their emotion. They end up hurting themselves if they do that. And we try as much to include people's positions, feelings, in terms of a service. From a biblical point of view, we see ourselves as being a comfort to the people, number one. We're there to comfort. We're there to

bring hope. And we use every opportunity in that fashion to present the hope that we have in the gospel. We try not to lose that chance of speaking the truth of the gospel. But yet we are sensitive in doing that.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

Yeah, well, the perspective is that everyone will have to face this. Death will come to every family, into every home.

In terms of the behavior, you cannot always control people's behavior. You cannot control how people will behave. So what we will do is, we will, when we have a funeral, put a microphone on the ground. I don't allow every person to come behind the church pulpit to express their tribute, because you're not sure what might come out of their mouth. And I would let them give their tribute on the ground floor. I have made the mistake in the past and allowed people behind the church pulpit, and people expressed their Islamic views or their Hindu views. And I didn't want that to be coming from my pulpit, so I let them do so on the ground.

There have been cases where people came to me and said, "Can I play this song?" and I would say, "I need to hear that song first." When people are doing funeral programs, I would make sure that those programs are presented to me first, and that I have a chance to review it before I give them the go ahead to print it, because I don't want to be faced with surprises on the air. So for instance, the funeral that we have here on Saturday, the family is doing the program, but they said, "Pastor, we want to make sure that you see it before." Most of the time you're not going to say no to people. But you still want to look at it to make sure that it's not something that's going to take you

by surprise. If you feel this is not the right thing, you just ask, or make a nice suggestion. You don't necessarily say, "Remove it," but, "Can you adjust this?"

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

Well, I find that as a pastor, following up is sometimes helpful. I would wait for some time, a week or so to go by, then I would call them to see how they're doing. And just say, "How're you making out and so on?" Sometimes that goes a far way in the healing process. And I think it goes a far way in expressing to people that you care.

As a pastor, I don't feel that I should be sticking on this as my duty to do this. I need to be more than just doing it as a duty or a job. It's a ministry that goes beyond what you do at the pulpit to making sure that people are convinced that you care about them and that you love them. If you want to help people, you've got to always make sure that you express that. As a result, in just about every occasion, people would ask me, "How much are you charging? How much it's going to cost?" I have never, ever attached money to any funeral. I will make it clear that, "There's no cost. You don't owe me anything. If you want to do anything, that's entirely up to you. But I don't affix any figures to my service." Having said that, it doesn't mean that it's wrong for anybody to do that. But that's been my approach.

In terms of using the church, if they're members of the church, we don't charge them. If they're not members of the church, and they ask, and we allow them, we will most likely charge them some money, because we have to clean the place. And sometimes you could have three to four hundred people come in, and when they leave your place, it's a mess. And sometimes they would go after the interment at the

cemetery, and rent a big banquet hall, and they have their repass, which is one big party. They spend thousands of dollars, and they give the church zero for being here. So sometimes you have to rethink that, and say, "Hey, if I'm going to accommodate this, this is what those who are not members of the church need to do." This also goes for weddings. Because when you're a pastor, it'll take you a whole day. Because when you think in terms of having to come here for the service, and then go to the cemetery, and by the time you're finished with that, it's practically your whole day. So if it's members of the church, nothing is wrong, but if it's not members of the church, it's going to cost them to use the place. Because I can't go and ask the guy whose cleaning, "Look, you're going to take care of this place for free, right?"

## Transcript of Interview with GL2

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

From a West Indian point of view, and within our culture, I would say that grief is when you experience a tremendous hurt by way of loss. I would say maybe of a loved one, a family member, or a very close friend, or a member of your congregation, or even a neighbor, someone within your community that you know of, or are familiar with.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Well, I can share from a personal level when I lost my mom. She was living in Canada, and I was living in Grenada, and we couldn't travel because my wife was pregnant, and was expecting that very same time. That grief was one where I suffered because I couldn't be here physically to be with my other family members, and to see her for the last time. But then when my dad passed away a few years after that, I was lucky enough to be here, to be able to grieve with my siblings, and family members.

From a pastoral level, I've had cases where church members died, or a member of the community, and they would invite me as a pastor to do the funeral. We would be expected, from our culture, to be there with the family to support them in their grief, as a religious leader in the community, especially when it comes to a congregation. When you get to your congregation, members of your congregation expect you to be there as a West Indian minister. You're expected to go to the wake, or whatever function they may have, to show your sympathy, to be there with the family. I think that as a West Indian minister, if you don't show up at a home, or at a hospital, or at the funeral, it's not looked upon very good in our culture. We're expected, so most West Indian ministers do present themselves in these situations.



3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Verbally you spread the news around to whoever you know. You talk about it. You talk about the person, maybe the cause of death, etc. If you're not talking about death, but about something that's traumatic, like someone being badly hurt, you grieve over the fact that your loved one is hurt, or somebody got into an accident, or is paralyzed, or whatever. Within the West Indian community, you call up your friends, you call up your church members, you talk about it. We talk about it. We just don't ignore it, or brush it aside. So verbally, you talk about it. I think people feel good also when you talk even in death. You go to a family member, you go to the family home, you want to converse, you want to talk about the person, the family, etc.

Emotionally, the West Indian people cry at funerals. Emotionally, we show our emotion by being there to support, to comfort, to lend a helping hand, sometimes just being there, sitting down there also. Like at the hospital, many times I've gone to the hospital, and people feel good just to hear that the pastor is here, he's sitting outside there, or something. You don't have to always be verbal, but just your presence, so that they can see the emotion, that you are there to empathize with them, you're there to sympathize, you are there to support them. And people feel that, Oh my pastor is here, my leader is here. And somehow they expect, well, everything would be okay because the pastor is here.

Just recently, last year, we lost a very close family friend. Apart from the very close relatives, myself and my wife, and another pastor, were the only strangers that were invited to actually visit the ICU, and to be there in those last moments. So you can see where in the West Indian community they look upon the pastor as someone very

close to include in their sorrow. In their suffering, they want the pastor to be there with them, to pray, to sing, to know that you support them.

And physically, when you're in grief, I would say just presenting yourself, and helping in whatever way you can. These things are very significant in the West Indian community. I would say that a lot of West Indian people would count it rude, and I've heard comments that, "Oh, my pastor didn't show up." This is especially so for people that go to churches that may be pastored by a non-West Indian minister. "Oh, the pastor didn't come to the wake, the pastor didn't come to the viewing. He just showed up at the funeral, did what he had to do, and left." Whereas we would, I know for a fact, myself and my wife, would go to the home and stay as long as you feel welcomed. And in the West Indian culture, you stay as long as you want, overnight, every day, it doesn't matter.

This week we have a funeral of one of my wife's aunt, and they have a wake on Thursday night at the church. They called us up and said, "You guys have to be here, you have to come." And I said, "Well, I'm tired because I would be going Friday to the official viewing. I'll be doing the funeral on Saturday. Maybe I will skip Thursday." But they insisted, "Well, you guys are pastors in our family. We want you to be there. We want you to pray, to lead the singing, or something." So they expect that you take a leadership role and help them along. Sometimes they want to see you physically there, not only call up and say, "We're with you, we're praying for you." No, they want to see you physically. And in our culture, it's important, it's significant within the West Indian congregation, the pastor is expected to show support verbally, emotionally, and physically.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

I would say my situation of grief would be where I'm touched emotionally by that passing in a personal way, where it sort of affects you, especially if you've been very close. Now we know that as family members you can say, "Oh, it doesn't affect me because it's family." But when it comes to your congregation, or friends, or neighbors, there are people in our lives who have touched our lives, there are people in our lives who have been very supportive. Like the example I gave of the lady that died last year. She was one of our team members that goes to Cuba to do compassionate ministry. She was one of the persons who helped us raise funds. She was one of the persons who would say, "Okay, pastor, I'm going to take care of sorting the stuff. I'm going to take care of making sure what we plan is carried out, and work with other team members. You guys can concentrate on the planning. You guys can concentrate on maybe getting the logistics worked out, or whatever, but I'm going to take care of the work that has to be done." Let's say we're making packages to give away. She could get the numbers so we don't have to worry about that. When she died, we felt a loss. We felt like a part of us was gone, we felt a gap, we felt like a hole was there because this was our right hand person, the person we could depend upon, the person we could delegate to. So mentally it affected us, because we began to ask, "How are we going to go on? What are we going to do next time we are going to do that project without this person?" So mentally it affects us. "Are we going to be able to do what we are doing because of this loss and this grief we're suffering?"

Even when we went to the funeral, all the family members knew that, Okay, this was also a loss to the pastor and his wife, because this lady was so very close. And the

thing that we liked was that we went out for coffee on a weekly basis. We'd go out a night in the week, sit down and have coffee, and chat for a couple of hours. Now that was gone. We miss that. We miss being there having coffee, because that person was our friend, that person was our team member. She wasn't a member of our church, but a member of our congregation, another sister church, but committed herself to supporting us in what we were doing, because for many years she gave money, and then one year we said, "Why don't you come with us and see what we do with your money." So she said, "Okay." And when she went that first year, which was a few years ago, she said, "Every year I'm going to continue to support you financially, and I'm going to come personally to help you, because what you guys are doing touched me, and I want to be a part. I want to help you, because I've seen what you're doing as a Christian, not only as a pastor, the sacrifices you make, the personal sacrifice of your time, taking your vacation to go, pay for your own expenses." Funds will be raised to go toward the project. We would pay our own airfare, hotel, food, and transportation. She saw that, and said, "I'm touched by that, because I can see here the sacrifice you're making. You're not only doing it because you get the money to do it. You have to take a week vacation. You can go to the beach, but you decided to go, maybe stay somewhere that you're not comfortable, do things like waiting on a bus for two hours, and it's like sixteen of us cramping in a nine-seater vehicle, or something like that." So people see what you do as a minister, and especially in the West Indian context, and say, "Okay, you are there for the people, you're involved."

For us, it not a job, it's never a job, it's a calling. It's not a paycheck, it's a calling. When God calls us to be ministers, to be pastors, this is not because I'm going to be paid. This is because I'm going to serve the people well. I want to minister to you. I

want to be there for you, even though it might affect us physically, our time, and our commitment.

I remember many years working full-time and doing the pastorate. Most of our visitations were done at night. And we had little children at that time. But we would come home, maybe have dinner, and then go out visiting, and don't get back home until ten or eleven. It was hard, but it was something we saw, and said, "Okay, we want to do it." Over time you sort of reprioritize, but not to the extent that you can get rid of it, but maybe reshuffle your lifestyle so that you can accommodate others. These days we still do a lot of visitations at night, even going to the hospital on weekends.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

I think for me, I'm more mature. As I grow older, and I'm involved in more situations of grief, it's not that I become immune to grief, but I think I am able to handle it in a more professional way. And some people would say, "Oh pastor, while you were conducting the service, you were not breaking down and crying." But it's because I've developed a professional way of doing things. Yes, I may be crying before, or after with the family. But at the time of the service, when I'm called upon to be a pastor, a minister, in that role, God gives me the grace to be able to do these things. And especially when the family members are all around you, even hugging you, or leaning on you for support, you have to be strong and stand up there. Yes, tears will flow, etc., but like I said before, in the West Indian community, they look up to us to be there as that pillar, as the source of strength to support, and to help them. So if we break down, and lose control of our emotions, I think everything will fall apart. So yes, you show emotion. Yes, you grieve with the family. But yet still, you sort of stand strong, and let people see that, especially

if we're dealing with a Christian person, Look, this is just a transition from the earthly life to be with the Lord. Think about the person who has been suffering, sick, and we are called upon to visit, and to pray, what do we pray? That's a good question, but you know something, you have to pray, "Lord, if it is Your will, please take this person out of their pain and suffering." We know that we can pray for healing, but medical science and everything tells us that maybe there isn't going to be a miraculous healing. You have to accept that especially if somebody's old, that death is inevitable. So what should we pray? "Lord, let this person live for a few years?" Maybe we need to pray, "Lord, if it is Your will, take them and their suffering."

And we've had cases where we were called to the hospital or call to homes. And the request was, "Can you come and pray that my mom or my dad would die peacefully?" So people call and express that, "We know that it's time for them to go. We'd like you to come and pray for them so that they would die peacefully." And sometimes we feel like we're the angel of death, because we go and pray, and very soon after, the person passes. So sometimes we have to say, "Hey family, we're not coming to kill the person, we're coming to pray that God's will be done. We don't want the person to endure this suffering anymore, and God can relieve the person. But if it means death, then so let it be."

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

Culturally and traditionally we believe in grieving, in expressing our grief. I know years ago family members would wear black clothing to show that they're grieving, or attending a funeral. These days things have changed a bit. But some people would not have any celebration within their family for a period of time. They might say, "Well,

look, this year we're not going to celebrate, we're not going to have Christmas with all the pomp and flair, because we've lost a loved one who used to be here. So we're going to take this time to show our grief." Within a West Indian tradition, people would not eat certain foods, they would not go to certain places for a period of time. So if we look outside the Christian realm, we look at the Hindus and the Muslims, and in a West Indian culture, they would do rituals, and they would not eat meat, or rank, or fish. They would not even cook in their homes for thirteen days, or whatever their religion teaches them. Some Guyanese people, after returning home from a funeral, would take off their clothes and shoes and wash them immediately before ever wearing them again. Others would leave an object outside their door as a way to trick the spirit of the dead person so that it waits outside, rather than comes inside the house. Later, when they think that the spirit of the dead person has departed, they would go out and pick up the object and bring it back into the house. These are just some of the physical or superstitious things that some people do so that the spirit of the dead will not follow them. So we can see that the beliefs are expressed and passed on from generation to generation.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Our church supports the expression of grief, whether it be emotional or physical. Our church encourages people to grieve. We encourage people to go through that process, and express whatever they want to express in their feelings of their loss. So I would say that our church, we do believe in grieving, and our church family comes and supports others in time of grief by visiting in the hospital, or visiting in the home. A group of us would go, and we would pray. The church would go many times if it's a Christian home and have a little service. Most families would say, "Okay, pastor and church, I want you

to take a half hour and sing hymns, and whatever.” They want to include the church, and the church is gracious in accepting those invitation to be there.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

I would say my faith in God, my belief. When it comes to family members, or church members, we know that we have accepted Jesus, we are saved from our sins, our hope is to be with him, with the Lord. And therefore my perspective in times of grieving is to know that, Okay, this is just a physical loss here, but there will be a reunion. As per our belief, we all will be together one day with the Lord. And like the Bible says, “Then we shall understand, then we shall see clearly, we shall be with each other, we’ll know each other, we’ll remember each other, we’ll have a great time, not only with people that we know, but with the Lord Himself in heaven.” So that’s our perspective. And our behavior is that, Hey, we look forward to that day. And so it helps me personally to deal with this grief, to know that, Okay, it’s our faith, and our hope, and our belief that we’re going to see each other someday, we’re going to meet again. So it helps me cope knowing that it’s just temporal.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

I would say that it has to do with how we pray. Many times people would go and question God, saying, “Well, God, why did this happen?” But if we understand that God is in control, He dictates when we are born, and when we are going to die. No one knows the time, or day, or hour that they’re going to die. So yes, I think it’s human to say, “Lord, why did this have to happen to my loved one, or this person?” But we need



to understand that God is in control and whatever He does, He does for our good. And even though we may not see the good in causing grief, which we may say, “Oh, why did God cause this to happen so I have to go through this pain, and suffering, and grief?” You have to say, “Lord, You know best.” We don’t know what could have happened to this person. God decided that, Look, I’m going to take this person. So let’s not forget that God is in control and we have to sort of condition ourselves to accept that, Okay, yes, I’m going to grieve, but at the end, I’m going to say, “Lord, You know why, and I give You glory and praise for whatever. It’s hurtful, but I’m going to trust You.”

### **Transcript of Interview with GL3**

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

The word grief means to me that you have a loss, and there is something to lament over. There's a loss beyond your control. There's something you lose. You lose a part of you, or a part of your relationship with loved ones and friends, and you cannot help them, so you grieve, and you show an outward expression of an inward feeling. So that's grief, and it's a loss that you lament over.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Oh yes. I experienced grief in the loss of my parents, and my sister too who died. And there is always an empty space, an empty chair there, and you lament over that. And you express this loss in such a way that it even affects your activities so much that it makes such an impact in your life that you show it outwardly in grief and in action.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Verbally, there is a loss, and you have nobody to talk to. So they're not there, they're absent. So verbally, you come to the end of the road. You cannot talk with them, they're not there. And the expression is that you lament over them, their loss. You express that you look for them, but they're not there. So you lament over it so much that it affects you. And there is where you look for help, especially to God, especially since you know they've gone into the hands of God, into the control of God. They're there where God expects them to be. And there's a great expectation that you're going to see them again. So that's the physical and the emotional part of it.

The significance I attach to these expressions is that in the home, we all give our hearts to God, there's joy in the home, there's togetherness in the home, there's a team spirit in the home, there's so much. So when you have a loss, that part of you has gone. But there's a great hope that in Christ you're going to reconcile again, you're going to reach again, you're going to unite again.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

I don't try to live with grief because it's a stress. Living with grief would hurt me more than help me. So I seek help from a greater force, a greater person who is in charge, who is God. I put my trust in Him. I rely on Him. I have confidence in Him. And He takes my grief and gives me comfort. He helps me. He said, "I am with you. I will walk with you." And He talks with you. He has communion with you.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

I was helped. I'm happy. I'm not grieving. Life has found meaning for me. Life now puts on a new dimension with God's presence, His power in me, His leadership, His protection. He has given me an inner joy that money can't pay for.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

There are two aspects of that. Number one, people are affected if they don't have God in their life. And they want to grieve in their own strength. And they want to live with that; it affects them. And in our culture, we call it worry. Worry kills. It's that stress can lead to death. So worry kills. That is a Guyanese term we have. That is when you're living

without God in your own strength, in your own human feelings. It hurts more than helps, and it can lead to death.

Secondly, or the other side of that coin is, when you have God, or somebody greater or more powerful in your life, He takes that grief from you and replaces it with joy, with happiness, and helps you along life's pathway.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Now there are two aspects of that too. Before, when I was in Hinduism, and then with that, without God in your own strength, you try to do good works, you try to live in your own strength, and you try to work towards God. It's like you are living in darkness, feeling your way around, and grief is like a monster leading you. That is in Hinduism without God.

Then on the other side of that coin with God, there's a big difference. A difference of hope. A difference of blessing. A difference of protection. You know who is protecting you, who is holding your hand and leading you. So life has found meaning. Life is such a big difference because of my present relationship with church, with God, with society, with community; it has found such a great blessing.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

Oh yes! Sure! Because in my own strength I am limited and weak. But with God in you, the powerful force in the world, who called the world into existence, that God with His power and His presence in your heart, He has established His kingdom and presence in the temple of your heart, and He is in full control. So you just get up in the morning and

say, “Good morning, Dad. It’s such a joy to have You in my life.” So life has found so much meaning.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

Without God, what is life? Meaningless struggle trying to put all the pieces together, which you are unable to do. But on the other side with God, He is in charge. He puts all the pieces together. He gives all the solution and all the answers. Should anything bother you, you go to Him and say, “Dad, here is a problem.” He intervenes. He gives you words of cheer, words of comfort, words of guarantee. That is what He gives. So all in all with God, it is a beginning of a taste of what heaven would be like.

### Transcript of Interview with GL4

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

I see grief as going through sorrow. That is my basic understanding of what grief is about.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Well, I experienced grief when my father passed away on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1974. That was the first time I ever experienced a very great amount of grief. I experienced grief before, but the major one was when my father passed away in 1974.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Well, people do speak verbally to me when I go through a time of grief, and they speak words of comfort and assurance to me, and that helps me emotionally as well. Words of assurance are like when my father passed away in 1974, the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. There was a Chinese man they called brother GAT. He quoted these words to unto me from John chapter 14 verses one and two. "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you onto myself, that where I am, there you may be also." And that was comforting to my emotion.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

Sometimes when I do remember, I try to picture this situation, and sometimes it's a bad situation, and I will want to forget it. But then it will come to me, and then what I do, I will sometime say, "I wish this thing doesn't come." But from a practical Christian point of view, we are all human beings and these things do happen to us, and all we need to do is to take it to the Lord in prayer.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

Well, where I am currently, I don't allow it to bog me down. I want to keep on going forward and not allow grief to play a negative impact on my life.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

Coming from an East Indian background, the cultural, and I don't know if I should link culture with religion, because some people believe, hey, that's part of karma, which I don't go with. As a Christian, I do not accept the world's views concerning grief because saint Paul says, "I don't want you to be sorrowful as others who don't have any hope.

Because in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are going to be sorrowful, but our sorrow or grief, it's not like the grief or the sorrow of this world."

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Well, I can only speak for myself, but some people allow their grief to overtake them. But as Christians, we should all aspire not to be overcome by grief. It will come our

way, but when we allow it to become a burden unto us, that is when it is not good for us as Christians.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

The Bible, in Isaiah 43 and verses 1 to 3, which is one of my favorite verses, gives an assurance. Jehovah God said in the Old Testament concerning the nation of Israel, and I believe it applies to us as believers today. It says, “Behold now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.”

That is when we are going through all of this period, the Lord is saying He’s going to be with us. And just before our Lord left, He told His disciples that, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Also, the hymn “Amazing Grace, has helped me to cope with my grief.”

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

It was our Lord speaking to His disciples in the upper room in John chapter 14 and verse 27. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”



When our Lord left this earth 2000 years ago, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with us. The Holy Spirit is our Comforter. John chapter 14 and verse 26 says, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

I ask the Lord for the strength and the grace to go through this time of grief or distress, as 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13 says, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

The meaning or significance of the expressions, especially prayer, is our dependence upon the Lord, our dependence upon the Lord.

### Transcript of Interview with GL5

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

The word grief speaks of a loss, or something detrimental to your life, your family, and something that words cannot adequately describe.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Well, there were several times in my life when I experienced grief, but the greatest grief that I experienced was the loss of my father. It was something I couldn't cope with. It took me a long, long time before I could've wrestled with that.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Crying is the most common one. When you don't cry, it's grieving within your inner being, and it makes you sad. It makes you depressed, listless, and all the things that go with it. Your stomach doesn't accept anything.

Talking to God is the most common thing we all do as Christians. We take it to the Lord in prayer. God is the God of all comfort. God comforts us in our affliction. You know that He is the only One who can bring you through, and give you the strength at the time of your great loss. And He's the only One that you can depend on and lean upon at this time. And you know that you have that full assurance that God is not going to forsake you, and let you down, because He promises in His word to bring you that comfort and to be there. He said, "Blessed are those that mourn for they shall be comforted." So you turn to Him because He is your only source of comfort. You have

family and friends that are there to comfort and surround you, but God is the ultimate comfort that you turn to. So you lean mostly on Him.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

Grief is basically, on a personal level, a sadness. You're so overcome with this emotion that you're going through that it consumes you, and takes you. You're not able to eat because the grief has filled you up so much that you're not actually able to express yourself. Food is not part of what you want to see because grief has overtaken you so much.

Sometimes you just want to be by yourself and not be able to relate to others. And you ponder mostly upon what you've lost, and whom you've lost, and all the many things that happened in the past. And it all kind of floods back into your memory and your soul. And it goes over in your head, over, and over.

Also, you start to think of what you could have done, and what you didn't do, and what you should have done. And all these different things come back in grief, and you feel regret. You feel guilty. These are the emotions that you pass through and you get depressed about not being able to do certain things. Like in the case of a death, things that you would've liked to do, and you didn't do, you sort of regret and try to find comfort within yourself.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

I still do remember it, especially when birthdays come, Father's Day comes, and holidays like Christmas and Easter. Those times bring back memories of him while he

was with us. And it's not something that you would forget. It will always be there once you know, or you can remember things, or you can think. It's always there.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

You have many ways in which to observe grief. You have family around you for a number of days, or weeks; families come around to comfort you during that time. You have pastors, you have the church family, and you have your immediate family coming around.

Then we have what we call wakes. People will come to your home to spend time with you. You have prayer services. You have singing; you use the hymns and songs to bring comfort. You will sing the favorite hymns of the person while he or she was a live. You sing sacred hymns and songs of comfort and healing such as: "O God Our Help in Ages Past," "Happy the Home When God is There," and "The Lord's My Shepherd." And if the person who died is of an East Indian descent, we usually sing bhajans at the wake and funeral. One of the most common bhajans is "Yishu Ne Kaha: Jiwan Ki Roti," which means, "Jesus said: I am the bread of life." During this time too there are opportunities for those gathered there for the wake to remember the deceased by paying tributes.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Well, most times it will be what we Presbyterians in Guyana used to do. You will have the pastor come to the family and sit down, and spend a little time with them, offer words of prayer. The good pastors, the ones who are really family-oriented, (I won't say that all of them are family-oriented), will hold a prayer service to remember the loved

ones, and plan the funeral service with the family, ask the family how they'd like to proceed, the funeral arrangements, and things like that. They do their best to assist.

And then you have some of them they won't even come to the house. If they go to the funeral home, and you have a visitation, they just come, sign the visitors book, just go up to pay their respects, and they just walk out back. They might stick around for a couple of minutes, and they're gone. So if you're looking for tradition, the Guyanese Presbyterian and the Canadian Presbyterian are kind of different in that over here, they basically don't get too much involved.

Like presently, there's someone in the Presbyterian church I know. They called me last week to mention that so and so is dead, but you can't go to the home of the family. For Guyanese people it's okay, but for the Canadian people, you don't go to their homes. They don't open the casket. The casket is always closed. I remember asking one of them that I was close to while at the church if I can visit, and I was told, "No." I was told point blankly, "No." I was told that I'll be given the opportunity to be at the memorial service if they do plan one, but they don't want anyone around. So the tradition is basically to be by themselves.

And there's one now, I was called last week and told about her death. I was told that when the memorial service will be done, I'll be informed about the time so I can go. But at that time, they had already buried the deceased. Traditions are different since we come and we associate with the Scottish and Irish people.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

I think having people around, family and friends, and those who care for you, help you to cope. And of course, leaning on God. Long after the events, people will come and will

still keep in touch. Some will write comforting letters to the family, which is very helpful.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

Mostly you'd be crying out, crying before God. That's an emotion. Sometimes, in general, if it's something that's sudden and unexpected, no matter how deep your faith, you might be questioning God, asking, "Why this"? until you come to that acceptance of what's going on.

Another expression that you find among Guyanese people is that, when there is a death, if in Guyana, the village or bell crier, also referred to as the bellman, would walk the streets of the village ringing a bell announcing the death and burial of the deceased. In Canada, this news is broadcasted by family members, or relatives, or friends of the deceased, in the local newspaper or on the television on Panorama TV on City TV channel 7 on Saturday mornings at 9:30 AM. Before there was the TV, telegrams were used to spread the news of the death of the person.

For those who attend a wake or funeral, when they return home, they will enter their homes walking backward rather than forward. The reason for this is that it is believed that the spirit of the dead usually follows those who attend the wake or funeral to their home. To prevent the spirit of the dead from crossing the threshold of their homes along with them, those who attend the wake or funeral will symbolically faceoff with the spirit of the dead as a way of saying to the spirit that he or she is not allowed or welcomed here anymore. I think that this belief originated in East Indian/Hindu folklore. At the same time, as an alternative to going to the cemetery, the women usually remain

with family members and friends at the home of the deceased so as to offer comfort to the bereaved.

On the day of the funeral, if there's a child sleeping while a funeral procession is passing by the house of the deceased, the parents or guardians would awake the child so that the child can see the dead person pass by. If you don't awake the child, it is believed that the spirit of the dead will enter the child while he or she sleeps. This also is another expression that I think derives from the East Indian/Hindu mythological teachings.

For some Guyanese, as a means of respecting the dead, no rank food like meat or fish, is consumed during the time of grief. Some Guyanese even avoid food altogether. Other Guyanese would clean their room, their clothes, and also their entire body after attending a funeral. Some even throw away their clothing or burn it after returning home from a funeral. A number of Guyanese also turn down or turn around the pictures that contain their lost loved ones. In the year following the death of a loved one, celebrations that usually accompany special holidays like that of Christmas and Easter, are either not as extravagant, but toned down, or are deferred until the next year. These rituals are ways and means of expressing respect for the loved one who has died.

APPENDIX 4:  
TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH VIETNAMESE-CANADIAN LEADERS

**Transcript of Interview with VL1**

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

Sorrow. Sad feelings.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

I just cried out when I heard my father passed away in Vietnam. I couldn't sleep. I grieved for one week for my dad. I also doubted God's existence during my time of grief.

Also, two million people escaped Vietnam on small boats, and five hundred thousand of them died at sea. Two of my sisters and three of my nephews went missing at sea on their way from Vietnam to Canada. When I realized this, for eight years, I prayed and questioned God, "Why has this happened to me and my family?" I even went to the Prayer Garden in Oshawa, and prayed and fasted for answers from God. I was also angry at the situation, and sometimes also at my wife and children.

I couldn't think. I couldn't prepare sermons. I was stressed out, and eventually I burned out. For three years I suffered depression, and during those three years, I had to check myself into a hospital every week. One day, while in the hospital, a nurse read me the words of Matthew 11:28. She told me that I needed to rest with God so that my body



would get over the grief. She also told me to put my hope in God like Jeremiah who hoped in God for the Israelites to return to Jerusalem. She was my angel. In the hospital, a non-Christian person offered me a ticket to Vietnam for three weeks.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

In my culture, we cry out loud. The father never cries in front of the family, but alone; he tries to be strong. Vietnamese people also pay for grievers to come to the home to pray and chant blessings for the dead. In the West, the grievers would blend the Vietnamese and the Canadian music at the same time. People also visit and go out with the bereaved. They also give a love gift in an envelope to the bereaved.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

Sad feelings in my thoughts.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

Currently, I don't have any grief.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

Express sad feelings.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

God has a purpose for any kind of grief. Everything happens for our good as Romans 8:28 says. One day we will face God and know everything.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

Pray to God. Share grief with family and friends. The pastor and the entire church should come alongside to grieve with the bereaved.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

Listen to the testimonies of other Christians. Pray, because there is power in prayer, and trust, and serve God. Celebrate the person's life as a memorial annually with lots of food. Visit the grave and carry flowers. Compose songs and poems, especially since Vietnamese music is sad music. Tell stories of your own grief in dealing with grief. Sing hymns. Read through the Bible. Read Job, Psalms, Jesus' suffering, Isaiah 53, and Jeremiah. Read God's Word; because of the power of God's Word, I got up from my grief and praised God.

## Transcript of Interview with VL2

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

Honestly speaking, I don't know much about grief, even though I lost my father in 1997, and my mother in 2017. The following explanation about grief is reasonably acceptable to me.

“Grief is a multifaceted response to loss, particularly to the loss of someone or something that has died, to which a bond or affection was formed. Although conventionally focused on the emotional response to loss, it also has physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, cultural, spiritual and philosophical dimensions.”

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

My father passed away in 1997. Not long before his death, I cried a lot on the way to and from work on the Don Valley Parkway. Even though I knew the fact of life that everybody will die in one way or another and cannot prolong one life forever, I still struggled with the idea of losing my father soon. I asked God for the reason why He created humankind in that way. At the same time, I was not good at understanding the Bible. After much struggle with thoughts about life in my mind and tears in my eyes, I finally accepted the harsh reality of birth, aging, illness, suffering and death.

I felt closer to my dad since I spent a lot of time with him in his custom tailor shop, and visiting members in the fellowship organization he co-founded; he was like a pastor in a church. Because I was attached to him, I felt much pain when death took him away. But since I was not close to my mother, I did not suffer much pain when my mother was gone.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

When a close relative like a mother, a father, husband, or wife, passes away, the bereaved who have been closely bonded with the deceased, will lament that death for a long time, will relate their experiences in tears, and will not bother eating for days. In deep sorrow, they regret unfinished business related to their loved one. They usually experience deep pain in their body due to exhaustion, thirst, and hunger. They do not pay attention to taking care of their own body.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

No response.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

No response.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

The Vietnamese people have been under the influence of the Buddhist culture for more than a thousand years. They believe in a soul rebirth. Usually they hire a group of monks to come into their homes to chant ritual prayers for the comfort of the dead and the bereaved family. Hopefully the dead would go to nirvana, eternal happiness, and not re-enter the painful cycle of birth, aging, sickness, and death, and the surviving ones would be able to return to their normal life soon.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Through that event of the loss of a loved one, we reaffirm our belief in the Bible, the word of God, which teaches the truth about the human life and the world. We lament in silence. We pray together, and we ask the Holy Spirit to comfort us. We commemorate the life of the deceased one devoted to God by holding a solemn ceremony with one's family and others, either in the church, or in the funeral home. During the funeral service we worship God with meaningful songs, prayer, and witnessing to unbelievers. Here we also strengthen our relationships.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

Last year my mother passed away in the hospital. Since my younger sister was living with my mother for a long time, she was deeply attached to her, she was the one who mourned much. She cried out in loud tears expressing her love for my mother, embracing her still warm body. After a while, I gathered my brothers and sisters together in the hallway of the hospital and reminded them that the most important thing was my mother had put her faith in God through the blood of Christ. Her life was in God's hands. We believe in the eternal life that God has promised to those who put their faith in Him. Since we are believers in Christ, we believe we will meet our mother again. We have to accept the fact that we live temporarily in this world. We reminded ourselves of all the good thing she had done, and the good life she had lived. We needed to encourage one another to keep on with her legacy of love, dedication to the family, and faithfulness to God, which she adopted in her later years.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

No response.

### Transcript of Interview with VL3

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

Grief to me is sadness, sorrow, anguish, and despair, when something that happens is terrible to someone that is close to you.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Yes, when I lost my father this year. I thought he would bounce back like he usually does, but this time he went to be with the Lord. Even though I am happy that he is with God, now I really miss him and want just a little bit more time to be with him.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Well, being Westernized and still Vietnamese, my expressions of grief verbally would be that I do mention my dad time and time again with people just because I want people to know who my dad was. It makes me happy talking about him. It brings back great memories of him.

Emotionally, from time to time, when I am driving alone, I would cry remembering my dad sitting beside me, and what he said. I usually don't tell anyone about this because it's my way of mourning for my dad by myself.

For physical expression of grief, I would keep his pictures on my phone and talk to it as I am talking to him. This is my normal way of responding to grief.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

When I see a hospital, I think of my dad, and sadness hits me. Then I take a deep breath and thank God for taking my dad home knowing that he is now comfortable and free of pain.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

As February comes closer, I get a bit despaired and depressed, because I know that that's the month my dad passed away. Each day when I come home, I see my dad's pictures and it makes me sad just for a little moment. Then happiness comes, because I see him being with my brother and with our Lord.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

There is a traditional Vietnamese way of dealing with grief, but I don't follow it because I have adapted to the Western world. My way of grieving is pretty much like everyone else, but different in time and ways of dealing with it. According to my mom, there is a traditional Vietnamese way of dealing with grief. During the funeral service, while in Vietnam the bereaved family wear all white, the mourners in Canada wear black clothing with a white band around their head and/or arm. This traditional white band is to be worn for an entire year as a sign of mourning, as a symbol of the loss of a life, or as a symbol of the ashes of the deceased. Being a Christian now, we just follow what God teaches us about death. I remember our Lord saying, "I have prepared a room for you and will come back to take you to be with Me." Those words comfort me.



7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

We follow the words of God.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

Knowing God loves us, and He is the One who takes us home, is how I cope with grief. I know one day when I die, I am not alone. God Himself will come and take me to be with Him. This is how I also feel happy and glad when I think about my dad's passing, because I wasn't with him when he died. My dad was not alone, but our Lord came and took him home.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

Another incident of grief, which was very painful, is related to why we gave up our Catholic faith and became born again Christians. It was the year 1989, a few minutes before we began the New Year, 1990. I was only fifteen years and about to turn sweet sixteen. Around 11:30 pm that evening, while I was getting ready to go to bed, and my dad was brushing his teeth, my mom was already in bed, and of course my fifteen-year-old brother L1 was out partying for the New Year. We got a knock on the door, and I went down to see who it was, and I saw two police officers standing there. I opened the door and asked them what's going on. They asked me if I knew a boy named L2, and I told them, no, but I know an L1, my brother. Then they came into the apartment and told my parents they needed to come to the hospital to identify if the boy lying dead is my brother. We were shocked and thought maybe they made a mistake.

So off we went to the hospital and I was the first to enter the room to identify the body. There was my brother covered in blood from his neck down to his chest. It was horrible and I was just numb. How am I going to tell my parents that it is him? I went out and told the officer, "Yes, it is my brother." Then my parents went in and there was a huge long silence, and then a burst of scream from my mom and then my dad. The police told us that my brother was stabbed multiple times in the chest, and that his heart was gone, and he had died at the scene. One of my brother's friends also was stabbed and was having surgery to save his life. Thank God he made it. So this is how my brother lost his life just before the New Year.

Apparently, my brother and a bunch of friends were heading to McDonald's to grab something to eat before heading to City Hall for the countdown, when they encountered a group of Neo Nazis Skinheads. Words were exchanged, mostly racial words from the Skinheads, and one of my brother's friends got into a fight with one of the Skinheads. While my brother jumped in to pull his friend out, another Skinhead jumped in and started to stab my brother repeatedly. My brother's girlfriend saw my brother holding his chest and saying, "I've been stabbed." He then collapsed on the floor.

So, we buried my brother who was only fifteen on my sweet sixteenth birthday. And this is how we lost our Catholic faith. It was during my brother's funeral service; my parents had hired a Vietnamese priest to perform the service for us at the church. Many friends, a few people from the Vietnamese Association, and lots of reporters came to the service. Our story was big in the press and big in the Vietnamese community. It was the first time anything like this ever happened in Toronto. It was a rainy day, but many showed up to show respect to our family. We were still shocked and heartbroken

and didn't understand why. It was after the church service, and as we were getting ready to head to the cemetery to bury my brother, my dad asked the priest to come with us to the cemetery to give a final prayer for my brother. But the selfish priest said, "No." He told my dad that it was rainy, so he won't go. My dad told him that he will be in the limousine, he will pay him anything he wants, and that he will bring him back to the church. But stubbornly he still refused and walked away. My dad ran after him and asked him what kind of priest he was, and he told my dad that his job was done, and he wasn't interested in doing anything extra. My parents were shocked and angry at how insensitive and selfish this man was, what kind of godly man he was; he wasn't at all, but just a man, a selfish and thoughtless man.

Then another man came walking toward my parents. He introduced himself as pastor K, and he told my parents he had overheard my dad's conversation with the priest, and he felt really bad for the way that the priest behaved. He asked my parents if they would let him go to the cemetery with us and say the final prayer for my brother before we laid him to rest. But he indicated that he wasn't a Catholic, but an Evangelical pastor. My parents were so happy and gladly agreed. My dad even offered to take him in the limousine and pay him money. But he told my dad, "No such thing is required. I have my own car; I will follow you." Pastor K gave a very touching and emotional prayer as we laid my brother down to rest, and he made everyone cry. I wish he was the one doing the church service for us instead of that selfish priest.

We found out later it was a Christian lady at the Vietnamese Association who heard what had happened to my brother who invited herself and pastor K to attend the service. The pastor and the lady asked to come visit us at our home, and we were thrilled to have them. They came and brought other Vietnamese Christians with them, and

prayed for our family, and even gave a donation to help us with the funeral expenses.

We thought, Wow, who are these people and why are they so nice?

Ever since we came to Canada in 1979, we never heard of the Vietnamese Association or Vietnamese Christians. I guess it's because my parents were too busy trying to survive in the new country and didn't have much time to discover other Vietnamese people living in Toronto. We started attending church and felt very comfortable with the new faith. It was so much different from what I was growing up with. I mean I knew who Jesus was, and I did love Him, and I knew I would never ever go to another faith, if Jesus wasn't in it. But it was interesting and wonderful. Of course, we were scared too, because we have always been Catholics. My parents were never going back to being Catholics after what that priest did to us. We were so disappointed and angry at him. There were a lot of hurts and questions as to why God let my brother die the way he did, so tragic and so painful, and he was so young. My parents took so much risk coming to Canada so that my brother and I could have a better life, and how come my brother lost his life so early? The death of my brother was so painful, and my family suffered tremendously. Eventually it ended my parent's marriage; they separated but didn't divorce. My parents just decided to part ways because they were blaming each other. I was in the middle trying to help my parents at the age of sixteen. I couldn't do anything except being a punching bag for my parents to use to relieve their anger and depression; but I was strong. Even though I was young, I understood what my parents were going through and I was never bitter or angry at them for using me as their punching bag. The people at church were very supportive and did what they could to help my family through this difficult time. My mom and I attended church which really helped, and my dad too, sometimes. Even though he and my mom parted ways, they remained friends,

and both were fine with the separation. I was happy they didn't fight anymore. At first, we did blame God, but as we got to understand Him more, we realized He took my brother home for a reason, and we left it in His hand. We realized also that it was God's way of rescuing my family from a wrong path, and He bought the right people into our lives when it was the best timing. I truly believe that if He didn't put pastor K and the church in our path, my family would not have left the Catholic faith, and we would have wandered into more darkness. Praise God for His unfailing love and mercy upon our lives!

Now in all my painful and suffering situations, I will look back and remember all that God has done for me. And I also look forward to each day and know how gracious God's love is and how much He does love us all. And He always rescues us even when we don't see it. Maybe we don't see it because we may be too focused on our problems and not realizing God is in the midst of it all already. My favorite thing to do when I am in a tough situation, which I am in now, is going back to my diary and reading a few of my entries and realizing how amazing God is during all my problems. He did help me, He is helping me now, and that gives me hope and a new spirit to carry me through. I thank God that He is there for us amidst the grief we go through. If He were not there, I think grief would be very difficult and hard to go through. Not knowing where our loved ones go, and what happens to them, is very scary for me.

### Transcript of Interview with VL4

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

A stricken, painful feeling when I realize that I am losing someone or something important to my life.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

Two years ago, my aged mother got a stroke in the US. She is fine now. At the time, I grieved, because I realized that I might not see her again.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Grieving is not approvable in our culture. Men are encouraged to show strength and courage in pain and sorrow. People withdraw when they grieve. They would like to vent their pain and sorrow, but only to their trusted friends or relatives. People also cry.

Women tend to cry more than men.

For me, when I pray, I talk to God saying something like this, "Father, You know that my heart is broken by this. This is too much for me to handle. Comfort me, Father.

Draw me closer to You. Shelter me from this stormy situation."

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

No response.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

No response.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

Our people avoid talking or showing grief. They believe in karma. If bad things happen, that means that they have done something in the past. People fail to see good purposes in suffering, and therefore, do not want to show their grief, which is a sign that they have reaped bad seeds they sowed in the past.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

Some of us are still affected by our cultural values. We tend not to talk much about our suffering. But thanks to the teachings from Scripture about pain and suffering, and thanks to the small group ministry, people are freer to express their grief.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

The Scripture says, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:22, 23).

We live in a fallen world. This world is not my home. Pain and suffering is a reality of life. We can groan or grieve even when we have the firstfruits of the Spirit. But in Christ, I have hope for our adoption to sonship. There will be no more pain and suffering.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

No response.



### **Transcript of Interview with VL5**

1) What is your understanding of the word grief?

From a Vietnamese point of view, my understanding of grief is that of a deep cry, and telling others of one's suffering, and telling the loved one we just lost how much we loved him/her.

2) Can you share an example of a situation wherein you experienced grief?

I have not experienced deep grief, because of the hope that I have for my loved ones who passed away.

3) What range of expressions of grief (verbal, emotional, and physical) are normal responses within your culture, and what is their significance?

Vietnamese people grieve for our loved ones who passed away for a long period. At the time of the funeral, family and relatives usually show deep grief as loud crying, talking to the loved one, or telling others how much they loved him/her. Some will lie down on the casket, or hit him/herself hard, especially if he/she thought he/she is the cause of the death of the loved one.

4) Do you have a mental image of your situation of grief, or how would you describe your situation of grief?

Because of the long period of thinking of the loved one, Vietnamese people usually experience depression, and mental problems. Some become confused, lose their memories, and spend most of their daily time at the cemetery sitting beside the tomb and talking to the dead.

5) Where are you currently on your journey with regards to this situation of grief?

As I said above, I don't have any experience of deep grief.

6) What are your culture's traditional beliefs/worldviews surrounding grief?

Vietnamese people who are non-Christians believe that the soul of their loved one who dies needs to be fed. Ancestor worship is a Vietnamese traditional belief. Family members therefore prepare fruits and place foods at the monument in worship to the loved one. Now in Vietnam and overseas, more and more Vietnamese people have become Christians. So, they have a different belief about the life after death as the Bible says. They have hope to see their loved one who died, and they show emotion with hope.

7) What are your church's traditional beliefs surrounding grief?

We value our tradition as our heritage, especially in times of grief. But as Vietnamese Christians, we rather trust the Bible than our tradition about the afterlife. We sorrow with hope.

8) Are there any perspectives or behaviors that help you cope with this grief?

From a Christian point of view, we share to people who lose their loved one that whoever trusts in Jesus will be saved.

9) Is there something important we forgot? Is there anything else you think I need to know about your expressions to/before God amidst grief?

No.

## APPENDIX 5: QUALITATIVE DATA

### **Metatheme: Coping Mechanisms for Dealing with Grief**

#### Cultural Coping Mechanisms for Sustaining the Bereaved amidst Grief

##### ***Grief (Crying / Shedding Tears / Fainting / Sadness / Sorrow)***

“Often accompanying wailing, which is a loud cry, some mourners scream and shout virtually at the top of their lungs all while beating their chest.” (GL1)

“It is normal for people to weep so much that they actually pass out [faint]. This is a way of telling their people that we love this person [the deceased].” (GL1)

“It is not uncommon to hear loud wails from those stricken by grief.” (GL1)

“Grief is an outward expression of an inward feeling.” (GL2)

“You lose a part of you, or a part of your relationship with loved ones and friends, and you cannot help them, so you grieve. . . . It’s a loss that you lament over.” (GL3)

“Grief within your inner being makes you sad. It makes you depressed, listless, and all the things that go with it.” (GL5)

“On a personal level, grief is a sadness that you’re overcome with, an emotion that you’re going through that consumes you, and takes you, so that you’re not able to eat, because the grief has filled you so much.”

“Crying is the most common emotional expression” (GL5).

“Some have even moved to kissing the dead, and when at the cemetery, some have even chosen to lie down on top of the grave.” (GL5)

“Grief is generally expressed in sorrow and sadness and loud cries.” (VL1)

“I just cried out.” (VL1)

“I grieved one week for my dad and I couldn’t even sleep.” (VL1)

“In my culture . . . The Father never cries in front of the family, but alone; he tries to be strong” (VL1).

“Grief is often bottled-up for a long time rather than expressed.” (VL1)

“After much struggle with thoughts about life in my mind and tears in my eyes, I finally accepted the harsh reality of birth, aging, illness, suffering, and death.” (VL2)

“The bereaved, who had been closely bonded with the deceased, will lament the death for a long time, and will even relate their past experiences in tears.” (VL2)

“Since my younger sister was living with our mother for a long time, she was deeply attached to her. She was the one who mourned much. She cried out in loud tears, and even embraced her still warm body, as she expressed her love for our mother.” (VL2)

“Grieving is culturally acceptably, but not approvable, in our culture. Men are encouraged to show strength and courage in pain or sorrow. Although people cry, women tend to cry more than men.” (VL4)

“My understanding of grief is crying deeply” (VL5).

Family and relatives usually show deep grief by crying loudly” (VL5).

“Vietnamese people grieve for our loved one who passed away for a long period.” (VL5)

“Someone will lie down on the casket, and hit him/herself hard, especially if s/he thought that s/he was the cause of the death of the loved one.” (VL5)

### ***Composing Songs***

“Compose songs and poems, since Vietnamese music is sad music” (VL1)

### ***Gift-Giving***

“During the wake, close relatives and friends bring coffee, crackers, and even food as a means of demonstrating to the immediate family members of the departed that they are there for them, and that they love and care about them.” (GL1)

“They [Vietnamese people] will also give a love gift in an envelope” (VL1).

### ***Comforting / Hiring Mourners***

“As an alternative to going to the cemetery, the women usually remain with family members and friends at the home of the deceased so as to offer comfort to the bereaved.” (GL5)

“Vietnamese people also pay for grievors to come to the home to pray and chant blessings for the dead. In the West, the grievors would blend the Vietnamese and Canadian music at the same time” (VL1).

### ***Eclectic Cultural Expressions: Death Announcements / Warding off the Deceased's Spirit / Respecting the Dead***

“If in Guyana, the village or bell crier, also referred to as the bellman, would walk the streets of the village ringing a bell announcing the death and burial of the deceased. In Canada, this news is broadcasted by family members, relatives, and friends of the deceased, in the local newspaper or on the television (Panorama TV on City TV channel 7) on Saturday mornings at 9:30 AM. Prior to the TV, telegrams were the conventional means of spreading the news of the deceased.” (GL5)

Subsequent to attending a wake night or funeral service, attendees enter their homes walking backward rather than forward. The significance of this physical expression is

founded upon the belief that the spirit of the dead trails the attendees home. To prevent the spirit of the dead from crossing the threshold of their homes with them, the attendees faceoff with the spirit of the dead symbolically communicating to the spirit that s/he is not allowed or welcomed here. This belief has its origin in East Indian/Hindu folklore.”

(GL5)

“For some Guyanese, as a means of respecting the dead, no rank food, characterized as meat or fish, is consumed during the time of grief. Some Guyanese even avoid food altogether. Still, others clean their room, their clothes, and also their entire body after attending a funeral. Others even discard their clothing by burning it after returning home from a funeral. What is more, several even resolve to turn down or turn around the pictures that contain their deceased loved ones. In the year following the death of a loved one, celebrations that usually accompany special holidays like that of Christmas and Easter, are either not as extravagant, but toned down, or are deferred until the next year. All of these rituals are ways and means of expressing respect for the deceased loved one.” (GL5)

### *Sharing Grief Stories*

“[The relatives and friends of the departed] might express [their stories of the deceased] by saying things relating to the past. They might repeat words told them by the deceased, and sometimes it could be really humorous, and you probably have to put your hand to your mouth.” (GL1)

“I gathered my brothers and sisters in the hallway of the hospital and reminded them of all the good things she had done and the good life she had lived, and encouraged one

another to keep on with her legacy of love, dedication to the family, and faithfulness to God, which she adopted in her later years.” (VL2)

“My expression of grief verbally would be that I mention my dad from time to time with people. I want people to know who my dad was and it makes me happy talking about him. It brings back great memories of him.” (VL3)

“Tell others of one’s suffering, and tell the loved one we just lost how much we loved him/her.” (VL5)

### ***Sharing a Meal***

“[The life of the deceased is celebrated] as a memorial annually with lots of food.” (VL1)

### ***Isolation / Fating / Reflection***

“Grief consumes you and takes you so that you are not able to eat because the grief has filled you up so much. Food is not part of what you want to see because sometimes you just want to be by yourself and not be able to relate to others. You ponder mostly upon what you have lost, and whom you have lost, and all the many things that happened in the past. And it all floods back into your memory and your soul, and it goes over in your head over and over.” (GL5)

“In my culture . . . The Father never cries in front of the family, but alone; he tries to be strong.” (VL1)

“People withdraw when they grieve. They would like to vent their pains or sorrows, but only to their trusted friends or relatives.” (VL4)

“Some of us are still affected by our cultural values. They tend not to talk much about their sufferings.” (VL4)

### ***Talking to the Dead***

“I keep pictures of my father on my phone and talk to it as if talking to him.” (VL3)

Vietnamese people grieve for our loved one who passed away for a long period. Because of this long period of thinking about the loved one, Vietnamese people spend most of their daily time at the cemetery, sitting beside the tomb and talking to the dead.” (VL5)

### ***Visiting the Bereaved***

“People will also visit and go out with the bereaved.” (VL1)

### ***Wearing Traditional Mourning Clothes***

“There is a traditional Vietnamese way of dealing with grief. During the funeral service, whereas in Vietnam the immediate bereaved family wear all white, the mourners in Canada wear black clothing with a white band around their head and/or their arm.” (VL3)

## Christian Coping Mechanisms for Sustaining the Bereaved amidst Grief

### ***Bearing Funeral Costs of the Poor***

“Indian people feel that it is part of their duty to take care, especially of their parents. They feel that it is part of their obligation, and in many cases, their culture will teach them that if they don’t, they will have a curse on them. So they feel that if they don’t do their best for their parents, they’ll be bringing a curse upon their own family. So they



gladly do it because that's part of their culture, among the Indian people especially."

(GL1)

"Generally, among the Indian people more than anyone else, they will chip in to pay without being asked to pay for the funeral. They would be willing to join in and help to pay for the expenses. They would often come and ask, 'Can I help?' But you will find this almost among the Indians." (GL1)

***Praying (Lament, Confidence, and Thanksgiving)***

"Dad, here is a problem, intervene" (GL3)

"Why me?", "Why this?" (GL5)

"How do we pray?" and "Why did this have to happen?" (GL5)

"We lament in silence, we pray together, and we ask the Holy Spirit to comfort us."

(VL2)

"Why has this happened to me and my family [God]?" (VL1)

"I struggled with the idea of losing my father so soon." (VL2)

"Why did You [God] create humankind in this way?" (VL2)

"Father, you know that my heart is broken by this grief. This is too much for me to handle. Comfort me now, Father. Draw me closer to You. Shelter me from this stormy situation." (VL4)

"I put my trust in God and rely on Him, having the confidence that He will take my grief, and give me comfort, and cheer me up, and make me happy." (GL3)

"I take it to the Lord in prayer [because] prayer [unleashes] the strength and grace of God to go through the grief or distress." (GL4)

"Good morning, Dad. It is such a joy to have you in my life." (GL3)

“I take a deep breath and thank God for taking my dad home, knowing that he is now comfortable and free of pain.” (VL3)

“I thank God that He is there for us amidst the grief we go through.” (VL3)

“But thanks to the teachings of the Scriptures concerning pain and suffering, and thanks to small group ministry, people are freer to express their grief.” (VL4)

### ***Funeral Service***

“We commemorate the life of the deceased one who was devoted to God and one’s family and others, by conducting a solemn ceremony in the church or in the funeral home. During the funeral service, we worship God with meaningful songs, pray, witness to unbelievers, and strengthen our relationships.” (VL2)

“[Prior to the funeral service] ritual prayers [are said] for the comfort of the dead and also the bereaved family” (VL2)

### ***Reading the Bible***

Finding strength amidst grief in the words of Isa 43:1–3.

But now, thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (GL4)

“Read through the Bible. Read Job, Psalms, Jesus’ suffering, Isaiah 53, and Jeremiah.

Read God’s Word, because of the power of God’s Word.” (VL1)

### ***Spiritual Rejoicing***

“[For the wake night service] the songs sung are upbeat Christian hymns or gospel songs, such as, ‘When We All Get to Heaven’ and ‘Mansion Over the Hilltop.’ And as is typical of *Kweh-kweh* celebration, these upbeat songs are never sung without being accompanied by dancing. Dancing during the *Kweh-kweh* celebration is part of having, “a real time expressing themselves in celebration of the life of the deceased, and the ultimate reunion in heaven, i.e., in that mansion over the hilltop with their Lord Jesus Christ. So rather than mourn the death of the departed, all activities are designed to celebrate the life of the deceased.” (GL1)

“If the deceased is of an East Indian descent, it is commonplace to sing bhajans at the wake and funeral. One of the most famous bhajans is ‘Yishu Ne Kaha: Jiwan Ki Roti,’ which means, “Jesus said: I am the Bread of Life.” (GL5)

“Sing Hymns.” (VL1)

### ***Proclaiming the Gospel***

“We commemorate the life of the deceased one who was devoted to God and one’s family and others, by conducting a solemn ceremony in the church or in the funeral home. During the funeral service, we worship God with meaningful songs, pray, witness to unbelievers, and strengthen our relationships.” (VL2)

“We share to people who lose their loved one that whoever trusts in Jesus will be saved. Therefore they have a hope that they will see their loved one who died.” (VL5)

### ***Writing Comforting Letters***

“Some will write comforting letters to the family, which is very helpful.” (GL5)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allender, Dan B., and Tremper Longman III. *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994.
- Anderson, A. A. *2 Samuel*. WBC 11. Dallas: Word, 1989.
- Anderson, Gary A. *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance: The Expression of Grief and Joy in Israelite Religion*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991.
- Anderson, Herbert. "The Bible and Pastoral Care." In *The Bible in Pastoral Practice: Readings in the Place and Function of Scripture in the Church*, edited by Paul Ballard and Stephen R. Holmes, 195–211. London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 2005.
- Anderson, Ray S. *Dancing with Wolves while Feeding the Sheep: Musings of a Maverick Theologian*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002.
- Arbuckle, Gerald A. *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*. Collegeville: MN: Liturgical, 2010.
- Arnold, Bill T. *Genesis*. NCBC. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . *1 & 2 Samuel*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1993.
- Ashley, Timothy R. *The Book of Numbers*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Bailey, Lloyd R. Sr. *Biblical Perspectives on Death*. Overtures to Biblical Theology. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.
- Balentine, Samuel E. *Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue*. OBT. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- . "Suffering and Evil." In *NIDB* 5:391.

- Bartholomew, Craig G., and Michael W. Goheen. *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Bass, Clarence B. "Fast, Fasting." In *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, edited by Walter A. Elwell, 2:780–81. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988.
- Bayly, Joseph. *The Last Think We Talk About: Help and Hope for Those Who Grieve*. Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1992.
- Begbie, Jeremy S. *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music*. London: SPCK, 2007.
- Beck, Guy. "Religious and Devotional Music: Northern Area." In *South Asia: The Indian Subcontinent. The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, edited by Alison Arnold, 246–58. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Belcher, R. P., Jr. "Suffering." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, edited by Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns, 775–81. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Bell, John. *The Singing Thing: A Case for Congregational Song*. Chicago: GIA, 2000.
- Bellinger, W. H., Jr. *Leviticus, Numbers*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- Bergen, Robert D. *1 & 2 Samuel*. NAC 7. Nashville: B&H, 1996.
- Bergen Funeral Service Inc. "Funeral Customs of Guyana." No pages. Online: <http://bergenfuneralservice.blogspot.com/2013/12/funeral-customs-of-493ritan.html>.
- Billings, J. Todd. *Rejoicing in Lament: Wrestling with Incurable Cancer and Life in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015.
- Billman, Kathleen D., and Daniel L. Migliore. *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope*. Cleveland, OH: United Church, 1999. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006.
- Blaiklock, Edward Musgrave. *Kathleen: A Record of a Sorrow*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
- Bloch-Smith, Elizabeth. "Burials." In *ABD* 1:785–89.
- Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. NAC 6. Nashville: B&H, 1999.

- Bloesch, Donald G. *The Struggle of Prayer*. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1988.
- Boadt, Lawrence. *Reading the Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Rev. and updated by Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2012.
- Bock, Darrell L. *Luke 9:51—24:53*. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Boda, Mark J. *After God's Own Heart: The Gospel According to David*. The Gospel According to the Old Testament. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007.
- . *A Severe Mercy: Sin and Its Remedy in the Old Testament*. Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 1. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009.
- . "Form Criticism in Transition: Penitential Prayer and Lament, *Sitz im Leben* and Form." In *Seeking the Favor of God*. Vol. 1, *The Origin of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*, edited by Mark J. Boda et al., 181–92. SBLEJL 21. Atlanta: SBL; Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- . "Prayer." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, edited by Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, 806–11. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.
- . *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- . *Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9*. BZAW 277. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999.
- . "Praying the Tradition: The Origin and Use of Tradition in Nehemiah 9." *Tyndale Bulletin* 48 (1997) 179–82.
- . *'Return to Me': A Biblical Theology of Repentance*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 35. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.
- . "'Uttering Precious Rather Than Worthless Words': Divine Patience and Impatience with Lament in Isaiah and Jeremiah." In *Why? . . . How Long? Studies on Voices of Lamentation Rooted in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, edited by Leann Snow Flesher et al., 83–99. London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2014.
- . "Varied and Resplendid Riches: Exploring the Breadth and Depth of Worship in the Psalter." In *Rediscovering Worship: Past, Present, Future*, edited by Wendy J. Porter, 61–82. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015.
- Boling, Robert G. *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*. AYB 6. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

- Bonanno, George A., et al. "Trajectories of Grieving." In *Handbook of Bereavement Research and Practice: Advances in Theory and Intervention*, edited by Margaret Stroebe et al., 287–307. Washington: American Psychological Association, 2008.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. New York: HarperOne, 1954.
- . *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1970.
- Bosworth, David A. "Faith and Resilience: King David's Reaction to the Death of Bathsheba's Firstborn." *CBQ* 73 (2010) 691–707.
- . "Understanding Grief and Reading the Bible." In *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature*, edited by F. Scott Spencer, 117–38. Atlanta: SBL, 2017.
- Bowlby, John. *Attachment and Loss, Vol. III: Loss, Sadness, and Depression*. New York: Basic, 1980.
- Brichto, Herbert. "Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973) 1–54.
- Bright, Ruth. "Music Therapy in Grief Resolution." *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic* 64 (1999) 481–98.
- Brown, Sally A., and Patrick D. Miller, eds. *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Brown, William P. "Psalms, Book of." In *NIDB* 4:661–80.
- Broyles, Craig C. *Psalms*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- Bruckner, James K. *Exodus*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *From Whom No Secrets Are Hid: Introducing the Psalms*, edited by Brent A. Strawn. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014.
- . *Great Prayers of the Old Testament*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- . "Lament as Antidote to Silence." *Living Pulpit* 11.4 (2002) 24–25.
- . *Praying the Psalms: Engaging Scripture and The Life of the Spirit*. 2nd ed. Eugene: Cascade, 2007.
- . "The Costly Loss of Lament." *JSOT* 11 (1986) 57–71.

- . “The Formfulness of Grief.” *Interpretation* 31 (1977) 263–75.
- . *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985.
- . *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*. Edited by Patrick D. Miller. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- . “Voice as Counter to Violence.” *CTJ* 36 (2001) 22–33.
- Budd, Philip J. *Numbers*. WBC 5. Dallas: Word, 1984.
- Bullock, C. Hassell. *Encountering the Book of Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- Burbank, Ray. “Bhajans and Biblical Theology: An Evaluation of the Indigenous Indian Devotional Song Genre’s Educational Potential.” *Global Forum on Arts and Christian Faith* 6 (2018) A1–A13.
- Butler, Trent C. *Joshua*. WBC 7. Dallas: Word, 1984.
- Byassee, Jason. *Praise Seeking Understanding: Reading the Psalms with Augustine*. Radical Traditions. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Cable, Dana G. “Grief in the American Culture.” In *Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve*, edited by Kenneth J. Doka and Joyce D. Davidson, 61–70. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Campbell, Antony F. “Form Criticism’s Future.” In *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Marvin A. Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi, 15–31. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Campbell, D. Keith. “New Testament Lament in Current Research and Its Implications for American Evangelicals.” *JETS* 57 (2014) 757–72.
- Capps, Donald. *Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counseling*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981.
- . *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care*. Theology and Pastoral Care. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- Card, Michael. *A Sacred Sorrow: Reaching Out to God in the Lost Language of Lament*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*. PNTC. Leicester: Apollos, 1991.
- Chilton, Bruce. “Altar.” In *NIDB* 1:115–19.



- Chiu, José Enrique Aguilar. *The Psalms: An Introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2014.
- Cohen, David J. *Why O Lord? Praying Our Sorrows*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013.
- Cole, Allan Hugh, Jr. *Good Mourning: Getting through Your Grief*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- Cole, R. Dennis. *Numbers*. NAC 3b. Nashville: B&H, 2000.
- . “Numbers.” In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 1: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, edited by John H. Walton, 338–417. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Common, Kate. “What Do People Mean by ‘Theopoetics’?” No pages. Online: <https://artsreligionculture.org/definitions>.
- Coogan, Mordechai. *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AYB 10. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Cook, J. A. “Dad’s Double Binds: Rethinking Father’s Bereavement from a Men’s Studies Perspective.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 17 (1988) 285–308.
- Coppes, Leonard J. “לָלֵךְ.” In *TWOT* 1:217–18.
- Corless, Inge B., et al. “Languages of Grief: A Model for Understanding the Expressions of the Bereaved.” *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine* 2 (2014) 132–43.
- Coward, Howard, and David Goa. *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2013.
- Crisp, Roger “Compassion and Beyond.” *Ethical Theology and Practice* 11 (2008) 233–46.
- deClaissé-Walford, Nancy L. “The Theology of the Imprecatory Psalms.” In *Soundings in the Theology of Psalms: Perspectives and Methods in Contemporary Scholarship*, edited by Rolf A. Jacobson, 77–92. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
- deClaissé-Walford, Nancy L., et al. *The Book of Psalms*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Denzin, Norman K. “The Art and Politics of Interpretation.” In *A Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 500–515. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1994.

- DeVries, Simon J. *1 Kings*. WBC 12. Waco: Word, 2003.
- Dickson, John. *Life of Jesus: Who He Is and Why He Matters*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Dillard, Raymond B. *2 Chronicles*. WBC 15. Dallas: Word, 1987.
- Douglas, Mary. *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1970.
- Drakeford, John W., and E. Ray Clendenen. "Grief and Mourning." In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, edited by Chad Brand et al., 690–91. Nashville: Holman, 2003.
- Duhm, Bernhard L. *The Book of Isaiah Translated and Explained*. 5th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968.
- Ellington, Scott A. *Risking Truth: Reshaping the World through Prayers of Lament*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series 98. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2008.
- . "The Costly Loss of Testimony." *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (2000) 48–59.
- Evans, Mary J. *1 & 2 Samuel*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Farnell, Brenda. "Techniques of the Body." In *International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, edited by Hilary Callan, 1–3. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2018. DOI: 10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea2263.
- Feinberg, John. "A Journey in Suffering: Personal Reflections on the Religious Problem of Evil." In *Suffering and the Goodness of God. Theology in Community*, edited by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, 213–37. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008.
- . *Where is God? A Personal Story of Finding God in Grief and Suffering*. Rev. ed. Nashville: B&H, 2004.
- Fensham, F. Charles. *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Ferrell, Betty R., and Nessa Coyle. *The Nature of Suffering and the Goals of Nursing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Ferris, P. W., Jr. "Prayer." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and J. G. McConville 583–87. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005.

- Fisher, Milton C. "Burial, Burial Customs." In *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, edited by Walter A. Elwell, 1:386–89. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988.
- Ford, S. Dennis. *Sins of Omission: A Primer on Moral Indifference*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990.
- Fretheim, Terence E. *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Fritz, Volkmar. *1 & 2 Kings*. A Continental Commentary. Translated by Anselm Hagedorn. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.
- Futato, Mark D. *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007.
- . *Joy Comes in the Morning: Psalms for All Seasons*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004.
- Garrett, Greg. *Stories from the Edge: A Theology of Grief*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008.
- Geertz, Clifford. *After the Fact*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- . *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz*. New York: Basic, 1973.
- Gibbs, Jason. "Nhac Tien Chien: The Origins of Vietnamese Popular Song." No pages. Online: <http://thingsasian.com/story/nhac-tien-chien-origins-vietnamese-popular-song#note22>.
- Graham, Elaine L. *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an Age of Uncertainty*. London: Mowbray, 1996.
- Green, Joel B. "Mourning." In *NIDB* 4:161–62.
- Greenberg, Moshe. *Biblical Prose Prayer: As a Window to the Popular Religion of Ancient Israel*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008.
- Gregory, T. M. "Mourning." In *ZPEB* Vol. 4: *M–P*, Rev. Full-Color ed., edited by Merrill C. Tenney, 302–7. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

- Grollman, Earl A. "What You Always Wanted to Know About Your Jewish Clients' Perspectives Concerning Death and Dying—But were Afraid to Ask." In *Living with Grief: Who We Are, How We Grieve*, edited by Kenneth J. Doka and Joyce D. Davidson, 27–37. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Gunkel, Hermann. *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*. Translated by Thomas M. Horner. Biblical Series 19. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967.
- Gunkel, Hermann, and Joachim Begrich. *An Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*. Mercer Library of Biblical Studies. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. 15th Ann. ed. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988.
- . *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987.
- Hale, Christopher D. "Reclaiming the Bhajan: Ancient Music Styles of India Transform Modern Worship of Christ." *Mission Frontiers* 23 (2001) 16–17.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- . *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Harasta, Eva, and Brian Brock, eds. *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*. London: T. & T. Clark, 2009.
- Harper, G. Geoffrey, and Kit Barker, eds. *Finding Lost Words: The Church's Right to Lament*. Australian College of Theology Monograph. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017.
- Harrichand, James J. S. "Recovering the Language of Lament for the Western Evangelical Church: A Survey of the Psalms of Lament and their Appropriation within Pastoral Theology." *MJTM* 16 (2014–15) 101–30.
- Harrichand, Niven. "God's Will That All Be Saved: The Character of God Revealed by The Word in John Wesley's Doctrine of Predestination." ThM thesis, Tyndale University College & Seminary, 2012.
- Hartley, John E. *Genesis*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.
- Hauerwas, Stanley. *Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering*. London: T. & T. Clark, 1993.

- Hays, Jeffrey. "Funerals and Ideas About Death in Vietnam." No pages. Online: [http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Vietnam/sub5\\_9d/entry-3382.html#chapter-13](http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Vietnam/sub5_9d/entry-3382.html#chapter-13).
- Herr, Larry G. "Sackcloth." In *ISBE* 4:256.
- Heschel, Abraham J. *The Prophets: An Introduction*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.
- Hess, Richard S. "Joshua." In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 2: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, edited by John H. Walton, 2–93. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Hoang, Dieu-Hien T. "Death Rituals in Vietnamese Society." No pages. Online: <http://webs01.hsl.washington.edu/clinical/end-of-life/death-in-viet>.
- Hobbs, T. R. *2 Kings*. WBC 13. Dallas: Word, 1985.
- Hopkins, Denise Dombkowski. *Journey Through The Psalms*. Rev. and Exp. ed. St. Louis: Chalice, 2002.
- Hopkins, Denise Dombkowski, and Michael S. Koppel. *Grounded in the Living Word: The Old Testament and Pastoral Care Practices*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- House, Paul R. *1, 2 Kings*. NAC 8. Nashville: B&H, 1995.
- Howard, David M., Jr. *Joshua*. NAC 5. Nashville: B&H, 1998.
- Hubbard, Robert L., Jr. *Joshua*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- . *Ruth*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Hubbard, Moyer V. "2 Corinthians." In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, Vol. 3: *Romans to Philemon*, edited by Clinton E. Arnold, 194–263. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.
- Ince-Carvalho, Lorraine. "The Unfortunate Reality of Grieving." No pages. Online: <https://guyanatimesgy.com/the-unfortunate-reality-of-grieving/>.
- Irish, Donald P. "Multiculturalism and the Majority Population." In *Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death, and Grief: Diversity in Universality*, edited by Donald P. Irish et al., 1–10. Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1993.
- Irish, Donald P., et al. *Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death, and Grief: Diversity in Universality*. Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1993.

- Jacobson, Rolf A. "Burning Our Lamps with Borrowed Oil: The Liturgical Use of the Psalms and the Life of Faith." In *Psalms and Practice: Worship, Virtue, and Authority*, edited by Stephen Breck Reid, 90–98. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001.
- Jonker, Louis C. *1 & 2 Chronicles*. UBCS. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *I Will Lift My Eyes Unto the Hills: Learning from the Great Prayers of the Old Testament*. Wooster, OH: Weaver, 2015.
- Kazen, Thomas. "Disgust in Body, Mind, and Language: The Case of Impurity in the Hebrew Bible. In *Mixed Feelings and Vexed Passions: Exploring Emotions in Biblical Literature*, edited by F. Scott Spencer, 97–115. Atlanta: SBL, 2017.
- Kedar-Kopfstein, Benjamin. "גד." In *TDOT* 3:237–38.
- Keefe-Perry, L. B. C. "Theopoetics: Process and Perspective." *Christianity and Literature* 58 (2009) 579–601.
- Kim, Matthew D. *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence: Understanding the People Who Hear Our Sermons*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- King, Philip J., and Lawrence E. Stager. *Life in Biblical Israel*. Library of Ancient Israel. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Khoshaba, Deborah. "About Complicated Bereavement Disorder." No pages. Online: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/get-hardy/201309/about-complicated-bereavement-disorder-0>.
- Kitchen, K. A. "Burial and Mourning." In *The New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., edited by D. R. W. Wood, 149–50. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Klein, Ralph W. *2 Chronicles: A Commentary*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012.
- Kleinman, Arthur. *Social Origins of Distress and Disease: Depression, Neurasthenia, and Pain in Modern China*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.
- Konkel, August H. *1 & 2 Kings*. NIVAC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- LaCocque, André. *Ruth*. Translated by K. C. Hanson. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004.
- Laderman, Gary. *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Lam, Minh Van. *God's Miracles: His Faith, and His Escape from Vietnam by Boat*. Bloomington, IN: WestBow, 2016.

- LaMothe, Kimerer. "Dancing in the Face of Death: 'Santuario' and the Pulse Nightclub Shootings. No pages. Online: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-body-knows/201703/dancing-in-the-face-death>.
- Lane, Patty. *A Beginner's Guide to Crossing Cultures: Making Friends in a Multicultural World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002.
- LaNeel Tanner, Beth. "How Long, O Lord! Will Your People Suffer in Silence Forever?" In *Psalms and Practice: Worship, Virtue, and Authority*, edited by Stephen Breck Reid, 143–52. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2001.
- Lartey, Emmanuel Y. *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling*. 2nd ed. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003.
- . *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World*. London: Epworth, 2006. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013.
- . *Postcolonializing God: New Perspectives on Pastoral and Practical Theology*. London: SCM, 2013.
- . "Postcolonializing Pastoral Theology: Enhancing the Intercultural Paradigm." In *Pastoral Theology and Care: Critical Trajectories in Theory and Practice*, edited by Nancy J. Ramsay, 79–97. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2018.
- . "Practical Theology as a Theological Form." In *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, edited by James Woodward and Stephen Pattison, 128–34. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.
- Lemche, N. P. *The Canaanites and Their Land*, JSOTSup 110. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991.
- Lemcio, Eugene E. "The Story's Conclusion: The Revelation to John." In *A Compact Guide to the Whole Bible*, edited by Robert W. Wall and David R. Nienhuis, 137–48. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.
- Leung Lai, Barbara M. "The Costly Loss of Lament and Protest: Toward a Biblical Theology of Lament and Protest (Psalm 44)." In *Between the Lectern and the Pulpit: Essays in Honour of Victor A. Shepherd*, edited by Rob Clements and Dennis Ngien, 281–91. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2014.
- Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.
- . *Reflections on the Psalms*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1958.
- Littlewood, Jane. *Aspects of Grief: Bereavement in Adult Life*. London: Routledge, 1992.

- Lochtefeld, James G. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, Vol. 1: A–M. New York: Rosen, 2002.
- Long, V. Philips. “1 Samuel.” In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 2: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, edited by John H. Walton, 266–411. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- . “2 Samuel.” In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 2: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel*, edited by John H. Walton, 412–92. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Longman, Tremper, III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1988.
- . *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Vols. 15–16. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.
- Luthar, Suniya S., and Laurel B. Zelazo. “Research and Resilience: An Integrative Review. In *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*, edited by Suniya S. Luthar, 510–50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther’s Works*. American Editions. 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and H. T. Lehman. St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–1967.
- Lynch, Peter. “Tested by Practice.” In *An Introduction to Catholic Theology*, edited by Richard Lennan, 164–83. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1998.
- Madigan, Kevin J., and Jon D. Levenson. *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Manser, Martin H. “Sackcloth and Ashes.” In *Dictionary of Biblical Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*, edited by Martin H. Manser, 6742. Pennsauken, NJ: BookBaby, 2009.
- Marr, David G. *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- Mauss, Marcel. “Techniques of the Body.” In *Sociology and Psychology: Essays by Marcel Mauss*, translated by B. Brewster, 95–135. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.
- Mays, James Luther. *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, edited by Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
- McBride, J. LeBron. *Spiritual Crisis: Surviving Trauma to the Soul*. New York: Routledge, 2009.



- McCann, J. Clinton. "Prayer and Activity: Vengeance, Catharsis, and Compassion." In *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah*, 112–26. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- McCarter, P. Kyle, Jr. *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*. AYB 9. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.
- McComiskey, Thomas E. "זָכַר." In *TWOT* 1:241–43.
- McCutchan, Stephen P. "Illuminating the Dark: Using the Psalms of Lament." *Christian Ministry* 24 (1993) 14–17.
- Meninger, William. "Aspects of Prayer." In *Word and Spirit: A Monastic Review*. Number 1, *In Honor of Saint Basil the Great*, 147–49. Still River, MA: St. Bede's, 1979.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, J. J. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated from the French by Colin Smith. India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995.
- Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AYB 3. New Haven: Doubleday, 1991.
- . *Numbers*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: JPS, 1989.
- Millar, J. Gary. *Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 38. London: Apollos, 2016.
- Miller, Douglas L. "Funeral Customs." In *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, edited by Walter A. Elwell, 1:820–21. Grand Rapids: 1988.
- Miller, Patrick D. "Heaven's Prisoners: The Lament as Christian Prayer." In *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, edited by Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller, 15–26. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- . *Interpreting the Psalms*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- . *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.
- Moo, Douglas J. "Romans." In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: New Testament, Vol. 3: Romans to Philemon*, edited by Clinton E. Arnold, 2–99. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.
- Mortari, Luigina. "The Ethic of Delicacy in Phenomenological Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being* 3 (2008) 3–17.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Experiences of God*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.

- . *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. Translated by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Monson, John. "1 Kings." In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 3: *1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, edited by John H. Walton, 2–109. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Morganthaler, Sally. *Worship Evangelism: Inviting Unbelievers into the Presence of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999.
- Muck, Terry. "Psalm, Bhajan, and Kirtan." In *Psalms and Practice: Worship, Virtue, and Authority*, edited by Stephen Breck Reid, 7–27. Collegetown, MN: Liturgical, 2001.
- Muddiman, John. "Fast, Fasting." In *ABD* 2:773–74.
- Muraoka, Takamitsu. "1 Sam 1,15 Again." *Biblica* 77 (1996) 98–99.
- Murray, Henry A., and Clyde Kluckhohn. *Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.
- Myers, Jacob M. *Ezra, Nehemiah: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. AYB 17. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965.
- Nehrbass, Daniel Michael. *Praying Curses: The Therapeutic and Preaching Value of the Imprecatory Psalms*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013.
- Nelsen, Vivian Jenkins. "One Woman's Interracial Journey." In *Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death, and Grief: Diversity in Universality*, edited by Donald P. Irish et al., 21–27. Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1993.
- Nelson, Judith Kay. *Seeing Through Tears: Crying and Attachment*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Nettl, Bruno. *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation and Survival*. New York: Schirmer, 1985.
- New GPC Inc. "Limaicol." No pages. Online: <http://limacol.com/limacol.php>.
- Newman, Judith H. "Prayer." In *NIDB* 4:579–89.
- . *Praying by the Book: The Scripturalization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*. SBLEJL 14. Atlanta: Scholars, 1999.
- Ngien, Dennis. *Fruit for the Soul: Luther on the Lament Psalms*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015.

- . *Interpretation of Love: God's Love and Ours*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2012.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *A Letter of Consolation*. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.
- . *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society*. New York: Image Doubleday, 1979.
- Oates, Wayne E. *Grief, Transition, and Loss: A Pastor's Practical Guide*. Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Orloff, Judith. "The Health Benefits of Tears: Learn How Tears Can Benefit You and Improve Your Health." No pages. Online: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/emotional-freedom/201007/the-health-benefits-tears>.
- Ortner, Sherry, ed. *The Fate of "Culture": Geertz and Beyond*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Oswalt, John N. "כָּרָה." In *TWOT* 1:132–33.
- Parunak, H. D. V. "A Semantic Survey of נְחָם." *Biblica* 56 (1975) 512–32.
- Patton, Corrine L. "From Heroic Individual to Nameless Victim Women in the Social World of the Judges." In *Biblical and Humane: A Festschrift for John F. Priest*, edited by Linda Bennet Elder et al., 33–46. Scholars Press Homage Series 20. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996.
- Patton, John H. *From Ministry to Theology: Pastoral Action & Reflection*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009.
- Payne, J. Barton. "Burial." In *ISBE* 1:556–61.
- Perrine, Laurence. *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*. 4th ed. New York: Harcourt, 1973.
- Perry, Hosea L. "Mourning and Funeral Customs of African Americans." In *Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death, and Grief: Diversity in Universality*, edited by Donald P. Irish et al., 51–65. Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1993.
- Peterman, Gerald W., and Andrew J. Schmutzer. *Between Pain and Grace: A Biblical Theology of Suffering*. Chicago: Moody, 2016.
- Ramshaw, Elaine J. *Ritual and Pastoral Care*. Theology and Pastoral Care. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987.

- . “Singing at Funerals and Memorial Services.” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 35 (2008) 206–15.
- . “The Personalization of Postmodern Post-Mortem Rituals.” *Pastoral Psychology* 59 (2010) 171–78.
- Ramshaw, Gail. “The Place of Lament within Praise: Theses for Discussion.” *Worship* 61 (1987) 317–22.
- Resner, Andre. “Lament: Faith’s Response to Loss.” *Restoration Quarterly* 32 (1990) 129–42.
- Richards-Greaves, Gillian. “Come to My ‘Kwe-Kwe’: African Guyanese Ritual Music and the Construction of a Secondary Diaspora in New York City.” *The World of Music* 4 (2015) 83–97.
- . “[Re]Constructing ‘Home’ in the USA through African-Guyanese Ritual.” *CeTEAL Newsletter* n.v. (2015) 2–3.
- Robinson, Thomas A., and Hillary P. Rodrigues. *World Religions: A Guide to the Essentials*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014.
- Ross, Allen P. *A Commentary on the Psalms*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011–2016.
- Sarna, Nahum M. *Exodus*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: JPS, 1991.
- Scazzero, Peter. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash A Revolution in Your Life in Christ*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006.
- Schapira, Lidia. “Communication at the End of Life.” *Journal of Oncology Practice* 4 (2008) 54, DOI: 10.1200/JOP.08215501.
- Schultz, S. J., and G. L. Knapp. “Postures; Attitudes.” In *ISBE* 3:911–12.
- Seecharan, Clem. “Guyana.” No pages. Online: <https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Guyana.html>.
- Sharma, R. T. “Psychological Analysis of Bhakti.” In *Love Divine: Studies in Bhakti and Devotional Mysticism*, edited by Karel Werner, 85–95. Surrey: Curzon, 1993.
- Sharp, Melinda McGarrah. “Globalization, Colonialism, and Postcolonialism.” In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion To Practical Theology*, edited by Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 422–31. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2014.
- Sherbino, David. *Re:Connect: Spiritual Exercises to Develop Intimacy with God*. Pickering: Castle Quay, 2013.

- Slotki, Judah J. *Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah*. London: Soncino, 1951.
- Smith, Robert S. "Belting Out the Blues as Believers: The Importance of Singing Lament." *Themelios* 42 (2017) 89–111.
- Soelle, Dorothee. *Suffering*. Translated by Everett R. Kalin. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.
- Soll, William M. "The Israelite Lament: Faith Seeking Understanding." *Quarterly Review* 8 (1988) 77–88.
- Sparks, Kenton L. "Form Criticism." In *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation*, edited by Stanley E. Porter, 111–13. New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Stager, Lawrence E. "Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden." *Eretz-Israel* 26 (1999) 184–94.
- Staudacher, Carol. *Men and Grief: A Guide for Men Surviving the Death of a Loved One: A Resource for Caregivers and Mental Health Professionals*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 1991.
- Swanson, James A. *A Dictionary of Biblical Languages: Hebrew Old Testament*. 2nd ed. Bellingham, WA: Logos, 2001.
- Sweeney, Marvin A. "Form Criticism." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry, and Writings*, edited by Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns, 227–41. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008.
- Sweeney, Marvin A., and Ehud Ben Zvi, eds. *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Swinton, John. *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- . "Researching Personal Experience." In *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, edited by John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, 101–32. London: SCM, 2006.
- Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. London: SCM, 2006.
- The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Burial: Death Rite." No pages. Online: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/burial-death-rite>.
- Thiselton, Anthony C. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.
- Thomas, John C., and Gary R. Habermas. *Enduring Your Season of Suffering*. Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University Press, 2011.

- Thompson, J. A. *I, 2 Chronicles*. NAC 9. Nashville: B&H, 1994.
- Toffelmire, Colin M. "Form Criticism." In *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, 257–71. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012.
- Tracy, David. *Blessed Rage of Order. The New Pluralism in Theology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. *The First Book of Samuel*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- . *The Second Book of Samuel*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019.
- Tucker, Gene M. *Form Criticism of the Old Testament*. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971.
- Anonymous ucanews reporter. "Vietnamese Bishops Issue Guidelines on Ancestor Veneration." No pages. Online: <https://www.ucanews.com/news/vietnamese-bishops-issue-guidelines-on-ancestor-veneration/86469>.
- Vanderkam, James C. "Feasts and Fasts." In *NIDB* 2:443–47.
- van Manen, Max. *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. 2nd ed. Edmonton: Althouse, 1997.
- van Tongeren, Louis. "Individualizing Ritual: The Personal Dimension in Funeral Liturgy." *Worship* 78 (2004) 117–38.
- Vieira, Caitlin. "Grieving and Mental Health." No pages. Online: <https://guyanachronicle.com/2018/07/21/grieving-and-mental-health/>.
- Villanueva, Federico G. "Preaching lament." In *Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching*, edited by Grenville J. R. Kent et al., 64–84. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010.
- . *The 'Uncertainty of a Hearing': A Study of the Sudden Change of Mood in the Psalms of Lament*. Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series Vol. 121. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Voth, Steven. "Jeremiah." In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 4: *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*, edited by John H. Walton, 228–371. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.

- Walton, John H. "Genesis." In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 1: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, edited by John H. Walton, 2–159. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- . "Rizpah." In *ISBE* 4:199.
- Watts, John D. W. *Isaiah 1–33*. WBC 24. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005.
- Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Weems, Ann. *Psalms of Lament*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.
- Weil, Simone. *Awaiting God*. Abbotsford: Fresh Wind, 2012.
- . *Gravity and Grace*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2007.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 16–50*. WBC 2. Waco: Word, 1994.
- . *The Book of Leviticus*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.
- Westerhoff, John. *Spiritual Life: The Foundation for Preaching and Teaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 37–50*. Translated by John J. Scullion. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.
- . *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*. Translated by Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen. Atlanta: John Knox, 1981.
- . *The Psalms: Structure, Content, and Message*. Translated by Ralph D. Gehrke. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1980.
- Whitbourne, Susan Krauss. "The Definitive Guide to Guilt: Five Types of Guilt and How You Can Cope with Each." No pages. Online: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201208/the-definitive-guide-guilt>.
- Wildberger, Hans. *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary*. Continental. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
- Williamson, H. G. M. *Ezra, Nehemiah*. WBC 16. Dallas: Word, 1985.
- Witvliet, John D. "A Time to Weep: Liturgical Lament in Times of Crisis." *Reformed Worship* 44 (1997) 22–26.
- Wolfelt, Alan D. *Creating Meaningful Funeral Ceremonies*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

- . *Creating Meaningful Funeral Experiences: A Guide for Caregivers*. 2nd ed. Fort Collins, CO: Companion, 2011.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for A Son*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Woudstra, Marten H. *The Book of Joshua*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004.
- . “Preaching and Teaching from the Psalms.” In *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth*, 246–61. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Wright, N. T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God: Christian Origins and The Question of God*. Vol. 3. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.
- Yamauchi, Edwin M. “Ezra-Nehemiah.” In *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, Vol. 3: *1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, edited by John H. Walton, 394–467. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009.
- Yancey, Philip. *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Zacharias, Ravi K. *Cries of the Heart: Bringing God Near When He Feels So Far*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002.
- . *The Logic of God: 52 Christian Essentials for the Heart and Mind*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.
- Zenger, Erich. *A God of Vengeance? Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath*. Translated by Linda M. Maloney. 1st ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- Zylla, Phil C. “Aspects of Men’s Sorrow: Reflection on Phenomenological Writings about Grief.” *PastPsych* 66 (2017) 837–54. DOI 10.1007/s11089-017-0768-y.
- . “Inhabiting Compassion: A Pastoral Theological Paradigm.” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73 (2017) 1–9, DOI: 10.4102/hts.v73i4.4644.
- . “Shades of Lament: Phenomenology, Theopoetics, and Pastoral Theology.” *PastPsych* 63 (2014) 763–76, DOI: 10.1007/s11089-014-0616-2.
- . *The Roots of Sorrow: A Pastoral Theology of Suffering*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012.
- . “What Language Can I Borrow? Theopoetic Renewal in Pastoral Theology.” *MJTM* 9 (2007–2008) 129–43