AOSIS

Practising piety in a (post-) pandemic time: A spatial reading of piety in Psalm 66 from the perspectives of memory and bodily imagery

CrossMark
click for updates

Author:
Lodewyk Sutton[1] ●

Affiliation:
[1]Department of Old and New Testament Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Corresponding author:
Lodewyk Sutton,
suttonl@ufs.ac.za

Situated in the larger collection of Psalms 51–72, also known as the second Davidic Psalter, the smaller group of Psalms 65–68 is found. This smaller collection of psalms can be classified mostly as psalms of praise and thanksgiving. The relation and compositional work in this cluster of psalms become apparent on many points in the pious expressions between groups and persons at prayer, especially in the universal praise of God, and in the imagery referring to the exodus, the Jerusalem cult and blessing. Such piety becomes most discernible in the imagery and expressions in Psalm 66. The psalm's two main sections may be described as praise, with verses 1–12 being praise by the group or the 'we', and verses 13–20 being praise by the individual or the 'I'. Personal or individual piety and private piety are expressed by the desire of the 'we' and the 'I', and the experienced immediacy to God by transposing the past into the present through the memory of the exodus narrative, the Jerusalem cultic imagery and the use of body imagery. In this research article, an understanding of piety in Psalm 66 in terms of the memory of past events and body imagery is discussed from a perspective of space and appropriated for a time of (post-) pandemic where normal or traditional ecclesiological formal practices cannot take place.

Contribution: This article makes an interdisciplinary contribution based on knowledge from the Psalms in the Old Testament, social anthropology, literary spatial theories and practical theological perspectives on the church in order to contribute to the relevance and practice of theology today, during a time of turmoil and a global pandemic.

Keywords: piety in the psalms; memory; cultural memory; body imagery; spatial perspectives; thirdspace; Psalm 66; COVID-19; pandemic.

Introduction

Piety[1] is an interesting religious phenomenon in many ways, although it may be difficult to interpret and characterise. The first problem is that the term piety is loaded with presumptions on how aspects of piety must be understood because of its popular use as part of Christian religious practices through the ages.[2] As noted by Luiselli (2014:105), this resulted in many scholars trying to avoid using the term piety or more specifically, personal or individual piety – a situation that resulted in scholars rather presenting alternative suggestions to convey the concept of religious devotion, for instance, 'popular religion, individual religiosity, personal religion, religious practice, or closeness to (a) god'. This problem is complicated further by the fact that many of the ancient Near Eastern cultures, including the texts of the Hebrew Bible, do not use a specific term for piety

---

1.This article is dedicated to my friend, mentor and colleague, Prof. Stephan Joubert. In the almost 20 years that we have known each other, one thing that I can testify to is that Stephan Joubert cares about people and their relationship with God. In his more than 50 book publications and multiple academic publications in books and journals, this fact has become more and more visible (see, for example, Joubert 2000, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2019). Piety (formal and personal), as a form of religious devotion that describes an individual seeking closeness to God, is an important practice in every faithful person's life. In times when practising formal piety associated with formal religious practices (in the church) becomes difficult or almost impossible, one needs to practise personal piety. Thank you, Stephan, for demonstrating a life of piety, a life of total devotion to God.

2.The use of the term 'piety' is popular amongst New Testament scholars, as the concept of piety is expressed in the Greek texts by the Greek verb εὐσεβέω, translated as 'worship', 'show piety towards' or 'profound respect towards' (Ac 17:23; 1 Tm 5:4), and the Greek noun εὐσέβεια, translated as 'piety', 'godliness' and 'religion' (Ac 3:12; 1 Tm 2:2; 3:16; 4:7; 4:8; 6:3; 6:5; 6:6; 6:11; 2 Tm 3:5; Tt 1:1; 2 Pt 1:3; 1:6; 1:7; 3:11). According to Packer (2015:928), the Old Testament view of piety stems from the concept of the 'fear of the Lord', which is common in the wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible, that demonstrates an attitude of 'reverence, submission and obedience towards God'. The New Testament understanding of this is 'obeying the gospel' or 'the truth' (Rm 10:16; Gal 5:7; 2 Th 1:8; 1 Pt 1:22), according to Packer (2015:928). It is therefore a response to revelation and being holy (godliness) and a total expression (and habits demonstrated) of faith in the life of a person following Christ. Connell (1960:248) remarked that piety in the New Testament is more about the right attitude and the appropriate conduct towards God than a display of a person's character. Devotion, therefore, takes a more important role in the definition for piety or godliness than belief.

describing the religious practices nowadays associated with the term.[3] An important extratextual phenomenon for studying piety in the Old Testament (specifically in wisdom literature and the Psalms) is the ancient Egyptian culture. Numerous studies have already been published, which identify and characterise personal piety in this culture. Even if there is not a specific term used for piety in ancient Egyptian culture, the notion that is normally used is the 'religious attitude characterised by deep devotion and loyalty to one or more deities and the desire for direct contact with them' (Luiselli 2014:105).[4] According to Buccellati (1995:1686), the visible organisation of the cult has an impact on piety, in that those individuals may find a similarity between their personal religious feelings and those in the formal structured rituals that are used for social needs. Piety truly becomes evident in the expression of personal religion when there is a connection between the individual and the divine, or as Fischer (2001:3) described it: '[p]ersonal piety is piety of the heart. It is a manner of relating to a god by having an individual relationship', especially in a time where normal cultic practices cannot happen because of war or some other circumstances.[5]

The 'we' seeking this closeness with God, and also the individual 'I', can clearly be seen in the pious expressions and imagery used in Psalm 66. This closeness in Psalm 66 is a search for intimacy in a time when everyday religious practices cannot happen.[6] Joubert (2003:57) wrote 'Geloof is nie 'n 'sagte opsie' nie. Dit vra moed om aan Christus se kant te staan…veral as die pad opdraande loop'. At the end of 2019, beginning of 2020, everything changed with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, commonly called COVID-19, also known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 or SARS-CoV-2 (and later all its variants) (National Institute for Communicable Diseases 2020). In order to deal with the pandemic, nations went into 'lockdowns' (see Krishna 2020), thus causing restrictions on individuals' movement and how they practised their formal religion. Visiting religious places such as churches could no longer happen. Alternative ways to practise formal religion, such as online church services,[7] quickly became the new standard. Many went from practising formal piety to practising personal piety.

3. Although not used in the Old Testament, the Greek noun εὐσέβεια is found in the Apocrypha (e.g. 2 Macc 12:45). That said, there are words that are used in the Old Testament, which describe this typical attitude of being godly or being pious. For instance, in Psalms 52:11 the word חסידים is used for the godly or the pious people. In this psalm, a comparison between those who are pious and those who are not pious is made (see Potgieter 2013:6). In Job 1:1, 8; 2:3, the תָּם describes the pious or the upright person. Again, the comparison is made between those who are pious and those who are not (Olivier 1997:307).

4. This comparison between piety in the Old Testament and other ancient Near Eastern cultures is important as many of the rituals and customs are shared. A comparison between the similarities and dissimilarities is helpful to see how these cultures approached their relationship with their deities. Important contributions to the study of piety in the Ancient Near East include Brunner (1982:951–963), Buccellati (1995:1685–1696), Assmann (1999:31–44); Fischer (2001:1–23), Luiselli (2008:1–9, 2014:105–116), Watts (2009:39–66), Ausec (2010), Baines and Frood (2011:1–17), Uehlinger (2015:1–24) and Bussmann (2017:71–91).

5. For instance, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, associated with lockdowns and restrictions on movement.

6. For Bokser (1943:9), 'piety varies with the character of the reality in which one finds life's worth to reside'. Piety is altered by the situation or the mood. The current mood inspires piety and how piety is practised. How piety is practised can therefore change as the current mood changes.

7. The article 'When God closes a church door, He opens a browser window' from Shellnutt (2020) explains how many people in the United States suddenly visited online church platforms after the lockdowns started.

In this article, an overview of piety research in the psalms is presented to see what conclusions have already been made in this regard. These conclusions contribute to understanding how piety is practised in Psalm 66 and how this can contribute to the psalm's interpretation. A further suggestion is made, namely, to study piety from a spatial perspective, utilising memory (from the standpoint of Thirdspace) and bodily imagery (from a perspective of spatial containment). An analysis of the exodus, cultic and body imagery in Psalm 66 is made from the spatial perspective, in order to understand how this imagery contributes to the understanding and development of piety in Psalm 66 so as to relate to God in difficult times. Finally, an appropriation of Psalm 66 is made to contribute to an understanding of how piety can be practised at times of difficulty, or rather in a time of pandemic, when traditional ecclesiological formal practices cannot take place.

An overview on piety research in the Psalms

During the last 170 years, the historical–critical method has dominated the interpretation of the psalms. Both Tate (1984:367)[8] and Brown (2014:13–15) indicated how this method has influenced psalm interpretation, especially form criticism through the research study of Hermann Gunkel regarding the genres of Psalms. According to Gillingham (1987:11, 13), before Gunkel, literary-critical studies dominated psalm research. Scholars, such as De Wette, Ewald and Graetz, studied the life settings of the individual in the poetry of the Psalms. This later developed to a communal life setting because of national consciousness that was evident in Israel's poetry. Personal piety in the psalms was understood in terms of the specific life setting of the individual poet or as part of some political and national events that happened in the community.

Gunkel followed a new approach for understanding the piety of the psalmists through the forms and language of their poetry, without having recourse to the limits of literary-critical studies. He understood the psalms in their 'life setting', and for him the 'original setting' of most of the psalms was Israel's worship (Brown 2014:12), which originated in the cult (Butler 1984:385). Piety is, therefore, understood in terms of public worship or public piety. That said, Gunkel realised that, especially in laments, one needs to make a distinction between the 'we' and the 'I' and how this individual relates to cultic poetry (Butler 1984:386). Furthermore, for him certain pious poetries had to be understood outside of the cult because of the superscriptions of the psalms (see Ps 34, 51, 52, and 54) or because of the content indicating a longing towards Jerusalem (see Ps 42, 43, 55, 61, and 120). However, Gunkel restricted this personal piety to the individual who used forms and formulas that were learned from cultic poetry and that were incorporated

8. Tate (1984:367) identified three major developments or modes in the interpretation of the psalms within historical–critical interpretation: the psalms as expression of piety, reading the psalms in the context of the history of Israel and form-critical readings in the context of human life. He identified a fourth mode as interpreting the psalms in terms of literary criticism (see also the comments by Brown [2014:11]).

for cultic worship by the community, stripped of their individual characteristics (Butler 1984:386).

Later, Mowinckel's focus on how the psalms were used in cultic situations (for liturgical and ideological usage) further shaped psalm research, providing a method called a 'cult-functional' approach. He used form criticism as an interpretive tool for such a cult-functional approach. In his understanding, piety is understood as a contribution by formal scribes (or as he called them, 'professionals') to specific cultic situations, who produced ritual texts for these situations (Gillingham 1987:40). Mowinckel furthermore interpreted the cultic use of the psalms in the context of illness. This approach has been reframed by scholars, such as Martin Buss, Erhard Gerstenberger and Klaus Seybold (Butler 1984:387). For Seybold, the sick person went through a two-part ritual to be healed and only went to the sanctuary after being healed. The purpose of the second ritual at the temple was to receive divine forgiveness (Butler 1984:388). There was thus a formal and a personal aspect to piety in these rituals.

Gerstenberger (1974:64–72) studied piety using sociological models and tools. The function of the petition within laments played an essential part for him. According to him, the recitation of these laments in the cult, as an attempt to prevent or escape from a crisis, was the focus, rather than the past crisis or situation. Therefore, according to Gerstenberger, the ritual specialist reciting these psalms is still an indication of their use for formal or communal piety. The communication (ritual) was between the group and God. If a person was too sick to go to the formal cultic centre, then the rituals were performed at home by a ritual specialist and took on a more personal nature, a more informal familial cult. Therefore, personal piety had a different focus from that of formal piety but still functioned within the boundaries of the cultic religion. The individual lament focused not necessarily on the formal cult but rather on bringing justice for the individual sufferer. It is only later that these laments became part of the formal cult. Both Erhard Gerstenberger and Rainer Albertz followed this approach, although for Albertz (1978), a formal ritual specialist was not necessary to perform the rituals at the home of the individual. A family member could also do it. According to Albertz, the everyday person meets God in everyday life and not in the great formal cultic situations. Therefore, personal piety plays an essential role for him. Personal piety is a personal relationship with God; however, formal piety is a choice as it is the decision of the people to stay with the god who delivered them from a crisis. In personal piety, the crisis keeps the personal relationship with God unbroken. Albertz argued that family religion became the foundation for the interpretation of David's kingship and Deuteronomy, which interpreted the official religious acts of salvation as a new foundation for personal piety. The exile and the post-exile led to personal religion (piety) influencing the official religion until a new mixture of the two came to be shaped (see Butler 1984:388–390; Gillingham 1987:35).

Further development came with Westermann's research on the more general life experiences of the psalmists. He reduced the categories of Gunkel's form-critical approach to petition and prayer. He also moved the focus away from the cultic setting and instead focused on personal prayers (Gillingham 1987:34, 40). Therefore, there was a stronger emphasis on personal piety. In 1987, Sue Gillingham returned to Mowinckel's 'cult-functional' approach however, her approach was more general and cautious and, as she terms it, it was a 'life-centred' approach, with a strong focus on the individual 'I' in distinguishing personal piety from formal piety.

Later, Brueggemann (1984) brought a further development by interpreting psalms from the three functional categories of orientation, disorientation and reorientation. Brueggemann was also dependent on the concepts of 'function' and the 'cult', as he saw the cult as a 'world creating drama' regardless of its 'ancient ceremonial practices'. Therefore, a typology of movement in the psalms could be seen, also in piety (Brown 2014:15). Norman Gottwald used sociological methods and applied Brueggemann's approach to ancient Israelite society (Brown 2014:13–15; cf. Bellinger 2012:27–30). In addition to these approaches from historical–critical methods, focus on reading the psalms as a whole from a canonical-critical approach as described by Childs (1979) and taken further by Wilson (1985) with his description of the shape and shaping of the Psalter shaped psalm research over the last four decades (cf. Bellinger 2012:31). This shaped the focus of research study on piety also in the collections of psalms, as Hossfeld and Zenger (1992:21–50, 1993:13–14, 45, 108–109) illustrated, in showing how collections of psalms relate to a 'piety of the poor'.[9]

Recently, in 2012, Dragoslava Santrac again emphasised the cult, and indicated the importance of the relation between personal piety and the cult at that sanctuary in the psalms, which is caused by the creative power of the cult. Focusing on the shape and shaping of the Psalter, Santrac (2012:i) argued that the sanctuary motif played an important role in the present shape of the Psalter, indicating that the piety of the psalmists, specifically that of the editor of the Psalter, 'promoted the eschatological hope of Israel in the new temple and the heavenly aspect of Israel's sanctuary'.[10]

Up to this point, the following observations regarding piety in the psalms must be made. Formal piety focuses on the

---

9. Already in 1963, Brennan (1963:562) indicated the strong relation between being poor and being pious. For him such a piety of the poor must be seen as one of the truest expressions of Israel's religion. According to Brennan (1963:562), in the psalms the two concepts are almost synonymous. Although the people may have been materially poor, their existence and their trust were in God alone. The approach by Hossfeld and Zenger (1992, 1993), where piety in the psalms is read from the perspective of the poor, has been utilized by multiple scholars in their research studies. Lombaard (2012:278) indicated how the supplicant in Psalms 109 demonstrates religious piety (of the poor) by placing one's troubles and suffering before God. Botha (2016:64) indicated that piety as a 'religious zeal' is a conspicuous feature in Psalms 15–24 as a collection. In his article, he argues that the 'piety of the poor' must be understood in a post-exilic context as a religious grouping rather than just a social grouping. Piety demonstrated in this collection and specifically Psalms 16 portrays David as an ideal person dedicated to YHWH. Even more, the piety in Psalms 16 demonstrates that to be blessed by YHWH is not something that happens through material prosperity, but rather through contentedness and happiness in a life that is under the control of YHWH (according to the Torah). Piety is therefore defined as Torah-piety (Botha 2016:74–75, 80). Groenewald (2018:790–811; see also Groenewald 2007:425–441) demonstrates that the redaction at the end of Book 1 (Ps 3–41) and Book II (42–72) of the Psalter was influenced by the view that the theology of the 'piety of the poor' as part of restoration and hope for those that are oppressed and in social crisis.

10. Franklyn (1987:1, 14) viewed the cult as part of a pious climax of eschatology in the apocryphal book 'The Psalms of Solomon'. He regards it as a specification of eschatology for the community.

community's religious practices (the group) in relation to the cult, as practised and experienced through history or in a traditional setting (the sanctuary or temple) to connect with God.[11] Personal piety focuses on the individual's experience and practices of religion to connect with God.[12] It is clear that a distinction between formal and personal piety was made; however, later it was not that discernible anymore because of everyday life crises[13] and 'the great moments in public religion' (Butler 1984:390).[14] In the final shaping of the Psalter, many of the psalms that showed personal piety was now incorporated into the formal public religion.[15] According to Mowinckel, Gerstenberger and Albertz, piety focused more on the emotional level than on the 'objective-event level' (see Butler 1984:391–392). It was about a person or people trying to relate to God under all circumstances of life. In the psalms, piety focused on acknowledging crisis, pain and despair; however at the end, always turned the focus (of the one praying) back to God with an element of praise, trust, worship or highlighting God's acts of deliverance (see Butler 1984:392–393). These manifestations of piety contributed to the theology of the psalms as they communicated praise, protest, the nature of God, and the nature of the relationship between God and human beings. In its final shaping, the Psalter shared themes, such as pain, crisis and the poor, and how piety was expressed and experienced in such circumstances (for the individual or group or later incorporated into the formal religious practices) (see Butler 1984:393; Hossfeld & Zenger 1992:21–50, 1993:13–14, 45, 108–109).

Piety from a spatial perspective

In 2019, a study by Danijel Berković contributed a new perspective to piety research study by distinguishing between personal and private piety (Berković 2019:14–15) by referring to body imagery. Up to this point, the debate focused mostly on how formal and personal piety merged under circumstances. Berković (2019:14) made a further distinction between personal and private piety. He understood personal piety as follows:

> Personal refers to everything that is immanent to a particular person, whether material (property) or immaterial (emotion). The personal is a combination of each individual's emotional and behavioral patterns. The consciousness and self-consciousness of

all that is personal, include forms of public expression. The psalmist often yearns to exercise his personal devotion and piety in public worship (Ps 27 cf. 61:4) where in his heartfelt yearning for the nearness of God, the psalmist seeks to affirm his faith and exercise his deep-seated personal piety in public worship. (p. 14)

'Private', according to Berković (2019:15), 'is private as confined to the person concerned, and not publicly expressed. It requires private space, "taken away" (lat. *privatus*) from public eyes'. For him the awareness and perception of what is strictly private is therefore important. He brings this in relation to human body parts (cf. Dt 25:11).[16] For him, privacy is also a matter of seclusion and secrecy (בלט). According to Berković (2019):

> '[t]he psalmist's personal piety is often exercised in such privacy. For him this can be designated spatially and temporally. Spatially, on his bed or a couch, his room (cf. Pss 6, 63). Temporally, it can be at all times or day and night'. (p. 15, cf. Ps 6, 16, 17, 42, 63, 77, 88)

Berković focuses mainly on the emotional expressions and experience of the person concerning body imagery. His description of space and time is primarily an outward description of these concepts. Considering what has been said up to this point about formal, personal and private piety, the rest of the article will contribute further to the topic of piety by reading Psalm 66 from a spatial perspective, in order to argue that the psalmist uses past events (cultural memory[17]) and body imagery to express piety. The spatial perspective utilised is that of third or lived space[18] and how body imagery contributes to further spatial awareness by viewing the body as a three-dimensional container.[19]

11. For a discussion on how this relationship between God and a person must be understood in relation to piety, see Assmann (1999:31–33).

12. Luiselli (2008:2–4) rightly stated that in many instances, personal piety must be understood as an intimate personal dimension or aspect of official religion.

13. See Fischer (2001:3) on this point, as he argues that after the loss of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem (586 BCE), because of the crisis, the individual had to move to a personal piety that focused on the inner relationship between the person and God or could opt for the 'abandoning of faith, that is nihilism, and the accusation of an arbitrary god' (Ficsher 2001:4). According to Fischer (2001:4), personal piety is not the result of the crisis but the crisis must rather be understood as 'fertile ground for it because it provokes a reaction towards the old *status quo*'.

14. Ausec (2010:8) argued that personal piety in New Kingdom Egypt texts can be understood as religious beliefs of Egyptian people, which were practised outside of the official cult in temples. This was seen mostly amongst the lesser classes of Egypt. The reasoning behind it varies. Bussmann (2017:71–91) also argued that personal piety was a response by the people to their exclusion from the temples. The focus was therefore not on the intimate relationship between the people (the individual) and their god but rather on the loss of the intimacy because of the exclusion from the formal religious practices (see also Baines and Frood [2011:1–17] for a further discussion on this topic).

15. See Butler (1984:391). Uehlinger (2015:9) calls it a reclassification of 'official' versus 'private', 'family' or 'private' religion.

16. Berković (2019:32) made an important point when he said that body imagery plays an important role in Israel's experience of God. This is true of an individual or corporate setting; however, it is mostly true of the individual's personal emotional expression. For him, it is, therefore, important to focus on the anthropological and psychobiological aspects of this language (Berković 2019:26). The heart is explained in its different emotional states (clean, pure, etc.) (Berković 2019:26–28). The eyes, face and hands are explained in the context of facial and emotional expressions (Berković 2019:28–29). He then also focuses on the innermost or emotional and religious experience of ברק to describe how God is praised in the innermost part of a human being (Berković 2019:30–32).

17. A distinction must be made between 'communicative memory', which is based on everyday communications, and 'cultural memory', which is characterised by its distance from everyday life. Cultural memory has instead a fixed point that does not change over time. These are fateful events of the past, the memory of which is now part of the formation of the culture and its institutional communication (Assmann & Czaplicka 1995:126, 129; cf. Hendel 2005:7–8, 62).

18. Soja (1998:10–11) 'proposes a trialectic of spaces. Firstspace is primarily focused on the physical, concrete, and perceived space and describes a place or an environment. In the Secondspace, one examines the mental or cognitive forms of human spatiality; the imagined, conceived, and abstract space. This space is produced by language, metaphor, and ideology. Thirdspace is lived space, where confrontation between various social groups and their space(s) takes place' (cf. Sutton 2019a:99).

19. The body is understood as a three-dimensional container, which is best understood in terms of boundedness that can be experienced and noticed (observed – inside the mind). Things can go in and out of the body (e.g. food, water and air). Depending on the body's surroundings (vertically and horizontally), it can be experienced as physical containment (in and out of buildings or cities) (Coetzee 2004:522; cf. also Johnson 1987:21). According to Coetzee (2007; cf. Sutton 2019b:563–564),
'[a]ll human experience is incarnated and all meaning, imagination and reasoning to grasp the world as reality, is bodily based and not only an objectivistic activity of the brain. It is through the perceptual organs that we perceive the world around us and it is through the body that we respond to what we perceive. Our emotions and desires are completely bodily based, and are mostly directly linked with our inner body, which contains organs such as the liver, heart, lungs, digestive system, nerve system, blood system, glands, the womb, etcetera. Whilst the body is the centre of one's world and is one's inescapable presence, the body is simultaneously characterised by absence' (pp. 321–322).

TABLE 1: Translation and division of Psalms 66.

Stanza	Strophe	Verse lines	Hebrew verses	Verses	Translation
Superscription		-	לַמְנַצֵּחַ שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר	1a	For the chief musician. A song. A psalm.
I	A	1	הָרִיעוּ לֵאלֹהִים כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃	b	Make a joyful noise to God, [20]all the earth!
		2	זַמְּרוּ כְבוֹד־שְׁמוֹ	2a	Sing the glory of his name! [21]
			שִׂימוּ כָבוֹד תְּהִלָּתוֹ׃	b	sing the glory of his praise![22]
		3	אִמְרוּ לֵאלֹהִים מַה־נּוֹרָא מַעֲשֶׂיךָ	3a	Say to God: '[h]ow awesome are your works!'
			בְּרֹב עֻזְּךָ יְכַחֲשׁוּ לְךָ אֹיְבֶיךָ׃	b	Because of your mighty power, your enemies cringe (bow down) [23]before you.
		4	כָּל־הָאָרֶץ יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְךָ וִיזַמְּרוּ־לָךְ	4a	Let all the earth bow down (worship) to you and sing to you,
			יְזַמְּרוּ שִׁמְךָ סֶלָה׃	b	sing to your name. *Selah*
	B	5	לְכוּ וּרְאוּ מִפְעֲלוֹת אֱלֹהִים	5a	Go and see the deeds of God,
			נוֹרָא עֲלִילָה עַל־בְּנֵי אָדָם׃	b	(his) awesome[24] work [25]amongst all the people.[26]
		6	הָפַךְ יָם לְיַבָּשָׁה	6a	He turned the sea into dry land.
			בַּנָּהָר יַעַבְרוּ בְרָגֶל	b	They walk through the river (dry-shod) on foot,
			שָׁם נִשְׂמְחָה־בּוֹ׃	c	and sing to him.
		7	מֹשֵׁל בִּגְבוּרָתוֹ עוֹלָם	7a	An everlasting ruler in his might.
			עֵינָיו בַּגּוֹיִם תִּצְפֶּינָה	b	His eyes keep watch over the nations.
			הַסּוֹרְרִים אַל־יָרוּמוּ לָמוֹ סֶלָה׃	c	The rebellious do not arise[27] against him. *Selah.*
	C	8	בָּרְכוּ עַמִּים אֱלֹהֵינוּ	8a	Your nations, praise our God.
			וְהַשְׁמִיעוּ קוֹל תְּהִלָּתוֹ׃	b	Let the sound of his praise resound.
		9	הַשָּׂם נַפְשֵׁנוּ בַּחַיִּים	9a	He gave life to our soul (life).
			וְלֹא־נָתַן לַמּוֹט רַגְלֵנוּ׃	b	And did not allow our foot to slip.
	D	10	כִּי־בְחַנְתָּנוּ אֱלֹהִים	10a	For you, o God, have proved us.
			צְרַפְתָּנוּ כִּצְרָף־כָּסֶף׃	b	Have refined us as silver is refined.
		11	הֲבֵאתָנוּ בַמְּצוּדָה	11a	You have brought us into the stronghold.[28, 29]
			שַׂמְתָּ מוּעָקָה בְמָתְנֵינוּ׃	b	You have laid heavy burdens [30]upon our hips,
		12	הִרְכַּבְתָּ אֱנוֹשׁ לְרֹאשֵׁנוּ	12a	You have let people ride over our head.
			בָּאנוּ־בָאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם	b	We came through fire and water.
			וַתּוֹצִיאֵנוּ לָרְוָיָה׃	c	But you brought us out into abundance.[31]
II	E	13	אָבוֹא בֵיתְךָ בְעוֹלוֹת	13a	I come to your house with burnt offerings.[32]
			אֲשַׁלֵּם לְךָ נְדָרָי׃	b	I will pay my vows to you.
		14	אֲשֶׁר־פָּצוּ שְׂפָתָי	14a	For which I opened my lips,[33]
			וְדִבֶּר־פִּי בַּצַּר־לִי׃	b	and which my mouth spoke in my trouble.
		15	עֹלוֹת מֵחִים אַעֲלֶה־לָּךְ עִם־קְטֹרֶת אֵילִים	15a	Burnt offerings of fatlings I will bring to you, with the smoke[34] of rams.
			אֶעֱשֶׂה בָקָר עִם־עַתּוּדִים סֶלָה׃	b	I will offer bulls and goats. *Selah.*
	F	16	לְכוּ־שִׁמְעוּ וַאֲסַפְּרָה כָּל־יִרְאֵי אֱלֹהִים	16a	Go and listen, and I will tell, all you who fear God.
			אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְנַפְשִׁי׃	b	What he has performed for my life (soul).[35]
		17	אֵלָיו פִּי־קָרָאתִי	17a	My mouth cried out to him,
			וְרוֹמַם תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנִי׃	b	and praise was under my tongue.
		18	אָוֶן אִם־רָאִיתִי בְלִבִּי	18a	When I looked into my heart, there was iniquity.[36]
			לֹא יִשְׁמַע אֲדֹנָי׃	b	The Lord will not hear it.

Table 1 continues on the next page →

20. Krause (1993:34) translated all the occurrences of God in the Psalm as YHWH, as he sees this text as part of the Elohistically revised Psalter.

21. The psalms make use of inclusion, see 2a-4b and 5a-7a.

22. This line presents a problem in translation because of the double object in the line. It can be translated 'set forth gloriously his praise' or 'make his praise an honour' or 'offer him glory and praise'. By the addition of the לו (Josh 7:19; Isa 42:12), the appeal becomes more significant. 'Glory' is then also seen as a construct or as an adverb, and therefore, 'glory of' (see Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:144; Tate 1990:145).

23. כחש can also be understood as bowing down, as in Psalms 18:45; 81:16.

24. One can also translate 'frightening'.

25. עלילה should be understood in the singular sense here and not in the plural sense, as it has a collective meaning.

26. The phrase עַל־בְּנֵי אָדָם may also be translated in different ways. One can also translate it as 'children of men'.

27. סר should be read either with the *kethiv* or with the *qere* here. The meaning stays the same. The parallel in Psalms 21:14 supports the *qere* (Tate 1990:146).

28. One can also translate this as 'hunter's net' or 'hunter's snare'. The net or stronghold is a metaphor for 'trouble'.

29. A chiastic pattern can be seen between 11a/12b/11b/12a.

30. מוּעָקָה is a *hapax legomenon*, that can also possibly be translated as 'trouble', 'tight place' or 'chain'. The meaning is uncertain.

31. The Masoretic text הָרְוָיָה can also be understood as 'intoxication' or for 'refreshment'. One can also translate it as 'freedom' as in the Greek, Jerome and the Targum. This context would suit the translation better.

32. Inclusion between 13a and 15a.

33. A chiastic pattern can be seen between 14a/17b/14b/17a.

34. קְטֹרֶת can firstly refer to the incense, and secondly also to the smoke and the aroma which go up from sacrifices (Is 1:13; 1 Sm 2:28).

35. Inclusion can be seen between 16b and 18b.

36. The phrase אָוֶן אִם־רָאִיתִי בְלִבִּי has also been altered by many to rather be seen as a phrase of self-reflection and translated as 'I said in my heart' or 'I thought to myself'. The Masoretic text is the more difficult version to comprehend but preferable to follow (see Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:144).

TABLE 1 (Continues...): Translation and division of Psalms 66.

Stanza	Strophe	Verse lines	Hebrew verses	Verses	Translation
		19	אָכֵן שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים	19a	But God has heard it.
			הִקְשִׁיב בְּקוֹל תְּפִלָּתִי:	b	And listened to the voice of my prayer.
		20	בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהִים	20a	Praise be to God,
			אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הֵסִיר תְּפִלָּתִי וְחַסְדּוֹ מֵאִתִּי:	b	who has never rejected my prayer and has not withdrawn his steadfast love from me.

Source: Author's own translation. Cf. Hossfeld, F.-L. & Zenger, E., 2005, *Psalms 2, Hermeneia – Critical and historical commentary on the Bible,* Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN & Terrien, S., 2003, *The Psalms: Strophic structure and theological commentary, Volume 1 Psalms 1–72,* Eerdmans Critical Commentary, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.

TABLE 2: Structure of Psalms 66.

Stanza	Strophe	Verse lines	Verses	Themes of stanzas	Themes of strophes
	Superscription		1a	For the chief musician. A song. A psalm.	
I		1–12	1b–12c	'We' group: hymn of praise (for all the world)	-
	A	1–4	1b–4b	-	Descriptive praise: make a joyful noise to God
	B	5–7	5a–7c	-	Descriptive praise: come and see the deed and rule of God – the Exodus
	C	8–12	8a–12c	-	Narrative praise: call to praise – trails and chastisement
II		13–15	13a–20b	Individual praise 'I' (invitation to the pious)	-
	D	13–15	13a–15b	-	The petitioner: call to praise and presentation of burnt offerings at the temple
	E	16–20	16a–20b	-	An appeal to listen –teaching with a declaration

Source: Cf. Hossfeld, F.-L. & Zenger, E., 2005, *Psalms 2, Hermeneia – Critical and historical commentary on the Bible,* Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN & Terrien, S., 2003, *The Psalms: Strophic structure and theological commentary, Volume 1 Psalms 1–72*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.

Understanding piety in Psalm 66

Reading Psalm 66 in its final placement in the Psalter, the post-war reality of the Babylonian exile with its outcome, consequences and trauma should be considered the backdrop for the ideology promoted by the final redaction and shaping of the Psalter and its readers to restore a broken community with hope and how to deal with their new life situation (DeClaissé-Walford 2004:5). The smaller group of Psalms 65–68 is situated in the larger collection of Psalms 51–72, also known as the second Davidic Psalter. This smaller collection of psalms can be identified mostly as psalms of praise and thanksgiving. On many points, the relation and compositional work in this cluster of psalms becomes apparent in the pious expressions between groups and persons at prayer, especially regarding the universal praise of God and imagery concerning the exodus, the Jerusalem cult and the blessing,[37] This piety becomes most discernible in the imagery and expressions used in Psalm 66, consisting of hymnic and thanksgiving elements.

The translation presented in Table 1, is in concurrence with the majority of modern translations. Textual difficulties and notes are discussed to a limited extent in footnotes.

Psalm 66's two main sections (stanzas), as seen in Table 2, are identified by praise: verses 1b–12, praise by the group or the collective 'we', and verses 13–20, praise by the individual or the 'I'. There is a clear thematic transition between the two major sections. The first strophe (vv. 1b–4) is an invitation to all the earth to praise.[38] The descriptive praise is directed to God and his name,[39] glory and mighty work.[40] In verse 3, a reason is presented for the praise, namely, the deeds of God (see Ps 65:6) in the creation and the memory of past deeds.

The power of God even forces the enemies to bow down in praise.[41] The previous thoughts are repeated in a poetic inclusion (v. 4), according to which the earth must come to worship, bow down, and sing to his name (cf. Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:144–145). According to Terrien (2003:479), this first section already introduces the following sections where the works (vs. 3/vs. 5) refer to the exodus reference in verses 5–7, and the praise directed towards God is part of the covenant recital in verse 16. For him, these verses already create a formal cultic space (Is 6:3; Hab 3:3). These verses recall the formal liturgical practice to praise God and direct oneself towards God, something associated with formal piety. The body imagery associated with the mouth (sing and praise) and the expressive pious speech directed to God by the 'we' is heard.

The descriptive praise continues in verses 5–7 with a recollection of the memory of past events. According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:145), the first of these is the use of the phrase לְכוּ וּרְאוּ in verse 5, 'go and see'. Its close parallel is found in the Zion hymn, Psalms 46:9 (cf. Ps 84:8; 122:1). The image recalls the memory of the pilgrims going to Jerusalem. In terms of the universal perspective in verses 1–4, such memory relates to the idea of all the nations on this pilgrimage. In verse 6, the salvation event with the miracle at the sea is recalled (Ex 14–15). Scholars debate whether verse 6 could also possibly be a reference to the transit at the Jordan in Joshua 3:14–17. The priestly language found in this verse in relation to Exodus 14:5, 16, and 22 rather suggests a reference to the exodus narrative. A further suggestion is that the text refers to the chaos waters and indicates YHWH's power over chaos (Is 50:2; 51:9–10). According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:145), it is more important to highlight the sequence of verb conjugations 'from the past through a generalised content with the prefix conjugation to the cohortative'. The main purpose of this sequence was to indicate the continuity between past events (memory) and the one praying the psalm. Therefore, the text is a 'liturgical remembering that brings

37.For a further discussion on the position of Ps 66 within Psalms 65–68 and within the larger grouping of Psalms 51–72, see Attard (2016:275–314).

38.Cf. Psalms 47:2; 82:2; 95:1–2; 98:4; 100:1.

39.Cf. Psalms 54:3; 29:1.

40.Cf. Psalms 8:3; 29:1.

41.Cf. Psalms 18:45; 81:16.

together time and space'. Continuity is created between the memory of the past event and the subject remembering the event (Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:145).[42] The memory (past events) is used to create a new 'sanctuary' or space within which to practise piety (whether it is formal, personal or private in nature). In order to understand this new space, the three-dimensional concept of space, as explained by Soja (1998:68), especially thirdspace, can be utilised. It may be considered a space that involves, comprehends and potentially transforms all space simultaneously, and may also be understood as a new lived space. The recollection of one of Israel's 'great moments in public religion' helps the 'we' (those praying the psalm) remember how intimacy with God was experienced. This allows them to practise piety (by recalling the past) in order to again experience intimacy with God in and after a time of crisis (after the exile). This is again seen in verses 13–15, with the recollection of the cultic imagery at the temple. These verses express the yearning of the group, later expressed in verses 13–20 by the individual, to practise piety again not only in a personal way as they are forced to, because of their circumstances, but also in a formal religious manner. In the meantime, this memory sustains them so that they can practise personal piety in the present. This section ends in verse 7 with a hymnic participle, focusing on the royal sovereignty of God, as a royal judge, keeping watch over the nations (cf. Tate 1990:149).

The third strophe (vv. 8–12) opens with a call to the nations, in verse 8, to praise not only 'God' but also 'our God'. This indicates that what is to follow has a strong focus on Israel. In verse 9, the metaphor that God did not allow 'our foot slip' is used to indicate misfortune (cf. Ps 20:6; 55:23; 121:3). Probably, according to Tate (1990:150), the body imagery suggests that life is slipping away into the underworld. The verse indicates how God prevented his people's feet from slipping into the underworld (experiencing misfortune) and instead experiencing God's life-giving work. In verse 10, the imagery turns to the testing and purification of metals, frequently seen in the prophets.[43] The purpose of testing and purification by God was probably to develop and reveal the character of his people (cf. Ps 11:4–5, 7) as this is not a cultic purification that takes place by fire (cf. Nm 31:23) and water (Ps 26:6) (cf. Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:146; Tate 1990:150). Verses 11 and 12 are loaded with warfare imagery. The negative image of the stronghold usually portrays a positive image of God as a fortress and stronghold (cf. Ps 18:3). Here, the negative image (cf. Ezk 12:13; 17:20) becomes an image of imprisonment. The burden of the hips is body imagery that expresses the hardship experienced. The negative image in verse 12 also alludes to warfare imagery with the riding over of the heads. Trampling on the heads of your enemies was a common display of power and domination in the ancient Near East (Ps 110:1). This body imagery is striking. The head, which represents the body in totality, is trampled on and shamed.

These verses again recall the memory of past events, either by alluding to the experiences in Egypt or, more likely, the Babylonian exile. In terms of verse 10, the body is even further tested. The image of fire and water can be interpreted as a merism for extreme danger (cf. Isa 51:23) (cf. Hossfeld & Zenger 2005:146). According to Tate (1990:150), the image of fire and water in relation to verse 10 alludes to cultic purification. The enemies become the instrument of God who uses them to purify Israel (cf. Terrien 2003:480). The experiences of warfare thus become an outer and inner experience of bodily purification.[44] According to Attard (2016:306), the language is part of cultic language. Going through the water in verse 6 and now the experience with fire and water in verse 12, further allude to the exodus narrative and freedom from Egypt, or the new exodus, that is, being freed from the exile. This indicates a time when formal piety could not be practised, when sacrifice could not happen. However, God promises (cf. Is 43:2) that he will accompany his people through fire and water, bringing them back to freedom and abundance (v. 12c).

In verses 13–20, the text focuses on the individual's personal experience. In the fourth strophe (vv. 13–15), the petitioner[45] refers to the memory of cultic experiences and, in this process, creates a new thirdspace. In this new lived space, the memory of the temple helps to practise personal piety again, where formal piety cannot happen because of the current crisis (exilic context). The memory of the exodus from Egypt (vv. 5–7), hardship endured (vv. 8–12) and now the cultic practices at the temple (vv. 13–15), functions as 'a symbolic shaper of the community' and the individual (Hendel 2005:8). According to Hendel (2005:62), '[m]emories of shared suffering are potent ingredients in the formation and persistence of ethnic identity'. Formal cultic practices (formal piety) of the burnt offering[46] are seen, where the burning of animals is considered the most worthy. The bringing of a burnt offering is part of the fulfilment of a vow. This is confirmed in the next verse with the imagery of the mouth, where expressive speech is used to declare a vow that will be brought to the house of God (Hossfeld & Zenger

---

42. In the praise of God by the rescued before the assembled community, the focus is on a public announcement of what was experienced with this God. In this way, the memory in Psalms 66 proves to be an important witness of experience, thus authenticating the traditional knowledge and re-establishing the community's collective thinking (cf. Janowski 2019:489).

43. Cf. Isaiah 1:22, 25; 48:10; Jeremiah 6:27–29; Ezekiel 22:17–22.

44. In Psalms 30:7–13, the question is asked in v. 10, what YHWH would gain from the death of one of his pious ones. With every person who was precious to him and who died prematurely, YHWH would lose a testimony of his power, so that such a death would also be his defeat (see also Ps 6:6; 88:11–13; 115:17; Is 38:18 and Sir 17:27) (Janowski 2019:489). The purpose of the event is thus a purification rather than the result of death.

45. It is unsure whether the petitioner is a king. The fact that the person brings a vow to the temple may indicate that he represents the nation. Watts (2009:45, 46, 47) explained the importance of the depiction of the king in the ancient near eastern iconography and inscriptions as a model of perfect piety. This rhetoric of propaganda influenced the way that lower class individuals saw themselves and how they were persuaded to view the king positively.

46. According to Santrac (2012):
There are many references to sacrifice in the psalms. The two main types of sacrifice are the peace offerings, referred to simply as sacrifices (e.g. Pss 4:5[6]; 27:6; 54:6[8]; 116:17) and burnt offerings (e.g. Pss. 20:3[4]; 66:13, 25). The Psalter mentions also the thank-offering (e.g. Pss 56:12; 100 (superscription); 107:22; 116:17); vows (e.g. Pss 22:25[26]; 50:14; 56:12[13]; 61:5[6], 8[9]; 65:1; 66:13; 76:11; 116:14); and the freewill offering (Ps 54:6[8]), which were forms of peace offering, and offerings which originally denoted sacrifice of any kind, although in the post-exilic period it denoted only cereal offerings and oil (e.g. Pss 20:3[4]; 86:8). The Psalms do not offer any proper clarification of what sacrifice means because they simply assume that the reader is accustomed to its theological meaning. The Pentateuch reveals that the purpose of the sacrifices and offerings within the sanctuary system was to provide a means of approaching the holy God who manifested himself in the sanctuary (e.g. Lev 1:1, 2; Exod 40:34, 35) and to maintain that presence by preserving the purity and the holiness of the sanctuary (e.g. Lev 15:31). (pp. 132–133) For a further discussion on the use of the burnt offering, see Tate (1990:150–151).

2005:146–147; cf. Sutton 2019b:563). It is important to note the positive use of the imagery here. Typically, in the psalms, the offerings are mentioned as a critique of the cult (Ps 40:7; 50:8; 51:18). In this case, the memory is a positive memory for the petitioner; again, the yearning to practise normal piety is seen. One of the most important contributions to the study of personal piety in Ancient Egypt is that of Brunner (1982:951–963), who identified personal piety as a form of individual devotion originating from the official cult and temple liturgy. This contribution helps one to see how piety was practised in times when the official cult was not yet established or could not be practised; for instance, in a time of war or after the war, in times of restoration. This is especially important for the study of Old Testament texts that originated from, or went through redactional editing in and after the Babylonian exile when the temple was destroyed, and the official cult had to be re-established and had to restore its former practices. The memories help to reconstruct the new lived space for the petitioner (the 'I') and community (the 'we'), and such piety can still be practised using the formal practices to incorporate into personal pious reflection and practice.[47]

The last strophe of this psalm (vv. 16–20) reflects on the individual, with an appeal to listen that may be seen as instruction. According to Hossfeld and Zenger (2005:147), the appeal to listen and instruction in verse 16 is not based on wisdom traditions but must rather be understood in relation to the previous section in the psalms, as part of the cultic language. All those who fear God are called upon as a reference to the 'we' and 'I' in this psalm. The body imagery in verse 17 again makes use of the mouth as part of expressive speech to declare the yearning to be close to God. Although verse 16 calls upon all to listen (and see), the declaration and praise in verses 16 and 17 are expressions of personal piety by the individual. In terms of containment, the body is placed for all to see, and to hear the personal declaration. In verse 18 and 19, the bodily imagery moves inward. The individual now practises private piety. The experience of testing and of God examining the heart (representing thoughts) is an exclusive experience between the one praying and God (relating to the imagery in vv. 10–12). At first, the individual experiences doubt and uncertainty as to whether God heard (the ear) the prayer; however, verse 19 confirms that God did hear his or her prayer. The ear represents communication (listening and hearing), where the individual in a self-revealing act opens the heart to scrutiny in an effort of private piety (cf. Sutton 2019b:563). Verse 20 ends with a declaration that God answered the prayer of the individual. At this stage, a religious attitude characterised by deep devotion and loyalty to God and a desire for direct contact with God is accomplished, despite the burden of the crisis experienced by the individual (and the nation).

47. According to Hendel (2005):
     The past uninterpreted would be a mere collection of facts. The past as people remember it is the meaningful past, the past as perceived and colored by subjective concepts, hopes, and fears. Memory is always selective, and it is organized and embroidered according to the desires of the present (i.e. the present situation of the memorious agent). The historically true and the symbolically true are interwoven in such a way that the past authorizes and encompasses the present (p. 71).

Practising piety in a time of (post-) pandemic

In this research article, the development of piety research helped to point out the importance of practising piety. The distinction between formal, personal and private piety is an important perspective for understanding piety, and realising that in the development of texts and their redactions, many of the typical distinctions between types of piety became blurred because of events in the history of Israel. This also impacted how piety was practised in times of crisis. In Psalm 66, piety is expressed by the 'we' and 'I' who desired and experienced immediacy to God by transposing the past into the present through the memory of the exodus narrative, Jerusalem cultic imagery and the use of body imagery. This was accomplished as the petitioner or the one praying the psalm ('we' and 'I') created a new lived space (thirdspace). It is important to realise that although these practices of personal and private piety help those praying Psalm 66 in times of war and thereafter, the main purpose of the texts was to remind them that it will be possible again in the future to worship in a formal setting. The one will always need the other. The text got its place in the final redaction where it served the restoration of a post-war Israel.

In the same manner, the text can still help people in any time of crisis or pandemic to practise piety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when people are forced to experience national lockdowns and isolation because of sickness, they cannot attend formal religious practices (church). The psalmist used the memory of past events to reinforce a practice of personal piety by creating a new lived space to experience God. In our case, as experienced in the history of Israel, such new spaces will later become part of our new formal practices of piety. Now, in isolation, being church (*ecclesia*) can be practised, and when the crisis passes, the new practices will become part of our joint practices. The past and the new symbolic truth of the current situation thus create a new space where the individual in crisis can practise piety, with the past providing authority for succeeding and transcending the present crisis.

Acknowledgements

Funding information

This research work received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

References

Albertz, R., 1978, *Persönliche Frömmigkeit und offizielle Religion: Religionsinterner Pluralismus in Israel u. Babylon*, Calwer Theologische Monographien: Reihe A, Bibelwissenschaft, Bd. 9, Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart.

Assmann, J., 1999, 'Conversion, piety and loyalism in ancient Egypt', in J. Assmann & G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Transformations of the inner self in ancient religions, Studies in the history of religions*, vol. 83, pp. 31–44, Brill, Leiden.

Assmann, J. & Czaplicka, J., 1995, 'Collective memory and cultural identity', *New German Critique* 65, 125–133. https://doi.org/10.2307/488538

Attard, S.M., 2016, *The implications of Davidic Repentance. A synchronic analysis of Book 2 of the Psalter (Psalms 42–72)*, Gregorian & Biblical Press, Rome.

Ausec, C.L., 2010, 'Gods who hear prayers: Popular piety or kingship in three Theban monuments of new kingdom Egypt', PhD thesis, Department of Near Eastern Religions, University of California.

Baines, J. & Frood E., 2011, 'Piety, change and display in the new kingdom', in M. Collier & S. Snape (eds.), *Ramesside studies in honour of K.A. Kitchen*, pp. 1–17, Rutherford Press Limited, Bolton.

Bellinger, W.H. Jr., 2012, *Psalms. A guide to studying the psalter*, 2nd edn., Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI.

Berković, D., 2019, 'Personal and private religious experience in the biblical psalms', PhD thesis, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.

Bokser, B.Z., 1943, 'Personal piety in a secular world', *The Reconstructionist* 9(11), 9–15.

Botha, P.J., 2016, 'True happiness in the presence of YHWH: The literary and theological context for understanding Psalm 16', *Old Testament Essays* 29(1), 61–84. https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2016/v29n1a5

Brennan, J., 1963, 'The Psalms and the beatitudes', *The Furrow* 14(9), 561–572.

Brown, W.P., 2014, 'The Psalms: An overview', in W.P. Brown (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the Psalms*, pp. 1–23, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Brueggemann, W., 1984, *The message of the Psalms: A theological commentary*, Augsburg, Minneapolis, MN.

Brunner, H., 1982, 'Persönliche Frömmigkeit' in W. Helck & E. Otto (eds.), *Lexikon der Ägyptologie Band IV*, pp. 951–963, Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden.

Buccellati, G., 1995, 'Ethics and piety in the Ancient Near East', in J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilisations of the Ancient Near East*, pp. 1685–1696, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, NY.

Bussmann, R., 2017, 'Personal piety: An archaeological response', in G. Miniaci, M. Betrò & S. Quirke (eds.), *Company of images. Modelling the imaginary world of Middle Kingdom Egypt (2000-1500 BC), Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, vol. 262, pp. 71–91, Peeters, Leuven.

Butler, T.C., 1984, 'Piety in the Psalms', *Review & Expositor* 81(3), 385–394. https://doi.org/10.1177/003463738408100304

Childs, B.S., 1979, *Introduction to the Old Testament scripture*, Fortress, Philadelphia, PA.

Coetzee, J.H., 2004, 'And Jonah swam and swam and swam: Jonah's body in deep waters', *Old Testament Essays* 17, 521–530.

Coetzee, J.H., 2007, 'Where humans and animals meet, folly can be sweet – Jonah's bodily experience of containment the major drive behind his conduct', *Old Testament Essays* 20, 320–332.

Connell, J.C., 1960, 'Godliness', in E.F. Harrison (ed.), *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 248, Pickering & Inglis Ltd., London.

DeClaissé-Walford, N., 2004, *Introduction to the Psalms. A song from Ancient Israel*, Chalice, St. Louis, MO.

Fischer, S., 2001, 'Egyptian personal piety and Israel's wisdom literature', *Acta Theologica* 21(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.4314/actat.v21i1.5476

Franklyn, P.N., 1987, 'The cultic and pious climax of eschatology in the Psalms of Solomon', *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 18(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1163/00472212-018-01-02

Gerstenberger, E., 1974, 'Der klagende mensch', in H.W. Wolff (ed.), *Probleme biblischer Theologie, G. von Rad zum 70 Geburtstag*, pp. 64–72, München, Germany.

Gillingham, S., 1987, 'Personal piety in the study of the Psalms: A reassessment', PhD thesis, Keble College.

Groenewald, A., 2007, 'Psalms 69:33-34 in the light of the poor in the Psalter as a whole', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 28(2), 425–441. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v28i2.115

Groenewald, A., 2018, 'A trauma perspective of the redaction of the poor at the end of Book I (Pss 3–41) and Book II (Pss 42–72) of the Psalter', *Old Testament Essays* 31(3), 790–811. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v28i2.115

Hendel, R., 2005, *Remembering Abraham. Culture, memory, and history in the Hebrew Bible*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Hossfeld, F-L. & Zenger, E., 1992, '"Selig, wer auf die Armen achtet" (Ps 41, 2). Beobachtungen zur Gottesvolk-Theologie des ersten Davidpsalters', *Jahrbuch für biblische Theologie 7*, pp. 21–50, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen-Vluyn.

Hossfeld, F-L. & Zenger, E., 1993, *Psalm 1–50. Volume 1 of Die Psalmen*, Die Neue Echter Bibel, Echter Verlag, Würzburg.

Hossfeld, F-L. & Zenger, E., 2005, *Psalms 2, Hermeneia – Critical and historical commentary on the Bible*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Janowski, B., 2019, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments. Grundfragen-Kontexte-Themenfelder*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.

Johnson, M., 1987, *The body in the mind. The bodily basis of meaning, imagination, and reason*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Joubert, S., 2000, *Wees geestelik fiks*, Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging.

Joubert, S., 2003, *Dit kos guts om te bly glo*, Lux Verbi, Wellington.

Joubert, S., 2007, *Die moed om vir vandag te leef*, Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging.

Joubert, S., 2012, *In pas met God se wil*, Christelike Uitgewersmaatskappy, Vereeniging.

Joubert, S., 2019, *Kry styl – Jesus s'n*, Lux Verbi, Kaapstad.

Krishna, S.A., 2020, *Coronavirus: What is a lockdown? Are we heading for a global one now?* viewed 29 March 2020, from https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/coronavirus-what-is-a-lockdown-are-we-heading-for-a-global-one-now-1.1584366369214.

Krause, H-J., 1993, *Psalms 60–150, a continental commentary*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Lombaard, C., 2012, 'Biblical spirituality, the Psalms, and identification with the suffering of the poor: A contribution to the recent African discussion on Psalm 109', *Scriptura* 110, 273–281. https://doi.org/10.7833/110-0-116

Luiselli, M.M., 2008, 'Personal piety (Modern theories related to)', in W. Wendrich (ed.), *UCLA Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, pp. 1–9, University of California, Los Angeles, CA, viewed 15 July 2020, from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/49q0397q.

Luiselli, M.M., 2014, 'Personal piety in Ancient Egypt', *Religion Compass* 8(4), 105–116. https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12106

National Institute for Communicable Diseases, 2020, *COVID-19*, viewed 29 March 2020, from https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19/.

Olivier, J.P.J., 1997, 'שמח' in W.A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, vol. 4, pp. 306–308, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.

Packer, J.I., 2015, 'Piety', in I.H. Marshall, A.R. Millard, J.I. Packer & D.J. Wiseman (eds.), *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd edn., pp. 928, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL.

Potgieter, J.H., 2013, 'The profile of the rich antagonist and the pious protagonist in Psalm 52', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 69(1), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1963

Santrac, D., 2012, 'Sanctuary cult in relation to religious piety in the Book of Psalms', PhD thesis, North-West University.

Shellnutt, K., 2020, *When God closes a church door, he opens a browser window*, viewed 09 April 2021, from https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/march/online-church-attendance-covid-19-streaming-video-app.html.

Soja, E.W., 1998, *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*, Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA.

Sutton, L., 2019a, 'Reading Psalm 139 as a literary unit: A bodily interpretation from the perspective of space', MA Dissertation, Department of Ancient and Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Pretoria.

Sutton, L., 2019b, 'Darkness as an anthropological space: Perspectives induced by Psalms 88 and 139 on the themes of death, life and the presence of YHWH', *Old Testament Essays* 32(2), 556–577. https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2019/v32n2a16

Tate, M.E., 1984, 'The interpretation of the Psalms', *Review & Expositor* 81(3), 363–375. https://doi.org/10.1177/003463738408100302

Tate, M.E., 1990, *Psalms 51–100*, Word Biblical Commentary, Nelson Reference & Electronic, Nashville, TX.

Terrien, S., 2003, *The Psalms: Strophic structure and theological commentary, Volume 1 Psalms 1–72*, Eerdmans Critical Commentary, William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.

Uehlinger, C., 2015, 'Distinctive or diverse? Conceptualising ancient Israelite religion in its southern Levantine setting', in G.N. Knoppers, O. Lipschits, C.A. Newsom & K. Schmid (eds.), *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1–24, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.

Watts, J.W., 2009, 'Ritual Rhetoric in Ancient Near Eastern Texts', in C.S. Lipson & R.A. Binkley (eds.). *Ancient non-Greek Rhetorics*, pp. 39–66, Parlor Press, West Lafayette, IN.

Wilson, G.H., 1985, *The editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, Scholars Press, Chico, CA.