

The Feeling of Home and Communitas: Communion of Saints, (Inter)corporeality, and Enkinaesthesia in Psalm 84

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Abstract: Employing the theories and language of (inter)corporeality, enkinaesthesia, and other corporeal-related nomenclatures, Psalm 84 programmatically depicts the doctrine of the communion of saints as experienced through their shared cognitive, affective, conative, and somatic sensing and consciousness. A corporeal-sensitive reading of the psalm surfaces two related, embodied, prelinguistic experiences. Specifically, the communion of saints is experienced as finding and being “at home,” feeling a sense of safety and provision that is contrary to the stimuli of dangers and threats the psalmist’s body experiences outside the house of the Lord. Also, the communion of saints is experienced when camaraderie, or in Victor Turner’s term *communitas*, is generated from the tactile proprioceptive intersensory entanglement shared by saints as they make the arduous pilgrimage trek to the house of the Lord. These two expressions of the communion of saints are primarily felt and experienced (inter)corporeally rather than merely seen or heard. These latter two senses are most privileged in the virtual space practice of communion of saints.

Keywords: Psalm 84, Communion of Saints, enkinaesthesia, (inter)corporeality, intersubjectivity, pilgrimage, Zion, Temple of the Lord.

Introduction

The COVID-19 worldwide pandemic has affected the communal life of the church. Government-imposed precautionary measures like city lockdowns, social distancing, and mask wearing have undermined the practice of one of the paramount doctrines of the church—the communion of saints. Local churches worldwide in varying degrees are forced to make adjustments in their weekly liturgical programs and meetings. Some, though not all, of these ecclesial programs and liturgies have been shifted from physical space to virtual space using Zoom, GoogleMeet, Youtube, etc. Ostensibly, holding church liturgies in virtual space is an unorthodox way to practice church as physical, face-to-face meetings

have been the traditional medium. For the meantime, churches are forced to adapt to the “new normal” while simultaneously rethinking what it means to practice the communion of saints.

Doing church in a virtual space environment is still a novice undertaking, and its normativity and efficacy to attain the communion of saints is still contested. Further ethnographic studies and empirical research are needed to ascertain the effectivity of doing church this way. Arguably, the communion of the saints may be attained through virtual space as others seek to demonstrate. However, this so-called “attainment” or “effectivity” is contingent on how different religious traditions and denominations define “the communion of saints.”

Thus, this paper seeks to look to Scripture to inform and shape our conceptualization and practice of the communion of saints. Insofar as Scripture is authoritative, it sets the standard by which any theorizing and even practices should be measured, including doing church via virtual space. My selection of Psalm 84 is strategic because the psalm contains the necessary and sufficient elements for our reflection on the communion of saints and corporeality. These elements include the house of the Lord, the language of corporeality, the subject—people of God, and the pilgrimage to Zion and its associated strenuous travel.¹

The article has two major sections. The first is a summary of studies on corporeality, intersubjectivity, and sensoriality. The second is a judicious application of the theory and findings of corporeality studies to the text of Psalm 84. Two important considerations should be made clear at the outset. Insofar as this essay is not an ethnographic and empirical study, it requires creative imagination on my part to perceive the corporeality and embodiment operating in and through the text of Psalm 84. That said, I am informed by the ethnographic works of Allen-Collinson, McNarry, and Evans on swimming and running together and Giester’s report on the ritual of Druids.² Since their works possess both continuities and discontinuities with the religious pilgrimage of Psalm 84, judicious adjustments and adaptation are needed. I hope that readers will likewise “see” what I aim to describe as I heuristically bring to light what is otherwise overlooked, the (inter)corporeal entanglements either implicitly or explicitly described in the text. Second, I locate the psalmist in the conceptual framework of the communion of saints as a saint. This essay uses the lexemes psalmist, pilgrims, and saints alternatively to show the fusion of ancient and modern horizons in the text.

Finally, the thesis of the essay maintains that while the communion of saints may be attained in varying degrees via virtual space, the communion of saints in Psalm 84 is achieved corporeally, better yet (inter)corporeally. Psalm 84 demonstrates that the communion of saints is best actualized through the shared cognitive, affective, conative, and corporeal performance of dwelling in and making pilgrimage to the temple of the Lord.

¹ All English Translation is from NRSV unless otherwise noted.

² Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson, Gareth McNarry, and Adam B. Evans, “Sensoriality, Social Interaction, and ‘Doing Sensing’ in Physical-Cultural Ethnographies,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 50, no. 5 (2021): 559-621; Thorsten Giester. “Druids at Wayland’s Smithy: Tracing Transformations of the Sentient Body in Ritual,” in *Dem Körper eingeschrieben: Verkörperung zwischen Leiberleben und kulturellem Sinn* (Studien zur Interdisziplinären Anthropologie), eds. Matthias Jung, Michaela Bauks, and Andrea Ackermann (New York: Springer VS, 2015), 55–74.

This doctrine is utmost when the saints experience finding home and being at home communing with the Lord. Moreover, the arduous travel generates an embodied sense of camaraderie or *communitas* among the saints. It is a form of the communion of saints that is lost if physical pilgrimage to the house of the Lord is dispensed with.

Corporeality, Intersensoriality, and Enkinaesthesia

In the current intellectual climate is a flowering of research interest in the concomitant senses of the human body. These studies advance new locutions like embodied cognition, corporeality, sensoriality, enkinaesthesia, etc. Interest in these aspects of the human body was first promoted by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) and later refined and explained by French philosopher Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*,³ which is often summarized as the return to human lived experience. Merleau-Ponty's work forms the basis of numerous disciplines and focuses including cognitive science, cognitive-linguistics, metaphors,⁴ morality,⁵ cultural society, art, and law.⁶ Scholars in these fields of study are fascinated by the role of the human body in their respective disciplines. Essentially, they are interested in investigating preverbal and even preconceptual stages of human consciousness and knowing. Infants often serve as objects of experimental and empirical study on the preconceptual and prelinguistic stages of consciousness. Phenomenology reexamines the earlier belief of the Cartesian mind-body dualism, the divide between theory and practice, and the differentiation between solitary and shared experience. These corporeal studies reinvestigate the validity in prioritizing the human mind or brain over and the contra body in the development of human consciousness, knowing, morality, aesthetics, and even social relationships. The results of these numerous studies indicate there are legitimate reasons to renounce (1) de-sensualizing human ways of knowing and (2) the privileging of mental activity over and separate from bodily experience, at least in the preverbal and apprehension stages of human consciousness.

In this field of study is the burgeoning discussion on multimodalities; synaesthesia, or the continuity and integration of human senses and perceptions; intercorporeality; intersensoriality; and enkinesthesia. Corporeal experts speak of human and non-human as agents and agential enactments toward each other. Accordingly, "Individual human consciousness is formed in the dynamic interrelation of self and other, and therefore is inherently intersubjective."⁷ Another similar concept is "compresence" of the *alter* and *ego* is defined as follows: In our engagement with other bodies, "that as humans we are able not only to embody the other while the other simultaneously embodies us, but also embody ourselves in the same way as we embody the other. Our body can

³ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge / The Humanities Press, 1989).

⁴ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁵ Susan A. J. Stuart, "Enkinaesthesia: Proto-Moral Value in Action-Enquiry and Interaction," *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 17 (2018): 411-431.

⁶ David Howes and Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Sense in Society* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁷ Evan Thompson, "Empathy and Consciousness," *Journal of Conscious Studies* 8, no. 5-7 (2001): 1.

be subject or object for us in the same way as the other can be one.”⁸ This concept of intersubjectivity or compresence is fundamental to our essay on the communion of saints for it is the basis for “the dialogical interaction between two or more bodies such that instead of mind-reading, it is feeling their way in the world and feeling their way with each other.”⁹

Additionally, the material culture and physical world reality in which the corporeal-embodied knower is intersubjectively embedded in, also called enactivism, is deemed critical in corporeal consciousness and knowing. The human body and inanimate objects or another human soma in the material world all have their respective affordances.¹⁰ They are capable to interact and to be enacted upon. Contrary to mind-body dualism, human consciousness is constitutive of how our human body is embedded in a material environment and how such embeddedness shapes subjective and intersubjective consciousness. Hence, “While the paradigm of ‘embodiment’ implies an integration of mind and body, the emergent paradigm of ‘emplacement’ suggests the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment.”¹¹

Moreover among the various sensory functions, the human visual seems have taken prominence in our enlightenment study of human knowing. However, recent studies are acquiescing to other bodily senses as media in the development of human perception and consciousness. Scholars talk about synesthesia and enkinaesthesia (or intersensoriality) to suggest that human senses do not operate independently from each other but in immanent relationship with other senses and with the senses of others. “We dwell within our plenisentient intersubjective engagement with other agents, human and non-human, and this dwelling, this entangled enkinaesthetic experience, is a transcendental condition for the prenoetic affect, which makes alter ego identification, co-presentation, co-articulation, and co-action possible.”¹² Stuart explains in more detail:

Enkinaesthesia emphasizes two things (i) the neuromuscular dynamics of the agent, including the givenness and ownership of its experience, and (ii) the entwined, blended and situated co-affective feeling of the presence of the other(s), agential and non-agential (for example cup, bed, apple) and, where appropriate, the anticipated arc of the other’s action or movement, including, again where appropriate, the other’s intentionality. When the “other” is also a sensing and experiencing agent, it is their—in this case, the pair’s— affective intentional reciprocity, their folding, enfolding and unfolding, which co-constitutes the conscious relation and experientially recursive temporal dynamics that lead to the formation and maintenance of the deep integral enkinaesthetic structures and melodies which bind us together, even when they pull as apart.

⁸ Christine Meyer, Jürgen Streeck, and J. Scott Jordan, “Introduction,” in *Intercorporeality: Emerging Socialities in Interaction*, eds. Christine Meyer, Jürgen Streeck, and J. Scott Jordan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xx.

⁹ Stuart, “Enkinaesthesia: Proto-Moral Value,” 411.

¹⁰ James Gibson, “The Theory of Affordances,” in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1986), 127–43.

¹¹ David Howes, ed., *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005), 7.

¹² Susan A. J. Stuart, “The Articulation of Enkinaesthetic Entanglement,” in *Dem Körper eingeschrieben: Verkörperung zwischen Leiberleben und kulturellem Sinn* (Studien zur Interdisziplinären Anthropologie), eds. Matthias Jung, Michaela Bauks, and Andrea Ackermann (New York: Springer VS, 2015), 23.

Such deeply felt enkinaesthetic melodies emphasize the dialogical nature of the backgrounded feeling of being.¹³

Enkinaesthesia is most expressed through the agency of touch by human skin. Tactile sense underscores the sense that is readily and immediately experienced through physical presence and less experienced in the virtual space which is primarily through visual and hearing. David Le Breton writes the following about the power of the sense of touch:

The tactile sense encompasses the entire body, inside and out. It emanates from the whole expanse of the skin, unlike the other senses, which are more circumscribed. We feel the surrounding world at every bodily surface and in every instant, even while we sleep. Sensory experience is first and foremost tactile experience, constant with others and objects, the feeling of our feet touching the ground. The world imparts its forms, volumes, textures, shapes, masses and temperatures to us through its endless layers of skin. Because of the eminence of touch in existence, its primary role in ontogenesis, the notion of contact is often extended to other senses.¹⁴

Having summarized the basic theses of human corporeality and associated senses, we now apply the above principles to Psalm 84, paying close attention to how these theories help us understand Psalm 84 with the corporeality of the saints in mind.

Ritual, Temple, Pilgrimage to Zion, and (Inter)corporeality

A survey of historical research on Psalm 84 reveals that it has received the attention of many Psalms scholars. I do not wish to bloat this essay with the source, historical, lexical, or form critical issues¹⁵ and debate on Psalm 84.¹⁶ Instead, our analysis will build on the consensus of the psalm's compositional coherence, unity, and integrity. The psalm informs and shapes our understanding of the dialectical relationship between the communion of saints and (inter)corporeality.

Psalms scholars agree in categorizing Psalm 84 as a pilgrim song. Mitchell Dahood writes, "A psalm of mixed literary types, containing elements of a pilgrim song, one of those composed on the occasion of a pilgrimage to the temple of Jerusalem, as well as of a Song of Zion."¹⁷ Erhard Gerstenberger echoes the same when he writes:

¹³ Susan A. J. Stuart, "Enkinaesthesia: The Essential Sensuous Background for Co-Agency," in *Knowing without Thinking: Mind, Action, Cognition and the Phenomenon of the Background*, ed. Zdravko Radman (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 167.

¹⁴ David Le Breton, *Sensing the World: An Anthropology of Senses*, trans. Carmen Ruschensky (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 95.

¹⁵ "The hymnic prayer tells us about expectations and aspirations of the dispersed community of Yahweh believers in regard to the Holy City, idealized as a token of God's helpful presence and in memory of the lost homeland. In keeping up strong ties with Zion and the sanctuary of Yahweh Sabaoth, the dispersed communities maintained their own faith and identity." Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 126.

¹⁶ See A. Robinson, "Three suggested interpretations in Ps 84," *Vetus Testamentum* 24, no. 3 (1974): 378–81.

¹⁷ Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms II 51-100: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 279.

Psalm 84 may have been used during pilgrimages toward the geographical center of faith. Reliable notices of religious wanderings at festive times are absent from preexilic documents, and really available only from Babylonian or Persian times. Another possibility in that intense longing for the presence of Yahweh was articulated liturgically in “pilgrims” hymns even in diaspora worship.¹⁸

However, H. C. Leupold is critical of classifying the psalm as a pilgrim song and maintains that there is no exact word for “pilgrimage” in the psalm. Instead, there is only tendential language like “ways” and “the highways to Zion.” He also identifies that the reference “highway to Zion” (in the NRSV) is not even in the original text (MT v. 6). Leupold thinks this psalm is about “love for the sanctuary.” His strong disagreement with the classification is evident in this line: “As long as this unwarranted approach is insisted upon, no interpretation can do justice to this choice of psalm.”¹⁹

Although Leupold does not agree with the classification of Psalm 84 as a song of pilgrimage, he seems to concede that the psalm has references to pilgrimage, albeit pejoratively, when he writes, “The route taken was certainly not as such the object of fond remembrance. Sometimes or even for the most part those pilgrimages were long, dusty and tiresome.”²⁰ As a rejoinder, Leupold is caught up in a positivistic approach to reading the psalm. Although there is no specific lexical reference “to Zion” in verse 6, Zion is clearly found in verse 8. Further while there is no explicit language for “pilgrimage,” the overall imagery is indeed that of pilgrimage marked by the Hebrew words *abar* (pass through, v. 7) and *halak* (walk, v. 8). The psalm narrates the circumstances, affections, and disposition of the people toward the Lord’s dwelling place (v. 2), the court of the Lord (vv. 3, 11), the altar and the house of the Lord (vv. 5, 11b), and the temple in Zion (v. 8). Undeniably, this psalm has strong cultic undertones in that it narrates the presence and dialogue between the priest and the pilgrims. The three-fold used of *’ashrei* is perhaps spoken from the priest to the pilgrims (vv. 5, 6, 13).²¹

Moving on, insofar as pilgrimage is a religious ritual, we employ Catherine Bell’s phenomenological study on ritual and ritual practices who provides a working definition and taxonomy on ritual. Accordingly, rituals are characterized by the following elements: sacral symbolism, formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, and performance.²² Careful analysis shows that these characteristics may be implicit and explicitly observable in our psalm.

While these six elements are significant to any discussion of ritual, I would like to select and expound more carefully on two vital elements—the sacral symbolism and performance—as they are most germane to our theme of the communion of saints and corporeality. The communion of saints is a product of the convergence of these two elements. In corporeality studies, the human body and its corollary senses are conceived as highly conscious and mindful, effectively making the body a meaning-maker. The

¹⁸ Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations*, 126.

¹⁹ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1969), 603.

²⁰ Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms*, 606.

²¹ The *ashrei* is praise and acknowledgement of those who have the courage and strong motivation to make a pilgrimage in the face of the difficulties and dangers of ancient travel. These dangers and difficulties are common factors affecting the necessity and desirability to travel. Ancient travel was not for the weak-hearted.

²² Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

body's internal sensory interaction with itself and with other sensing bodies embedded in a "sensing place"²³ are constitutive of meaning-making processes. Thus, insofar as the body is perceptive and conscious making, all bodily movement and performances possess and reflect corporeal signification of sacral meaning, albeit in preconceptual and prelinguistic stages.

That said, Psalm 84 contains the important corporeal textual markers for our reflection, summed up in verse 2 (v. 3 MT):

My soul longs, indeed it faints
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.

The deliberate collocation of the lexemes soul (*nefesh*), heart (*leb*), and flesh (*basar*) constitute the traditional view of human trichotomy: soul, spirit, and body. This enumeration in a single verse fit into our interest in corporeality. The soul and heart represent the internal senses of psyche and affections, while flesh refers to physical body and senses. The integrity of these corporeal organs and senses is presumed as there is no reason to think otherwise. The convergence of the soul and mind together with the body in conjunctive and interactive relationship are united in their cognitive, conative, affective, and corporeal consciousness toward the dwelling place of the Lord. The unity of our trichotomy serves as the rationale for our corporeal-sensitive reading to demonstrate how the corporeal body is the medium through which the communion of saints is experienced.

"Feeling At Home": The Saint's (Inter)corporeality with the Lord

As noted above, fundamental to the psalm's conception of the communion of saints is the saints' conative corporeal desire for the house of the Lord. Presumably, the psalmist is far distant from the temple (v. 2).²⁴ The "temple" is a literary metonymy of the Lord and his divine presence. The explicit reference to the temple in its metaphysical sense, instead of simply to "the Lord," is another indication of the centrality of physicality and corporeality in the psalm. The temple, albeit an inanimate object (or subject), is vested with affordances to intersubjectively and intersensorially interact with other material agents, or better with the human *soma* of the pilgrim (or psalmist or saint).

The dwelling place of the Lord is afforded with an affective sensing attraction such that the psalmist places his plenivalent attention on the temple. The temple is "lovely" (v. 1), to be construed in affective and aesthetic terms and to elicit yearning and longing in the psalmist. "Feeling is to touching as listening is to hearing," says Le Breton.²⁵ The intersubjectivity between the psalmist and the temple is expressed by the longing to

²³ Steven Feld, "Places Sensed, Senses Placed: Toward a Sensuous Epistemology of Environments," in *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader*, ed. David Howes (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005), 179–91.

²⁴ However Kraus reads this verse differently. He writes: "The location of the singer is clearly indicated. He is still standing before the gates of the holy city or is just in the act of entering them." Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 167.

²⁵ Le Breton, *Sensing the World*, 102.

house of my God than live in the tents of wickedness.” The spatial comparison between the temple of the Lord and “the tents of wickedness” presupposes that the psalmist has physically experienced these two different spatial environments. Contrary to the home-like dwelling of the Lord, I surmise the “tents of wickedness” evoke the sense of fear, discomfort, threat, and danger.²⁷

Conversely, the experience of “being at home” emerges out of a multisensory and integrated corporeal body in a social environment. Rather than simply the enactment of the visual or hearing senses experienced in virtual space, the bodily senses of the saints are fully activated to experience the house of the Lord as “being at home.” Moreover, unlike modern discourse on home which conjures unfortunate feelings and negative associations, the psalmist connects the house of the Lord with a home that is lovely and desirable. He envisions openness in the body, a calm heartbeat, a sense of peace, and a hopeful and positive attitude. There is no safer and more secure place than in the presence of the Lord.

Home is sensed and experienced with the Lord in the temple of the Lord. When “at home,” there is a sensory experience of relational intimacy, warmth, nurture, provision, safety, comfort, stability, and security from the Lord. Saints embody the Lord as the very source of what home means. Awareness of these affective and corporeal elements are perceived corporeally *first* before they are expressed linguistically and conceptually. However when in virtual space, saints hear and speak about “home” instead of feeling “at home.”

In ritual studies, at the aggregation stage the interplay between the saint and the Lord evinces a sense of acceptance, harmony, empathy, and understanding toward each other. To go even further, a compositional approach to Psalm 84 will extend the reading to include the neighboring Psalm 85 which states in verse 10, “Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.” The communion of saints with the Lord in the temple is expressed in love, loyalty, and peace which are first and foremost corporeally experienced rather than simply preached, sung, taught, or theorized. These are affective and psychological statements rather than intellectual.

Lastly, “Blessed are those who dwell in your house” (Ps 84:4). The intercorporeal interaction between the Lord and the saint invokes a feeling of “’*ašrê*-happy,” or better yet, “’*ašrê*-most happy.” ’*Ašrê* is an adjective of relative pattern meaning “most happy” or “very happy.”²⁸ The theme of “’*ašrê*” indicates the affective emotion, albeit the emotion is not from the psalmist himself. Janzen Waldemer argues,

the relation of ’*ašrê* to emotion is not on the part of him who is called “’*ašrê*” but rather on the part of him who makes the pronouncement. And the latter again imputes his emotion to the former: he himself would be happy if he were in the other’s situation, and in this vicarious sense he imputes “happiness” to the other.²⁹

²⁷ Some Psalms scholars read this psalm in light of the exile in Babylon as Israel lives in the “tents of wickedness.” The national event of forced migration and exile caused the ancient Israelites cultural trauma. Thus, the psalm is said to be about their return to their own land and religious center.

²⁸ Aaron D. Rubin, “The Form and Meaning of Hebrew ’*Ašrê*,” *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010): 369.

²⁹ Janzen Waldemar, “Asre in the Old Testament,” *Harvard Theological Review* 58, no. 2 (1965): 226.

In other words, Psalm 84 conceives of the communion of saints as the experience of finding and being “at home” with the Lord that generates a sensation of happiness which is better felt than heard or seen.

Feeling Communitas: Communion of Saints and Enkinaesthesia in Religious Pilgrimage

Psalm 84 is composed of the literary juxtaposition of individual and corporate voices. The individual voice, presumably from the psalmist and/or the priests, is marked by first person singular forms in verses 1–4 and 9–12. At the heart of the psalm is verses 5–8 with plural markers. The juxtaposition of singular and plural markers is explained by Gerstenberger as “the idea of community is alive also in v. 5, in spite of its very personal character. Longing ardently for the temple, and thus for the presence of Yahweh, naturally implies a community of fellow worshipers or pilgrims, as vv. 5–8 will show.”³⁰ Two insights may be gained from Gerstenberger’s comment. First, the language of pilgrims presupposes but not limited to religious pilgrimage, as it may include the general notion of life’s journey. Second, the corporate orientation is the primary nature and utility of the ancient temple as a public and common space for the community of saints to come together (see Pss 122:1; 133:1; 135:2). Individual pilgrimage reflects a modern rather than ancient religiocultural understanding. While Israel’s religious pilgrimages were corporate spatiotemporal events in communion with the Lord, they were also communion with other worshippers.

Insofar as pilgrimage is a religious ritual, the multimodal corporeal movement, intentionality, and sensing of the pilgrims generate religious signification and meaning.³¹ The pilgrims experience Victor Turner’s so-called “liminality” of being “betwixt and between” their respective residences and the temple of the Lord.³² While the pilgrims are in this liminal or threshold state, they experience the following communal processes:

Happy are those whose strength is in you,
 in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
 As they go through the valley of Baca
 they make it a place of springs;
 the early rain also covers it with pools.
 They go from strength to strength;
 the God of gods will be seen in Zion.
 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
 give ear, O God of Jacob!
 Behold our shield, O God;
 look on the face of your anointed.
 (Psalm 84:5–9 NRSV [vv. 6–10 MT])

³⁰ Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations*, 123.

³¹ Dermot Moran, “The Phenomenology of Joint Agency: The Implicit Structures of the Shared Life-World,” *Phenom Cogn Sci* (November 2021).

³² Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95–96.

Modern archaeology has refined our background knowledge of the material culture of ancient Near Eastern travel. Ancient people traveled primarily for trade and commerce, for war and political occupations, as refugees escaping from calamities, to find healing, to find marital mates, and notwithstanding the concern of this essay, on religious pilgrimage to religious festivals.³³ Marvin Tate summarizes pilgrimage this way:

Pilgrimages and festivals are almost universal features of religious life. They are concerned with the physical aspects of religion: journey, temple, courts, feasting, liturgies, fellowship with fellow pilgrims, and the like. These physical aspects, however, have meanings because they bear spiritual realities with them. The experiences of pilgrimages and festivals stay with the worshipers when they return to everyday life. They have seen what they would never have seen had they stayed at home.³⁴

The pilgrimages in ancient Israel are matched with their religious calendar. Psalms scholars Tate, Kraus, and Gerstenberger agree that the pilgrimage depicted here was to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles as described in Leviticus 23:33–43.³⁵ The spatiotemporal environment of this religious feast is enkinaesthetically meaningful because the bodies of the saints are emplaced in a shared pilgrimage spatiotemporal-attuned sensing. The bodily senses are heightened and wired toward senses associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. Leviticus 23:35 states, “On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.” The prohibition against regular work placed the body in a restful sabbatical and sacred mode. Instead of agricultural and pastoral work, the corporeal senses were purposely attuned toward religious and spiritual awareness. The body was set apart from the contingencies of everyday life, feelings, and self, even corporeal spiritual callousness.

Making religious pilgrimages to Zion activated the multisensory bodyscapes of the pilgrims unique to their socioreligious ambience. Pilgrims were sensorially emplaced in treacherous terrain as they made the pilgrimage journey together to Zion. Apart from the visual, auditory, and olfactory senses, the tactile sense of the human skin was most critical in this proprioceptive enkinaesthetic pilgrimage. Their bodies touched and were touched by fellow saints and by the perilous environment. The rough terrain, the burning heat of the sun, the freezing nights, the blowing wind, the scarcity of food and water, the threat of becoming lost, the bad weather, the uncomfortable resting areas, and the exposure to wild animals and dangerous people (street bandits and robbers) were unwelcome corporeal stimuli of insecurity and threats. Spiritually, they are symbolic of the threats, challenges, and failures of spiritual life. The bodies of these saints were vulnerable, their muscles and nerves tightened, their heartbeats pounded faster, their blood pressure rose, their breath quickened, and their bodily senses became sharper and highly sentient. These visceral feelings were apprehended and shared among the pilgrims in the outdoor environment.

Moreover, the communion of saints was manifested in the heightening of the pilgrims’ proprioception and alterception consciousness as they made pilgrimage together in “communion” mode. The proprioceptive walking and climbing in Psalm 84:8 on unpaved,

³³ David A. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

³⁴ Marvin Tate, *Psalms 51-100, Word Bible Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), 363.

³⁵ Tate, *Psalms 51-100*; Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*; and Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations*.

difficult terrain evokes exertion of bodily energy. Their bodies saw, heard, and felt the crackling of their sandals against the rocks and stones and the intermittent sound and feel of the outdoor wind. Initially these sounds may have been foreign and turbulent, but repetition of the same sounds grows familiar in the human senses. Their bodies were stimulated by the sight, smell, and feel of the dust of the Palestinian ground. The trekking required reciprocal sensing and synchronized movement of the pilgrims' corporeal hands and feet to avoid collision with another body. The boundaries between the selves of the saints were transgressed and blurred. The intermingling of their bodies generated a sense of bonding that formed the basis of the communion of saints. Sensing each other's presence formed an organic spiritual and corporeal camaraderie. This solidarity was first felt before it was conceptualized.

Furthermore, Psalms scholars and Bible translators debate over the proper translation of the reference to the "valley of Baca" in verse 7.³⁶ Nonetheless, if we maintain the common translation "valley of weeping," we may interpret this phrase as a reference to the pilgrims feeling sad and sorrowful as they passed along "some dry and cheerless valley"³⁷ in the aridness, or to the perilous trek in difficult terrain, or to the lack of water supply. Together their bodies enkinaesthesially experienced fatigue, exhaustion, and a thirst longing to be quenched. The communion of saints is a shared experience of feebleness and weakness to mirror and affect each other, like empathy.

Nevertheless, the collocation of the lexemes "might" (*ôz*, v. 5) and "strength" (*hāyil*, v. 8, 2x)—the former as brute strength and the latter as strength of character—is an enkinaesthesia marker. Navigating through rough terrain requires both physical stamina and determination of character. Verse 9 states, "Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed!" Might we construe this as the Lord serving as the protector from the heat and chill, similar to the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night in Israel's early history?³⁸ The moral support and physical strength to persevere in the trek came from the Lord.

The high point of the pilgrims' song in vv. 5–8 is the poetic assertion that those on their way to Jerusalem, under the blessings of their God, receive physical and spiritual strength, rain, and comfort from above, until they arrive in the presence of the Lord at Zion (v. 8b).³⁹

Thus, the communion of pilgrims was enhanced through a common experience not only of the tough travel but also of the Lord's protection.

Of note, Psalms scholars connect the provision of strength and water resulting in rejoicing with supernatural phenomenon of miracles performed by Yahweh (vv. 6–7).

³⁶ Gerstenberger writes, "The 'valley of baca' (v. 7) was either a geographical name or legendary, imaginary or mythical designation. Etymologically, there is no way of linking it with the famous 'valley of tears' ('to weep' would be *bākāh* in Hebrew not *bākā*) of later Christian tradition." Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations*, 124. Hans-Joachim Kraus maintains that valley of baca is textually difficult. To speak of a valley of tears is problematic. However, considering the overall context, he writes, "The valley of *baca* was probably a definite place, namely, a wild waterless area. How else could we understand the miracle of stilling the thirst and the assistance in passage, about which vv. 6–7 speak?" Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 169.

³⁷ Charles Briggs and Emilie Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 227.

³⁸ Yoo-Ki Kim, "The Referent of 'Our Shield' in Psalm 84:10," *Biblica* 98, no.1 (2017): 10–24.

³⁹ Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations*, 124.

Kraus writes, “In all of these texts there are descriptions of how Yahweh opens springs of water in waterless lands to pilgrims who wander through the desert.”⁴⁰ Artur Weiser intimated the presence of miracles saying,

The poet characterizes the fatiguing journey of the pilgrims from the foreign country to Jerusalem with all the strains and dangers it involved as a passing through the valley of tears (cf. Ps 23:4; Hos 2:15) which the pilgrims transform into a place of springs and in so doing he thus alludes to the power of God which works *miracles*. By virtue of that divine power the believer is able to endure and overcome troubles and dangers so that even the bleak steppe becomes for him a landscape with bubbling fountains and pasture, which the early rain, ardently hoped for after the long spell of summer heat, transforms from a desert into a field richly blessed with fruit.⁴¹

Miracles are frowned upon by modern, enlightenment readers; however this miracle-receptive reading is supported by sociologists and anthropologists. From his survey and research, Edwin Eschler concludes that people who possess strong religious dispositions and experience existential threats and dangers are likely to experience miracles and supernatural events.⁴² Their bodies are corporeally tailored and receptive to divine intervention. The communion of saints is formed when witnessing a miracle: in this case seeing and hearing and even tasting the provision of water. Experiencing miracles in ritual pilgrimage were the product of the bodies’ heightened senses towards transcendence and supernatural phenomenon. A miracle experience generates a transformation of the self not simply in the body but also in the soul. This shared corporeal experience of a miracle is another manifestation of the communion of saints which is perhaps difficult to achieve in the virtual space of one’s own living room.

Additionally, there was singing in ancient religious pilgrimages similar to the Songs of Ascent (Pss 120–134). Psalm 84:2 says, “My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.” Singing is referenced again in verse 4: “Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise.” Sigmund Mowinckel writes,

The travelers in a caravan would no doubt shorten the journey by singing traditional and universally known stanzas, and also new improvisations, and this might happen whenever several people were travelling in company. We were explicitly told that when the festivals were approaching and people were departing in a body, they would raise the pilgrim’s song: “Let us go to the hill of Yahweh.”⁴³

Singing added to the shared multisensory corporeal performance of the pilgrims. The heightening of the multisensory and intersensorial experience included singing and hearing each others’ singing voice. Like speaking, singing is an integration of one’s senses to produce harmonious sound, beat, rhythm, and lyrics, a coming together of the cognitive, conative, and corporeal consciousness. Moreover, this synchronous

⁴⁰ Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, 169.

⁴¹ Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: A Commentary* (Bloomsbury: SCM Press, 1962), 567, emphasis original.

⁴² Edwin Eschler, “In the Valley of the Shadow of Death: Insecurity and Miraculous Experiences,” *Rev ReligRes* 62, no. 3 (2020): 439–64.

⁴³ Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), 107.

acapella singing is another expression of communal compresence. There is a shared and intersensory convergence in unison singing. Assuredly, spiritual singing in virtual space may be possible, but my personal experience reveals as a virtual worshipper I am inclined to become passive observer rather than active participant in worshipping the Lord.

In sum, we have interpreted the corporate and intercorporeal experiences of the pilgrims in Psalm 84:5–9. While evangelical Christians call this bonding “the communion of saints,” religious studies scholars call it *communitas*. This *communitas* is experienced in liminality defined by Turner as

The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae (“threshold people”) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.⁴⁴

The liminal process occurs when the saints have “separated from” their respective homes in preparation to be “aggregated to” commune with the Lord in his house. The journey is the “liminal and transitional process.” This process takes place when the pilgrims are sensing each other as they share a collective liminal environment. Their pilgrimage experience enables them to resonate with each other as they know each other and are known by others. They exemplify the unity and harmony of the saints. “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!” (Ps 133:1) The dynamic process enables them to psychologically and affectively like each other as they experience and develop comradeship.

Simply put, in order to experience communion of saints similar to *communitas*, intercorporeal and intersensorial functions are expected to be active, enabled to emit and receive pilgrimage-related signals and sensations from fellow pilgrims. The pilgrims to Zion shared a common experience generating a camaraderie or *communitas* that was wittingly or unwittingly cultivated when they faced and overcame dangers and threats of harm, pain, disease, and even death. They shared the experience of the difficult trek, singing together, depleting and regaining energy, and witnessing a shared miracle. In Susan Stuart’s enkinaesthesia, *communitas* in pilgrimage is the coupling of intersubjective bodies creating an affective entanglement in that saints embody each other making them one in cognitive, affective, conative, and somatic sensing. The pilgrims leave behind their respective lives, social status, personal goals, and idiosyncrasies to feel spiritual bonding with other pilgrims. *Communitas* of the saints is not realized by looking or hearing or talking about the communion of saints through virtual space in one’s respective homes. The bonding of the saints is not only felt in the temple of the Lord but also in and during life’s journey. Religious camaraderie makes cohesive saints.

⁴⁴ Turner, *Ritual Process*, 95.

Final Remarks

In summary, we have found the utility of (inter)corporeality, intersensoriality, and enkinaesthesia that is fruitful in addressing the theme of the communion of saints. The psalm's explicit corporeal language expects a corporeal-sensitive reading to fully appreciate Psalm 84. The intersubjective enactment between the Lord and the saint in the house of the Lord is described as compresence experience of "finding and being at home," which evokes a consciousness of protection, safety, security, comfort, and acceptance when one is united with the Lord in his house.

We have also applied corporeal-oriented reading to the liminal phase of the pilgrimage to Zion when the pilgrims were intersubjectively and in intercorporeality interacting with each other in pilgrimage-knowing surroundings. Overcoming physically arduous, painful terrain, experiencing a miracle, and singing together created an environment in which the pilgrims generated a sense of religious camaraderie and bonding as their corporeal bodies embodied each other.

Simply put, the communion of saints in Psalm 84 was manifested through the shared corporeal, intersubjective experience of the pilgrims in the sacred spatiotemporal dwelling of the Lord and in journeying with fellow saints. These two are the standards by which our reflections on communion of saints may be based.

By implication, contemporary Christians who have been subjected to social distancing and home quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic endure a sense of dissatisfaction and discontent with doing church via virtual space, for such is akin to what the apostle Paul says, "we know only in part" (1 Cor 13:9). Saints long for the time when these COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, if not removed, to truly apprehend the feelings of "being at home" with the Lord and in *communitas* with fellow saints. This aspiration is promised to be consummated when the restrictions are lifted or when Jesus Christ comes again, whichever comes first. Only when the saints are (inter)corporeally and intersubjectively attuned can the communion of the saints reach its optimal potential of sensing and being sensed, knowing, and being known, uniting and being united, and harmonizing and being harmonized. For only then will saints truly know and be fully known (1 Cor 13:12).

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Спільнота та відчуття рідного дому: спільність святих, (між)тілесність та енкінестезія у Псалмі 83

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Анотація: Застосовуючи теорії та мову (між)тілесності, енкінестезії та інших підходів, пов'язаних з тілесністю, 83-й Псалом послідовно зображує доктрину про спільноту святих, що переживається через спільне когнітивне, афективне, конативне і соматичне чуття

та свідомість. Тілесно-чутливе читання Псалма виявляє два взаємопов'язані, втілені, долінгвістичні переживання. Зокрема, спільнота святих дає відчуття затишку та безпеки, на протипагу загрозам, що вичікують на псалмоспівця поза межами Господнього дому. А також, спілкування святих переживається, коли спільнота, або, як називає Віктор Тернер, *communitas*, породжується тактильним пропріоцептивним міжчуттєвим залученням, яке поділяється святими, коли вони здійснюють важкий шлях паломництва до дому Господнього. Ці дві експресії спілкування святих передусім відчуваються та переживаються (між)тілесно, а не просто за допомогою зору чи слуху, які є найбільш привілейованими у віртуальному просторі практики причастя святих.

Ключові слова: Псалом 83, спільнота святих, енкінестезія, (між)тілесність, інтерсуб'єктивність, паломництво, Сіон, храм Господній.

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