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COUNSELING AND HUMAN
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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF UNITED METHODIST AND
CONSERVATIVE JEWISH CLERGY VIEWPOINTS CONCERNING THEIR
EVENTUAL DEATHS (257 pp.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: Martin Jencius, Ph.D.
Cynthia Osborn, Ph.D.

The purpose of this study was to learn how 12 United Methodist and 12 Conservative Jewish clergy describe and understand their eventual deaths. Each religious group consisted of 6 male and 6 female clergy. Purposive sampling was used to acquire the 24 participants.

A transcendental phenomenological approach adapted from procedures described in Moustakas (1994) was used to explicate the data. Participants composed responses to the Clergy Death Anticipation Protocol (CDAP) developed for the study and derived from an extensive review of the death literature. The format consisted of five statements to solicit viewpoints related to eventual death. Areas of inquiry included (a) preferred death, (b) non-preferred death, (c) death scene, (d) emotions experienced, and (e) meaning ascribed to one's eventual death.

Findings revealed that a general structure emerged from the viewpoints of the participants as a whole consisting of four overarching themes: (a) timing and manner of death, (b) relationship and closure, (c) variant emotions, and (d) eschatological/temporal frames of death. Results indicated that Timing and Manner of death linked to death occurring at an acceptable time and in a non-debilitating manner. Relationship and

Closure linked to the value that significant others and religious rites play in life endings.

Variant Emotions linked to participants' distress their death would have on others.

Participants expressed anxiety concerning the dying process and no anxiety for the afterlife.

Eschatological/Temporal Frames of Death linked to the meaning participants ascribe to their eventual death. What lies beyond the present time is in the hands of a divine "Other." The present time provides impetus to make contributions that go beyond self-serving ends.

The findings have implications for the counseling profession and clergy providing pastoral assistance to the dying and bereaved. Limitations to the research investigation were identified and suggestions for future research with clergy and counselors were provided.