

Reviews:

Once the contemporary psychological approach to grief is recognized as culture-bound, where do we go from here? The authors of this innovative work base their investigations of grief on the theme of continuing bonds between the living and the dead. From ancestor veneration to the destruction of saints' graves, religious traditions structure and re-structure these ties. How they do this, and how new ties such as those with religious teachers are formed to endure beyond death, is the subject of this adventuresome and wide-ranging book. For those interested in moving beyond a psychological model of grief, this volume raises important questions about the roles of death, loss and meaning within a new model of grief and a new set of questions about persons, families, societies and transcendence.

— **Lucy Bregman, Temple University**

This is a long-awaited book. As someone who teaches an undergraduate course on death and dying, I welcome its publication. The central question of religious grief is one that we too seldom dare to explore, in large part because not many intelligent resources are available to us. That has now changed, and definitely for the best. With this accessible and inspiring volume, Goss and Klass provide an engaging and diversified look at grief in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. They are bold and prolific in their approach. In situating grief at the very heart of religious meaning, they have opened up new ways of understanding the experience of death, and of studying it. I am excited about sharing their important work with my students.

— **Donald L. Boisvert, Concordia University, Montreal**

This fascinating book advances our knowledge of bereavement at the interface of culture, religion, and psychology. It breaks new ground in the study of the continuing bonds and ongoing relationship to the deceased. Goss and Klass have given professionals and laypersons alike a thoughtful work informed throughout by scholarship, humanity, and respect for diversity.

— **Simon Shimshon Rubin, Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Haifa, Israel**

Recent years have seen a surfeit of studies on death and dying and on grief work. Far too little has been written on the ancient and venerable—indeed some might argue constitutive—religious virtue of fidelity to the dead. In this engaging and substantive book, Robert Goss and Dennis Klass argue that an on-going sense of connection with the dead has an honorable pedigree in the religious history of humankind and show it to be natural, healthy, even empowering. Drawing on materials both traditional and contemporary, they explore not only the religious and psychological dynamics involved but also the political cultures which have worked to police and control the ways humans have sought to honor their dead. Insightful and ground-breaking, this is a must read for all who would seek a deeper understanding of grief, religion, or both.

— **Ronald E. Long, Hunter College/City University of New York**

Highly recommended. Lower-level undergraduates through faculty/researchers working on topics in death and dying.

— **CHOICE**

The authors examine the development of an idea — continuing bonds between the living and the dead — through several cultures spread over many centuries and locations. These men are well-read and very intelligent authors who value ideas and who are maverick thinkers. Klass and Goss go where the evidence takes them and expect readers to share their interest in seeking the truth. They are saying that while the current interest in "continuing bonds" presents a notable challenge to received ways of understanding death and mourning, in reality all cultures and political systems have taken a clear stance about links between the living and the dead. Their incisive writing style is clear and fun to read. For many of my students in the rich sea of cultural diversity that is Brooklyn, intelligent appreciation of culture is a clear mark of validity when speaking about death, dying, and bereavement. Perhaps because of Klass's honored scholarly reputation within the field of thanatology, this book will get more people thinking about and examining culture as a major influence on death, dying, bereavement, grief, and mourning.

— **David Balk David Balk, Brooklyn College**