

- ***A person know they are old when:***
- When there are more and more little bottles in the medicine cabinet.
- When year by year his feet seem farther from his hands.
- When he falls asleep in the afternoon.
- When his bones ache.
- When he decides not to drive at night anymore.
- When, if you are wearing one brown and one black shoe, quite possibly there is a similar pair in the closet.
- Malcolm Cowley, *The View from Eighty* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), pp. 3,4,41, quoted in Vaillant, *Aging Well*, p. 160.

Matthew the Poor

- “The spirit of persistence springs from an inward conviction that ***life is but one single way that leads to the kingdom of God.***”
- Matthew the Poor, *Orthodox Prayer Life* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 164.

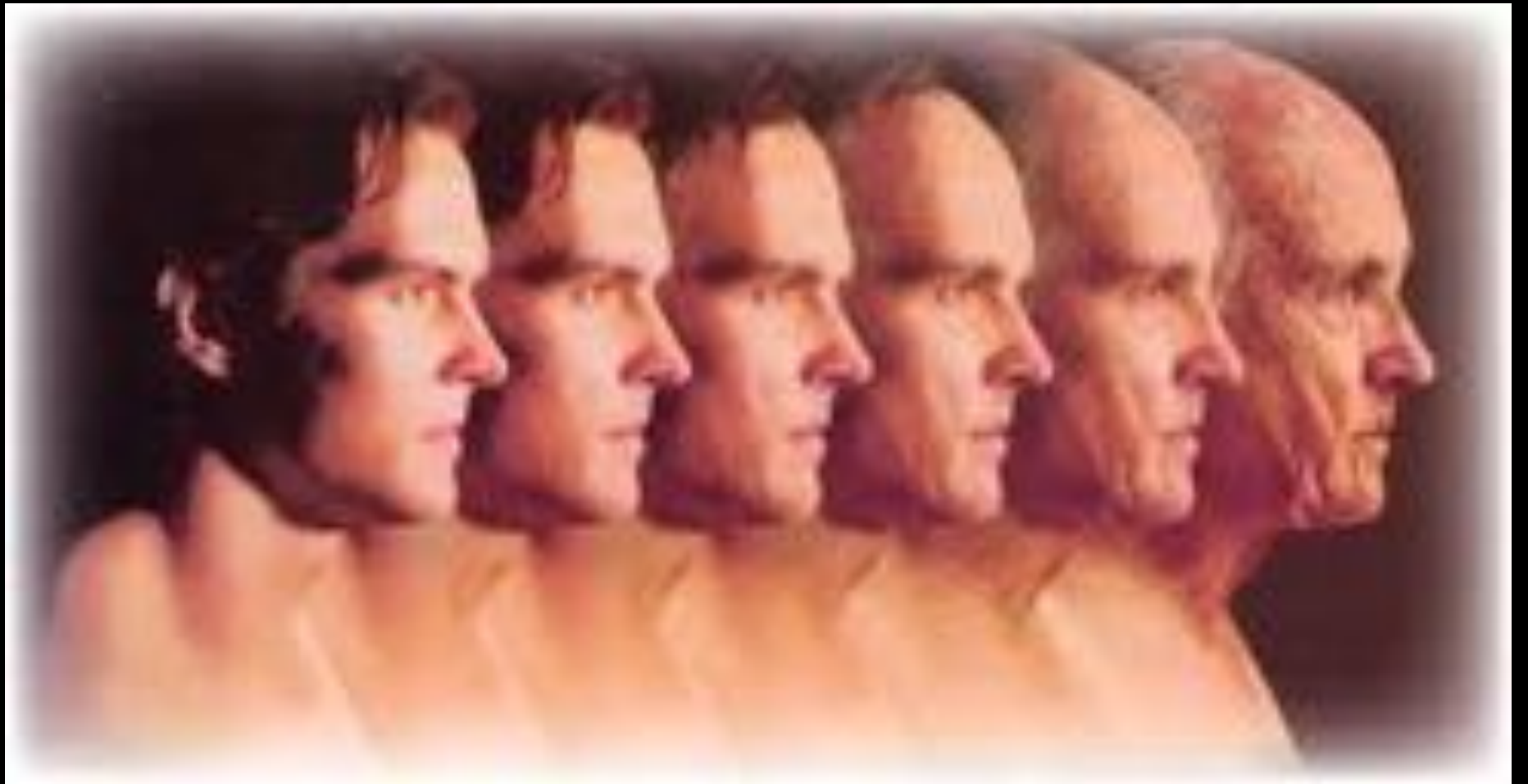
Assumptions

- We live in a therapeutic culture that militates against the spirituality of aging.
 - Death can be avoided if we work hard enough and sufficiently trust our rational scientific abilities.
 - The medical dream of having an average life expectancy of one hundred years is becoming a reality.
 - Suffering and the contingencies of living and dying well are functionally denied.
 - Health and youth are highly valued.

Later Life Challenges

- The youth culture
- Rapid changes in society (the internet has left many behind)
- Changes in health, mobility, energy, beauty





THEN



NOW



Tangible and intangible losses:

- Tangible (job, colleagues, spouse, children who leave home)
- Intangible (love, hope, status)

Later Life Challenges

- The youth culture
- Rapid changes in society (the internet has left many behind)
- Health, mobility, energy
- Formalized and institutionalized retirement sets people up for a season of continuous leisure and sloth (and some die shortly after retirement)

Later Life Challenges

- Challenges to self-worth (no longer identified by our career)
- The Industrial and Information Ages—assuming that old age is a time of repose and disengagement (in contrast to older societies)

Later Life Challenges

- Challenges to self-worth (no longer identified by our career)
- The Industrial and Information Ages—assuming that old age is a time of repose and disengagement (in contrast to older societies)
- **Progressive losses: parents, friends.
Colleagues, career, perfect health**

Spirituality—Definition

- “All spirituality springs from this fundamental fact of a God who loved us first...If Christian spirituality is, before all else, an initiative by and a gift from God who loved us and seeks us, spirituality is then our recognition and response, with all that entails, to this love of God that desires to humanize and sanctify us.”

Spirituality—Definition

- Because this plan is essentially the Kingdom of God and its justice (holiness), spirituality is identification with the will of God for bringing this Kingdom to us and others.”
- Segundo Galilea, *The Way of Living Faith: A Spirituality of Liberation* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 20.

Mid Life Transition as a Spiritual Experience

- Recognizing the transience and superficiality of what has gone before invites you to go deep (Walter Hilton, “Letters to a Layman”)

Some Caveats

- You do not have to go into the ministry or serve in a Christian parachurch organization to be doing “the Lord’s work” or to be “doing ministry.”
- God does not have “a wonderful plan” just for the *second half* of your life—but a wonderful purpose for the whole.
- God’s calling for you is continuous (though the form it takes may change) and outlasts life in this world (beware of abrupt changes).

- “Perhaps the most beautiful legacy that aging parents can leave their children is a personally lived lesson about facing old age and death with courage and grace.” (Bianchi, *Aging as a Spiritual Journey*, 169)





Which One?

Questions

(Many covered in the book *Aging Matters*)

- Is there something in the actual process of aging that is conducive to spiritual growth? i.e. Is spiritual growth a natural by-product of growing older?

- Are there new questions and issues that arise through aging that demand an answer that has spiritual implications?
- Are there special vices, temptations in the aging process?

- Are there virtues that are uniquely developed through aging?
- Are there especially appropriate spiritual disciplines for aging people?
- How can the people of God minister to aging people and equip aging people to be ministers to the coming generation?



Ageing Matters

finding your calling
for the rest of your life

R. Paul Stevens

Implicit Spiritual Disciplines in Aging

- ***1. Intensification (deepening)—
towards a contemplative life***
- Shifting from doing to being and doing
- “Middle age offers one of the richest periods for growth in meditative interiority.” (Bianchi, 46)

Implicit Spiritual Disciplines in Aging

- ***2. The emergence of existential (what does life mean) questions***
- During middle and later years there is a heightened sense of guilt. “Have we made unworthy choices about our own development? Have we chosen our careers for ulterior motives? Do we use them humanely? How have we hurt our immediate family and friends?”

Implicit Spiritual Disciplines in Aging

- ***3. Simplification - a growing asceticism***
- ***(from materialism to relationality)***
- Pruning our lives of some material things to treasure what can last, and what we can take from this life to the next (Luke 16—“Make friends for yourselves....”)



Implicit Spiritual Disciplines in Aging

- **4. Increasing Dependence**
- “The recognition of finitude and dependency...may cause us to examine our life style, our values, our goals. Such self-examination may be the point of breakthrough for Spirit, for being drawn toward a life style which does not depend on physical power and independence.”
- Ken Dychtwald and Joe Flower, *Age Wave* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990), 167.

Implicit Spiritual Disciplines in Aging

- ***5. Mortality and Heavenly-Mindedness
(Struggles, physical and emotional)***
- “Even if our outer humanity is decaying, our inner humanity is being renewed day by day... After all, the things you can see are here today and gone tomorrow, but the things you can’t see are everlasting (2 Cor 4:16-18).

Chaim Potok, *My Name Is Asher Lev*

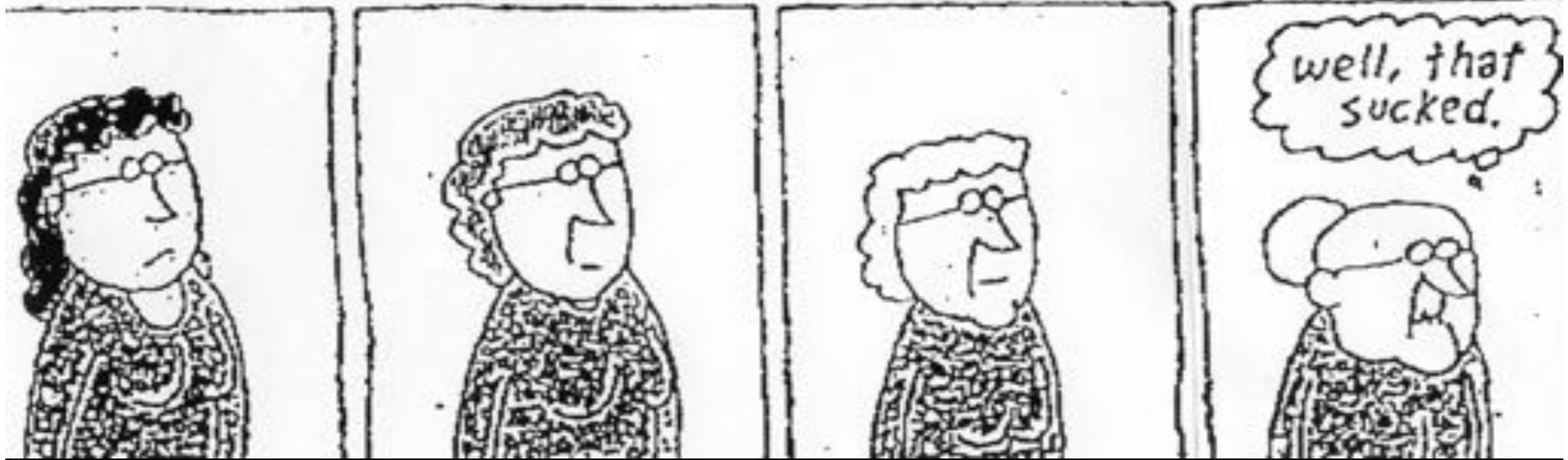
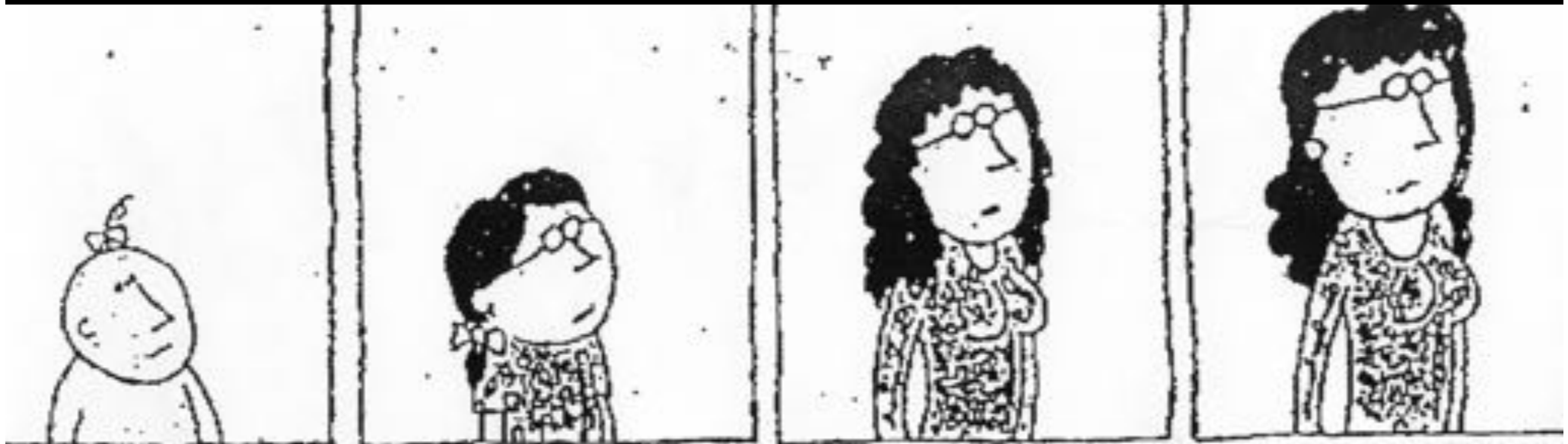
- (A conversation with his father concerning a bird lying on its side in a curb)
- “Is it dead, Papa?” I was six and could not bring myself to look at it.
- “Yes.” I heard him say in a sad and distant way.
- “Why did it die?”
- “Everything that lives must die.”

- “Everything?”
- “Yes.”
- “You too Papa? And Mama?”
- “Yes.”
- “And me?”
- “Yes,” he said. Then added in Yiddish. “But may it be only after you live a long and good life, my Asher.”

- I could not grasp it. I forced myself to look at the bird. Everything alive would one day be as still as that bird?
- “Why?” I asked.
- “That’s the way the Ribbono Shel Olom made His world, Asher.”
- “Why?”
- “So life would be precious, Asher. Something that is yours forever is never precious!” (Quoted, Gorman,182)

- Aging people need both life review and life preview.





1. Life Review

- 1.1 Gathering our life
- 1.2 True Success
- 1.3 True Wealth
- 1.4 Legacy
- 1.5 Last Will and Testament
- 1.6 The Ethical Will

1.1 Gathering

- Its history has roots in spiritual and secular literature from ancient times to the present. The Bible repeatedly urges the faithful to assess their lives, not in terms of immediate joys and sufferings, but in the spectrum of beginning and ends.

Gathering

- *How we do this:*
- Journaling
- Memoirs
- Seeking healing and learning from all the hard experiences of our lives
- Collecting life and family photographs
- Writing letters to family

Resurrection-Life Preview

Come Sweet Death (J.S. Bach)

- (1) There is the ***resurrection*** of the body—renewal not replacement, certified by the resurrection of Jesus
- (2) There is the ***renewal of everything*** (2 Peter 3:10)
- (3) There is a grand ***rendezvous*** (1 Thess 4:13-18)
- (4) There is the final invigorating ***rest*** of the people of God

Martin Luther, “Of the Resurrection”

- On Easter Sunday, 1544
- “God will create a new heaven and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell. It will be no arid waste, but a beautiful new earth, where all the just will dwell together. There will be no carnivorous beasts, or venomous creatures, for all such, like ourselves, will be relieved from the curse of sin, and will be to us as friendly as they were to Adam in Paradise. There will be little dogs, with golden hair, shining like precious stones.



Our Lady of Martyrs
CATHOLIC CHURCH

ALL DOGS
GO TO
HEAVEN

BEULAH

CONGREGATIONAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



SUN. SCH. 10AM WORSHIP 11AM & 3:00PM

ONLY HUMANS GO TO
HEAVEN READ THE BIBLE



Our Lady of Martyrs
CATHOLIC CHURCH

EGG LOVES ALL THE CREATIONS
EGGS INCLUDED

BEULAH

CONGREGATIONAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



SUN. SCH. 10AM WORSHIP 11AM & 3:00PM

DOGS DONT HAVE SOULS
THIS IS NOT OPEN FOR
DEBATE



Our Lady of Martyrs
CATHOLIC CHURCH

CATHOLIC GODS GO TO HEAVEN
PRESBYTERIAN GODS CAN TALK TO
THEIR PASTOR

BEULAH

CONGREGATIONAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



SUN. SCH. 10AM WORSHIP 11AM & 8:30PM

CONVERTING TO
CATHOLICISM DOES NOT
MAGICALLY GRANT YOUR
DOG A SOUL



Our Lady of Martyrs
CATHOLIC CHURCH

FREE OUR SOULS
WITH CONVERSION

BEULAH

CUMBERLAND
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



SUN 10:30 10:45 WORSHIP 11:45 & 5:30PM

DOGS ARE ANIMALS
THERE AREN'T ANY
ROCKS IN HEAVEN
EITHER



Our Lady of Martyrs
CATHOLIC CHURCH

ALL SOULS
GO TO HEAVEN

Martin Luther, “Of the Resurrection”

- On Easter Sunday, 1544
- The foliage of the trees, and the verdure of the ass, will have the brilliancy of emeralds; and we ourselves delivered from our mundane subjection to gross appetites and necessities, shall have the same form as here, but infinitely more perfect.

Martin Luther, “Of the Resurrection”

- Our eyes shall be radiant as the purest silver, and we shall be exempt from all sickness and tribulation. We shall behold the glorious Creator face to face; and then, what ineffable satisfaction will it be to find our relations and friends among the just!”

Q&A