religious community was founded upon the delusional belief that Jesus remained alive and would continue to live forever. By contrast, in successful mourning, visions or hallucinations are temporary, and the death of the beloved is eventually accepted as final and permanent.

Support for such a view is offered by Paul himself, who affirms that there is no need to mourn: "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). Mourning is also irrelevant to the appearance of a resurrected Jesus to Paul's "more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time," for it is highly unlikely that so many people could each have been personally attached to Jesus before he died. Here atheist Lüdemann moves beyond the notions of "vision" and "trance" which even theist Crossan is willing to entertain, and, quoting Gustave Le Bon's 1895 classic *La psychologie des foules*, he states that "the mechanism of the collective hallucination" was at work. In an excited crowd, Lüdemann says, "the members . . . are often subject to contagious suggestion" (p. 80). All it takes is one individual to start the chain reaction, and the result is a group delusion.

The death of Jesus, then, was denied. The denial initially took the form of apparitions of a risen Jesus. But the apparitions following the bereavement of Jesus' immediate followers constituted only the leading edge of a massive denial of the *permanence* of death which developed among early Christians. The "Easter faith" was the one which persisted and became the "orthodox" faith. According to this faith, the crucifixion was a "redeeming" event, not a gratuitously painful and shameful death. With time, moreover, the *shame* of crucifixion was transformed into *victory* by the process of reaction formation. Indeed, the sign of the cross came to signify victory generally, not only victory over death. In the political-military arena the cross was now capable of signifying victory over every conceivable enemy—from Muslims, heretics, and pagans attacked by cross-bearing crusaders (*crucesignati*) in medieval times to Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, and others massacred under the sign of the hooked cross (*Hakendreuz*) of Roman Catholic dictator Adolf Hitler in the twentieth century.

***Daniel Rancour-Laferriere, PhD**, is Emeritus Professor of Russian at the University of California, Davis. Among his many books are Signs of the Flesh: An Essay on the Evolution of Hominid Sexuality (1985); The Mind of Stalin: A Psychoanalytic Study (1988); Tolstoy on the Couch: Misogyny, Masochism, and the Absent Mother (1998); Russian Nationalism from an Interdisciplinary Perspective (2000); The Joy of All Who Sorrow: Icons of the Mother of God in Russia (2005); and Tolstoy's Quest for God (2007). He may be contacted at darancourlaferriere@comcast.net.*❑

Aging Correspondents: Adams and Jefferson on God, Friendship, and Death

Martin H. Quitt
University of Massachusetts—Boston

In the afternoon of July 4, 1826, while towns across the country were formally celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, both Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died. When news of this "most wonderful coincidence" spread, it became difficult to resist the belief that American nationhood was divinely inspired and blessed. While each patriarch did try to hold onto life until the national jubilee, neither believed that God had much to do with what they had set in motion at Philadelphia so long before. During their last years, they shared feelings about aging and death that revealed an essentially secular approach to life. They would have concurred fully with those who refused to invest their deaths on the Fourth with a "superstitious" meaning (Early American Newspapers, Series, I. [henceforth EAN]. *The Constitutional Whig* [Richmond, VA], Sept. 1, 1826).

While their joint passing on that day often is told, the way in which they helped each other prepare for dying is not. During their last half dozen years, they regularly acknowledged the approaching end of their lives. In contrast, Jefferson

appears to have avoided aging and death as topics with his closest friend, James Madison, who was eight years younger than he. They might have spoken of these matters when they got together, but there is no hint of such conversations in their letters (James M. Smith, ed., *The Republic of Letters: The Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, 1776-1826* (3 vols., New York, 1995), III, 1799-1816, 1822-1841, 1852-1882, 1890-1914, 1921-1951, 1961-1971).

Ruminations about the meaning of their lives and what death would bring were safe subjects for Jefferson and Adams, who eschewed issues that might antagonize each other. For example, John Quincy Adams's first annual message to Congress was printed and appraised in newspapers around the country for ten days before Jefferson penned a letter to the President's father. The Virginian ignored the message. Instead he focused on what his granddaughter had told Adams on her visit to Quincy. She had revealed that Jefferson would not mind living his life again. Adams had disagreed. He preferred to "go forward and meet whatever is to come." Jefferson responded that he had good reason to repeat his life, because "the pleasures surely outweigh the pains of life. Why not then taste them again, fat and lean together?" (Lester J. Cappon, ed., *The Adams-Jefferson Letters* [2 vols., Chapel Hill, 1959], II, 611-612; 19th Century U. S. Newspapers. *Daily National Intelligencer*, Dec. 7, 1825; EAN. *Boston Commercial Gazette*, Dec. 15, 1825).

While he was writing this wistful musing to Adams on December 18, Jefferson was thinking hard and passionately about his "desperate" opposition to the President's message. He believed that Adams's proposal for internal improvements upset the constitutional balance of powers between the states and the general government. He drafted a lengthy "Declaration and Protest" that he sent on December 24 to Madison for possible adoption by the Virginia legislature (Smith, ed., *Republic of Letters*, III, 1943-1946).

How could he feel so strongly about the President's program and not convey any thoughts about it to John Adams? Jefferson did not want to risk another rupture in their relationship. They had not communicated with each other for more than a decade after Jefferson had replaced Adams in the White House. From 1812 to 1826, both treated the revived friendship with caution. Their affection for each other was genuine. On one occasion Jefferson expressed his feelings for Adams with unrestraint: "I am sure that I really know many, many, things, and none more surely that I love you with all my heart, and pray for the continuance of your life until you shall be tired of it yourself." Adams could not respond with a comparable declaration, although he tried to reciprocate the sentiment. He admitted having a "deeply melancholy" view of human affairs that "over clouded" the "ardent and sincere" friendship he felt for Jefferson with "constant fears of its termination" (Cappon, ed., *Adams-Jefferson Letters*, II, 569, 542).

Sustaining the friendship was more important to both men in their old age than it had been earlier. Another breach would have diminished greatly each one's sense of well-being, for each uniquely was able to empathize with how the other was grappling with the impending end of a legendary life. Writing about their existential concerns not only was safe, it was psychologically necessary as each balanced belief and uncertainty regarding the divine and death. As Judith Shklar has observed, both were theists but were more confident in voicing their anticlericalism than in reflecting on the ways of God. For instance, Adams's inquiry about a Scottish moral philosopher prompted Jefferson in 1820 to take up the argument between materialists and spiritualists over the nature of God. Is there a "Spirit, of which we have neither evidence nor idea," and can it put matter into motion? "These are things which you and I may perhaps know ere long. We have so lived as to fear neither horn of the dilemma . . . I look therefore to that crisis, as I am sure you also do, as one [who neither fears the final day nor hopes for it]." In an equally informed response, Adams agreed about what they could not be certain, but concluded reassuringly, "We shall meet hereafter and laugh at our present botherations. So believes your old Friend." Five years later Adams closed a letter with a similar sentiment: "We shall meet again, and so believes your friend, but if we are disappointed, we shall never know it" (Cappon, ed., *Adams-Jefferson Letters*, II, 562-563, 563-565, 610. I have interpolated his translation of Jefferson's Latin phrase. *Judith N. Shklar: Political Thought, Political Thinkers*, ed. by Stanley Hoffman [Chicago,

1998], 98.).

Jefferson could admit to his older friend how much he wanted to hold onto life. In 1821 he opened a letter lamenting setbacks to democratic constitution making in Europe, "Must We, before We take our departure from this grand and beautiful World, surrender all our pleasing hopes of the progress[es] of Society?" When William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration died later that year, Adams wrote, "We will all be asterised very soon." Asterisks were used to denote the deceased in published lists of names. Jefferson responded that before progress would be made in Europe "you and I must join our deceased brother Floyd." Worse than death, however, was the possibility of dementia. Reporting on the memory loss of nonagenerian Charles Thomson, secretary of the Continental Congress, Jefferson queried in June 1822, "Is this life?" He followed, "It is at most but the life of a cabbage, surely not worth a wish." Noting that aging brought the departure of our faculties and the passing of friends of our youth, he asked, when "a generation is risen around us whom we know not, is death an evil?" Adams answered, "Is Death an Evil? It is not an Evil. It is a blessing to the individual and to the world...Winter is as terrible to me, as to you. I am almost reduced in it, to the life of a Bear or a torpid swallow" (Cappon, ed., *Adams-Jefferson Letters*, II, 572, 575, 577-579).

Adams could not read because of failing eyesight and could not easily write because of palsy. Jefferson also had ailments that made "writing slow and laborious." Yet he maintained that writing to Adams, particularly reminiscing about their "ancient times," gave him relief from the "heavy hours" and "winter of age" while waiting "until the friendly hand of death shall rid us of all at once..." Nearly two years before he died Adams wrote, "I still breathe, which will not be long." Six months before the national jubilee, he wrote Jefferson that he contemplated death "without terror or dismay." He did not believe "there is then an end of all but I shall never know it, and why should I dread it, which I do not." His avowed equanimity in facing the end was not posturing, but a testimony to their shared cerebration. Jefferson's reasoning had reinforced Adams's thinking about God and death. Poles apart on what the Constitution permitted the central government to do, they were at one on the basic existential questions confronting man. The timing of their deaths became part of our national mythology, yet it should also signify how two aging great men were able to support each other as human beings (Cappon, 582, 599, 603, 613).

***Martin H. Quitt, PhD**, is professor emeritus of history at the University of Massachusetts — Boston. He recently has written "Congressional (Partisan) Constitutionalism: The Apportionment Act Debates of 1842 and 1844," Journal of the Early Republic, 28 (Winter, 2008), 627-651 and he is working on a book on Frederick Douglass. Professor Quitt may be contacted at martin.quitt @umb.edu.*❑

Psychological Dynamics in Aging Survivors of the Holocaust

Eva Fogelman

Generations of the Holocaust Research Project

The psychological dynamics of aging survivors of the Holocaust are worthy of inquiry because, indeed, their old age is marred by a massive traumatic historical catastrophe. For some Holocaust survivors, their lives were disrupted not only by barbaric persecution during the German occupation of European countries, but also by oppressive Communist regimes under which some were living after liberation, or by other harsh experiences in the post-Holocaust era.

In general, the aging process, which manifests itself with increasing physical deterioration, slowing down mentally, a barrage of losses, social isolation, and loss of self-worth is exacerbated for individuals who once again are not in control of their own destiny, and who have to adapt to multiple deaths, physical illness, and their own imminent death. The aging Holocaust survivor is often not conscious of the connection between the horrific past and his or her current emotional state, particularly if he or she is surrounded by beauty,