

The  
Global  
**THINKING**  
Community

In Faith United  
**ONE FAMILY**

In Civility United  
**ONE FUTURE**

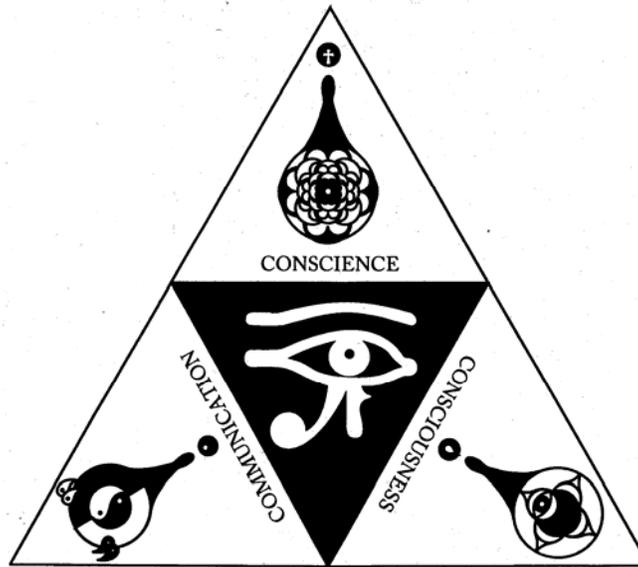
Sylvester L. Steffen



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## The Trinitarian Way of Community



### TRIMORPHIC PROTENNOIA

FAITH — REASON — NEW WORD-Made-Flesh

In regards to thought-processing, the most recent thinking we do becomes first for it is a recapitulation (reformulation) of prior thinking. “Updating” includes reason’s intentional reformulation of faith understanding, which is how faith remains vital in consciousness.

So it is with writing, as with the “evolution of consciousness” by way of “trimorphic resonance”. The reformulation of the resonance (sensibility) of prior thought is how reason and faith relate, and what religion and “intelligent design” are about.

The rebirth of consciousness is a perpetual “groaning”, the perpetual Eucharistic process of conscious reformulation of Word, how God’s Word is ever at work on Earth in the growing understanding of divinity and humanity.

Eucharist, the intentional resonance of Word-Light-Love, is how global community, in form and function, is constantly remade in flesh, body, in soul, consciousness, in the reformulation of Divinity consciousness and understanding of Godlikeness, what divine/human hypostasis is, what intentional living is.

**LOVE, the motive of right relationship,  
is above all other.**

**RELIGION, the culture of right relation,  
binds differences, not separates.**

**CIVILITY is evidence of right relation,  
of religion, the evidence of love; incivility  
is evidence of a lack of religion and love,  
what is “irreligion”.**

## INTRODUCTION

### **Eucharist, Intelligent Design, and Change — for-the-better**

The joined EVOLUTION/FAITH Study speaks to cosmic life's common faith treasury and to lessons of change, as they apply to our times. Faith experience and religious instruction root one in culture, in spirituality and "sacrament" (sacred remembrance) as advanced in global traditions, but especially, in Judaic/ Christian history and theology.

Our time — profoundly different in its challenge — confronts tradition and culture more radically than ever before, that is, to seek out and understand transformational history from the evolutionary aspect of the physical/ psychological view of quantum relationships.

The worldview understanding that has been in place until now is the engine of insight that has driven global societies to today's crisis situation of ecological/ environmental disaster, what is the "ecozoic" crisis of our time, ["Ecozoic" is a word coined by the Catholic priest, Fr Thomas Berry, and taken from the continuity understanding of the organic ecological/zoological web-complex.] Cultural ignorance, misinformation and misdirection characterize what is the "static worldview" (SWV) and overreach.

There is a wisdom maxim that says in effect, "understandings that create a crisis lack the insight to resolve the crisis"; and so it is with SWV. Before remedies to crises in our times can be applied, the crisis must first be discerned and understood, what are its causes and what is the nature of the crises.

Thus, we begin with the worldview that has taken us to where we are today, and we awaken to the realization that the old worldview continues to bring grief. And so we realize, we need a new worldview, a new paradigm, what is the Evolutionary Worldview (EWV) and the insights of quantum science.

If one is of a mind to move beyond the childhood limitations of faith/ religion, one must admit to the inadequacy of belief and process that is defined by SWV consciousness, and recognize the need for a cultural shift to the informed and changing consciousness of EWV. In the least, one must be open to this understanding if the Evolution/ Faith is to make any sense and have any effect in conveying new meanings and redirecting life.

The new evolutionary worldview, EWV, has the potential of bringing greater clarity to personal/ social consciousness and of enlightening the collective conscience to find some escape from the worsening ecozoic disaster that is of our own making.

The "intelligent design" of faith consciousness recognizes Divine Presence indwelling in the reality of the self-expressing cosmos, and the ascendancy of self by way of altruistic, Eucharistic purpose, what is — The Sacrament of Natural Order.

## FOREWORD

### HOPE — Retrospective Life, Prospective Life

*In the sacred remembrance of retrospective self-consciousness, life is “prospective”, the intelligence of hopefulness. If evolution is the intelligent design of God in Creation, indifference to evolution is indifference to Divine Intelligence; rejection of evolution is rejection of Divine Intelligence. Natural cosmic evolution is God’s doing, the doing of intelligence in process of design, in the design of process.*

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The coding of life, its fabric and consciousness, is in genetic “words” composed of four DNA letters, CTGA. Words are leaves from the Tree of life. We need to imitate nature’s economic industry in communicating within evolution’s panorama of interdependent life.

Looking to the past in the context of the present lets us anticipate the future and become liberated from the imprisonment of old ways of thinking and doing.

Historically, institutions of religion have tended to define faith dogmatically and use its definitions politically to control what people believe and how they live. As violence among civilizations testifies, faith fixations and the political control of what people believe have aggravated abuses and animosities and have fomented cultural wasting and wars. This is wrong and intolerable.

Humankind and life on Planet Earth are threatened with ever greater self-wasting and destruction because of cultural violence and unconscionable exploitation that have prevailed and yet prevail. Unless serious global thinking happens, and unless conversion from destructive cultural behavior happens, Earth-life will continue to be degraded even more, and human relationships will become ever more insufferable.

The outcome of evolution, the processing of interdependent life and consciousness, doesn’t have to be terminally wasteful and self-destructive, rather it can uplift, enlighten intelligence and show humankind its wrongdoing; and importantly, it can help us see how to end bad habits and replace them with right-thinking and doing, and how to keep hope alive for a prospective future.

This manual, “The Global THINKING Community” invites all to take a critical look at who we are, what we are saying, what we are thinking, what we are doing, and to stop, take a breath, and rethink what we have done and what we need to do to change and live in sustainable relationships.

The companion, “2000: A SUMMARY PREVISION toward Global Revitalization” directly exposes religion’s complicity in blindness and cultural misdirection. As a people, individually and collectively, we can and must do better. It begins with us individually. With Saint Francis we should all pray to God, “Let it begin with me.”

# **The Four-Level FAITH/EVOLUTION SYLLABUS**

## **Adult Faith Studies, Part One: Year One**

**Evolution 101**: Cultural Orientation:

**Introduction to**

The Unity of Consciousness and Faith/ Evolution

**Resources:**

**“The Global THINKING Community”**

**“2000, A SUMMARY PREVISION toward Global Revitalization”**

## **Adult Faith Studies, Part Two: Year Two**

**Evolution 202**: Programmatic History:

**The Quantum World and**

**The Second Enlightenment Trilogy**

**Resources:**

**PRIMARY SCRIPTURE**, Cosmic Religion’s First Lessons;

**QUANTUM RELIGION**, the Good News of Rising Consciousness; and

**RELIGION & CIVILITY**, the Primacy of Conscience

## **Adult Faith Studies, Part Three: Year Three**

**Evolution 303**: Plateaus of Consciousness:

**Insights of Quantum Consciousness and**

**The Conscious Light Trilogy**

**Resources:**

**The POSSIBLE JOURNEY**, Uncompromised Trust;

**WHAT SELF-DONATION IS**, Kenosis, Eucharist and Green Religion; and

**GREEN RELIGION**, Inside the Cultural Spectrum

## **Adult Faith Studies, Part Four: Year Four**

**Evolution 404**: Intension/ Intention and Secular/ Spiritual Harmony:

**Cosmic Poetics and**

**The Poetree Trilogies**

**Resources:**

**I. NOVOGENESIS**: Faith-based Communication;

**II. METAGENESIS**: Hope-based Consciousness;

**III. THEOGENESIS**: Love-based Conscience

**IV. HOUSE of BREAD**: “*RIGHT as GRAIN*”

## **ESSAYS for REFLECTION and DISCUSSION**

- 1. Faith!? Are we losing it?**
- 2. Why Evolution Matters**
- 3. THEISTIC EVOLUTION, Catholicism & Bruno's Acentric Universe**
- 4. "The Medicine of Mercy rather than Severity"**
- 5. Truth and the Culture of Distrust**
- 6. Ideology, Worldview, Subjectivity**
- 7. "Axial" Age and "Postaxial" Age**
- 8. "Teaching the Faith in a Postmodern World"**
- 9. Conscience is the Means/ End**
- 10. Human Personality**
- 11. Women and Scholasticism's Unrepented Blunder**
- 12. The Other Face**
- 13. How Does Scholasticism's Blunder disorder**
- 14. Bernard Lonergan speaks**
- 15. To Think with the Church**
- 16. Energy and Reconciliation**
- 17. Reflections on Faith and Frustration**
- 18. How timely**
- 19. The Oneness of Nature**
- 20. Einstein's Theory**
- 21. The Universe is quantum-electric**
- 22. Natural Polarity, Natural Ambiguity**
- 23. The Cultural Spectrum & Intrinsic Order**
- 24. Ecological Necessity and Divine Instance**
- 25. Inside the Cultural Spectrum**

26. In the evolving...
27. I mean resonance in two senses...
28. TRUE Religion, TRUE Priesthood
29. ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE
30. "SUFFERING", What Eucharist Is
31. "Suffer" means more than pain;
32. From the Perspective of Evolution
33. We are also taught by omission...
34. Now we get to the nub...
35. Immediately following Vatican II
36. The documentation of female/ male
37. The DIVINE FEMININE & Church Competency
38. Evolution clarifies Original Sin
39. This is a non-conventional...
40. In the Book of Genesis
41. To be fully human
42. Faith, Reason and Dysfunctional Marriage
43. Virtual Reality and New Age Metaphysics
44. Equal Opportunity Sin
45. "COGITANDO SIC", method of evolution
46. From William Madges,
47. This strand (44 and 45) is important
48. The philosophical worry
49. David C. Korten's
50. American Corporate Feudalism
51. Religious Paralysis Syndrome

52. Odious Stereotyping
53. What Do You Expect?
54. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI
55. Exclusionism vs. Inclusionism
56. Tithing Nature, Restoring Faith
57. Living in the person
58. TRUST issues: Faith, Ecology, Natural Law
59. Yes! Natural Law, Cosmic Law
60. The HOLY TRINITY Triduum (Retreat Exercise)
61. Evolution and Intelligent Design
62. Faith — Eucharist
63. THEOSIS and the Pursuit of Godlikeness
64. Earth's Ecozoic Crisis
65. Pursuing Truth
66. The Fraudulent Prerogation of Male Primacy
67. Eucharistic Evolution & Resurrection Consciousness
68. A UNIVERSAL SYLLABUS

#### **APPENDIX: Summaries**

1. Living Truthfully and Openly
2. Cover-up and Breach of Trust
3. Original Sin
4. The Sacrament of Natural Order

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The essays that follow are from postings that were made at [www.ncrcafe.org](http://www.ncrcafe.org) The NCR website is operated by the **National Catholic Reporter** for the public exchange of ideas; unedited postings and discussions can be found at the NCR website. The reprinting of postings here is with the permission of the National Catholic Reporter.

## 1. Faith!? Are we losing it?

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 11, 2006 - 3:29pm. --- **Diocesan Life**

What is faith anyway? Because faith is intuitionally natural and transmitted from generation to generation, we recognize it when we see it. But do we recognize that it is missing when we don't see it?

For example, as parents we better pay closer attention to the feedback we get from our children because it tells us about ourselves, about our faithlessness. Are we missing the message? Oh sure, I know that religions, preoccupied at their preferred polarities, give a bad name to religion and faith by association; and that it isn't a lot better with middle religion. But if we are honest with ourselves we should be asking "how much is religion about faith anyway?" Don't get me wrong, I believe religion and church are very important, but they are no better than we are because we are church. And we are misguided in our religious pretenses.

The waste of our wealth and children to the violence of choice is criminal; and I speak to all the offspring of Abraham! Violence in any of its forms is not about faith! It's about despair (among other things). And what causes despair? Alienation!? Poverty!? Fear!?

Faith is wisdom, collective intelligence, naturally evolved. Faith is a treasure of great and incalculable worth. Cosmic processing, going back to the big bang, is responsible for faith's formation and its collected value. All life preceding has contributed to the faith we now have. We should be aware of and sensitive to nature's unrelenting investment in us, in faith potential encoded in our DNA. Surely we have enough decency and good sense not to trash something so irreplaceable, so valuable and long in the making!?

Cultural bad habits of exploiting natural resources and wasting ecology (repositories of wisdom/ faith) are now challenged with demands of payback. The greater cost of payback is going to fall on our children. And they know it and they are getting madder, and madder about it. Should we expect them to thank us for it? I don't think so. What kind of faith lesson are we giving them? Is the unprecedented anger in children today any wonder? NO. It's what we might expect.

To answer the title question "are we losing faith", my answer is "yes", and at an accelerating pace.

### **Keeping Faith Alive**

Cosmic Call & Universal Rationale: As a parent I'm sufficiently chagrined, ashamed and guilt-ridden by our collective infidelity as to feel compelled to do something about it. Over a long period of time I have struggled to frame a rationale of universal conscience, sufficiently informed so as to expose to ourselves the life and treasure we are wasting; and to attempt to reverse habits, personal and social, that waste nature and faith at the same time. Loss of nature/ ecology is direct loss of faith! We trash ourselves when we trash them! The call of nature to us to change is "Call to Church"; it's a personal mandate to (re)discover and recover fidelity to nature, to life, self and God.

Even with the diversity of global cultures and the uniqueness of bioregions, all humankind, all religions, as global community, are obliged morally and practically to the universal Covenant of common Faith. As community, as Church, we are called to journey together in trust. This is faith's universal Call to religion, to civility. All religions should be able to agree on the need for universal response and collaboration.

## 2. Why Evolution Matters

### People of faith need to know

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on April 26, 2008 - 4:05pm.*

People of faith need to know why evolution matters. Childhood lessons of faith are solid grounds upon which peace of mind and sense of self are reassured in understandings that endure. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ are the solid ground of received faith for the Christian.

Adult experiences of life impose on childhood understandings and reveal that faith's grounding is ever called into question by ever changing circumstances, and so are peace of mind and sense of self.

Preparation for adulthood supposes awareness of learned faith certainties, but also anticipation of adulthood uncertainties and how one can cope with uncertainties and still preserve the certain ground of faith.

In brief, the answer to the question "why does evolution matter to faith" is that faith and reason together are life's coping means, for, faith (emotional intelligence) and reason (rational intelligence) together find workable solutions to life's recurring uncertainties.

The "how" of coping is by intentionally engaging faith and reason in perpetual dialog, for in their dialog human intelligence (rational and emotional) evolves even as they resolve life's challenges.

The evolution of intelligence is a process of faith and reason reconciling uncertainty and certainty. "Reconciling" is a process of "harmonizing", that is, of finding consistency in uncertainty before uncertainty overwhelms.

How does the process of reconciliation work? It works by the intentional attention of good faith (trustworthiness) to the sensible understandings of informed reason. Intentional dialog is a three-step process: "communication" is the trustful exchange of understandings; "consciousness" is secured trust in certainty and open-mindedness to sensible understandings; and "conscience" is the will to change from beliefs and behavior-patterns that are less good than new ones that better serve wellbeing.

No faith system is self-attained in possessing "absolute" truth. The faith system that engages with reason and expands its bases of certainty is a system that evolves by engaging with uncertainties and dealing openly and trustfully with eventual and inevitable uncertainty.

This I believe is precisely the intent and purpose of the Second Vatican Council, namely, to urge the People of God, individually and collectively, in an ever new and renewing "analysis and synthesis" of every aspect of life, but especially of faith life. Evolution does matter to faith

life. We eschew evolution at our own peril, and except we perpetually reconcile certainty and uncertainty we stunt our own growth in wisdom and grace and we stymie our sense of self and our capacity for harmonious living. The merciful mind, not the severe, judgmental mind, administers the medicine of health and healing.

### **3. THEISTIC EVOLUTION, Catholicism & Bruno's Acentric Universe**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on August 14, 2008 - 5:38am. --- Spirituality & Culture*

Dominion theology, premised in Earth-centric cosmology, is irreconcilable with process theology that arises organically from evolving cosmic consciousness. Roman Catholic fixation in its own centrism (infallibilism) obscures the organic understanding of Divine/ Human Covenant and compromises fidelity to Covenant.

If Catholicism means to be universal in its truth-sense, and if truth is expressed organically (physically/ psychically) in ongoing evolution, then evolution and Catholicism, necessarily and morally, converge in intentional consciousness. If human intention would avoid imperiling itself it needs to seek out authentic truth revelation in evolution. Truth-sense endures in the unity and continuity of cosmic evolution (what symbiosis does); disdain toward cosmic evolution is disdain toward truth's unity and continuity, the frustration of truth-sense.

One of the more remarkable findings of space science is that the expansion of the universe continues at an accelerating pace. What this suggests is the ongoing de-centering of the cosmos and increase of cosmic acentricity.

The original gravity of maximum centeredness that preceded the bigbang continues to be diffused at an accelerating rate, and ever more distributed and shared in expanding quantum-electric relationships. The distribution and expansion of gravity energy are what cosmic evolution is about, what the personalizing and complexifying of self-reflective consciousness are about. "Dominion Theology" obsesses in pre-bigbang centrism while "Liberation Theology" celebrates personal liberation and self-reflective autonomy.

The liberation and distribution of gravity, i.e., the process of expanding consciousness, is at the heart of "intelligent design" which values human autonomy and personal worth. Cosmic personalizing is an apex accomplishment of cosmic evolution. Faith and reason together work to sustain and advance the personalizing process, which secures purpose and meaning by focusing intention on the centering means of self-sustainability. If focused intention on centering collapses, then the process of decentering accelerates and puts human personalizing in peril; the outcome of unmoderated decentering (entropy) is greater chaos. At the other extreme, the outcome of unmitigated centering, "centrism," is the frustration of personal autonomy and the suppression of personal conscience.

The cosmic process of CONSCIOUSNESS RECONCILING TRUTH-SENSE is what "Theistic Evolution" is about; what conscionable living within of the God/ Human/ Nature Covenant is about. Church should seek out truth/ covenant understandings with enthusiasm for truth-sense is the primacy "business" of religion; nevertheless, Church remains dismissively minded toward theistic evolution.

Before the Catholic Church can realistically embrace theistic evolution, it must first deal with its entrenched misdirection and with its overt sins of the past, e.g., against Bruno [<http://ncrcafe.org/node/2021>], Galileo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, whose evolving insights show the way of reconciling Christian Theology and faith practice with quantum science. [See: 65. Pursuing Truth]

Whether or not institutional Catholicism is capable of making the quantum leap of accepting the evolutionary insights of theistic evolution remains an open question — but that a growing segment of Catholics have made the leap isn't controvertible. Based on very recent remarks of Pope Benedict XVI it seems quite clear that he has not made the shift. [<http://www.ncrcafe.org/node/2039>, Transcript of Benedict XVI's Q&A with priests in northern Italy, Posted on Aug 8, 2008 11:45am CST, "When, in our time, we discuss the rationality of the faith, we should discuss precisely the fact that reason does not end where experimental discoveries leave off, it does not end in positivism. The theory of evolution sees the truth, but it sees only half of it. It does not see that behind evolution there's the Spirit of creation. We are struggling for the expansion of reason, and thus for a form of reason that is open to the beautiful, not leaving it aside as something totally different or irrational."

It is quite clear that the present advance of theistic evolution does accept "that behind evolution there's the Spirit of creation." Will the two Catholic churches (Vatican II and Tridentine) persist in their schism, or will they (can they) reconcile on terms of accommodations available in understanding theistic evolution?

Roman Catholicism and Christian churches in general have a problem with evolution because they have persisted historically in their antagonism toward science and Enlightenment rationalism, even as Enlightenment rationalism has persisted in its atheistic antagonism against cultures of fideistic religions. It is my sense that "Second" Enlightenment consciousness has opened avenues of dialog that can reconcile faith consciousness with reason/ science.

The most recognized protagonist for theistic evolution is the French Jesuit Paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who has advanced a scientific sense that is consistent with Bruno and Albert Einstein; contemporary illuminaries, such as Thomas Berry and James N. Studer advance theistic evolution even further. Even though Chardin's theology and cosmology had a powerful influence on the thinking and conclusions of Vatican II, Chardin does not yet enjoy the Church's public endorsement.

What is immediately relevant to the global predicament of Church's ecosocial disconnect is that Teilhard de Chardin opens up a rationality that is a framework on which the impasse between theistic evolution (Christian) and atheistic evolution (Enlightenment) can be clarified; significant strands of Catholic theistic evolution have now been developed beyond the worldview and struggling theology of Chardin.

I began seriously my journey of science/ faith reconciliation in February 1957. [See QUANTUM RELIGION, Appendix A, "Religion: a Rational Consideration", pp 255-266, 2003, [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)]. The body of thinking that I have put together since 1957 is herein being organized into a syllabus of faith/ evolution study, offered online. A "2008 Update" of [www.secondenlightenment.org](http://www.secondenlightenment.org) begins now and continues in process.

I invite all to participate in the effort of Church to facilitate greater ecosocial relevance in this time of universal crisis.

#### 4. "Teaching the Faith in a Postmodern World"

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on May 9, 2008 - 2:33am. --- **Spirituality & Culture**

Together, Eucharist (altruistic self-donation) and evolution are the internal and external dynamics of the cosmic, transformational Soul/ Body. Faith and reason together authenticate the intentional roles humans play and qualify the successes of altruism and evolution.

Faith and reason are the underpinnings of religious belief and social governance; religion and civility authenticate each other even as faith and reason authenticate each other. We cannot live life fully except we engage reason intentionally and in the lived expression of collective wisdom (public faith expression).

It needs to be made clear that faith understanding in evolutionary consciousness, the consciousness of Postmodernity, is larger and less ideological than faith understandings of Modernity and Premodernity.

In Modernity and Premodernity, faith like religion is understood in highly ideological terms, that is, as qualified by the authoritarian fideism of patriarchal politics and dominion theology. In Postmodernity, faith is understood as the ground-state of consciousness resourced ever more profoundly in the disciplines of intelligence and universal discourse.

While faith is the certitude upon which knowledge is secured, it is not fixated in one context of cultural experience or in the experience of a single specific time reference. Faith, like knowledge and experience, evolves to accommodate the changing realities of time/ place/ energy/ matter, that is, all the dimensions of quantum relativity.

New knowledge feeds reason even as reason feeds faith. As science expands knowledge, so the insights of reason expand faith. It is clear that neither faith nor reason is closed in its conscious expression; both remain open to the changing dynamics of personal/ social experience. This is a problem for cultures whose faith premises are fixated in closed absolutes, that is, in authoritarian religion and patriarchal politics.

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, SJ, of Milan, Italy, well states the problem: "...we are not all living in the same historical age. Some are still living in the time of the Council of Trent, others of the First Vatican Council. Certain people have digested the Second Vatican Council well or poorly; others are well advanced into the third millennium. We are not contemporaries, and this has always been a great burden for the church and requires plenty of patience and discernment." ("Teaching the Faith in a Postmodern World", AMERICA, May 12, 2008)

Eucharistic and evolutionary consciousness is stymied by religious/ political dominion fixated in authoritarian belief. Changing experiences, changing consciousness and changing faith happen in individual lives, and only gradually, come to be accommodated in religious/ political culture — what maturity and intelligence are about.

When institutional fixations stymie personal/ social authenticity, only the people can bring to bear the pressures necessary to jar institutions out of their cultured fixations. A Herculean straining is now being exerted by the people to bring religious and political institutions up to date.

## 5. “The Medicine of Mercy rather than Severity”

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on April 24, 2008 - 5:03am. --- Church Leadership*

Church is effective in its work when it works to persuade and reconcile, as Jesus did. At the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the grandfatherly Pope John XXIII instructed the gathered fathers to think of mercy as the right remedy to cultural misdirection rather than severity. (Maureen Sullivan, Review of book, “VATICAN II: Did Anything Happen?”, AMERICA, March 3, 2008, pg 26)

Grandfatherly Pope Benedict XVI now seems determined to advance Vatican II by his proactive affirmation of the necessary and continuing work of correlating Faith and Reason, as did Pope John Paul II in his “Fides et Ratio”. The ongoing correlation of Faith and Reason in social/ personal living accomplishes in fact the updating “aggiornamento” theme of the Second Vatican Council.

The integrity of truth, sustainable health and personal/ social rationality rely on trust, that is, on the trustful mutuality of faith and reason. This is true whether as to personal emotional/ rational intelligence or to interpersonal relationships, especially in the man/ woman, husband/ wife and family relationships.

The neural network of the senses is an omni-directional causeway linking the whole body system to the cortical brain as information-processor and instructor of mind/ body holism. The information-exchange systems of all bodies link to the energetic cosmos. Everything is perpetually energized in the wave/ energy processing of the electromagnetic cosmos. We belong in soul and body to the Divine Intelligence that informs the energetic cosmos. We are linked to each other by and in divinity, and we are harmonized in the intentional work of the cosmos, what is the Work of Providential participation — EUCHARIST in the holistic, cosmic sense.

If individual life and group systems are to function holistically, rationally, systemically, within the cosmic system, consciousness must intend trust as its foundation and means of working for common wellbeing.

If we as individuals fail to preserve in our own consciousness the integral trust relationship between emotional and rational intelligence, then our own intelligence and our personal lives will be defective and disordered. If as individuals we fail in inter-relational trust, then our social selves and our social living become disordered.

Trust begins in personal conscience, in our intentional efforts to understand right relationships and to conform our personal actions to wellbeing and right living. The processes of right order, reason and social evolution are by way of communication, consciousness and conscience, the trimorphic processes of resonance, of intelligence.

The challenge this awareness imposes on us is the personal right ordering of faith and reason, that is, the intentional ordering of life to a higher level of trust than that to which we are religiously/ culturally accustomed at the present time. Our present habits of religion and culture are destroying us. Fidelity to conscience, to trust, demands change in thinking, change in doing. Both grandfatherly Popes, John XXIII and Benedict XVI, challenge us to live and think, and to be Church in the Modern World, to seek communal remedies found in mercy, not in severity.

## 6. Truth and the Culture of Distrust

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 10, 2007 - 8:28am. --- **Church Leadership**

The pursuit of trust, of truth is the persistent, consistent objective of consciousness. The surprises of everyday life (contingent reality) are major challenges to consciousness, consistent living and to the understanding of truth. Through it all, however, there is continuity linkage of truth and consistency. The truthfulness of things works for wellbeing when wellbeing is what is being pursued; the connections of truth to wellbeing need to be made every day.

Religion, Church and consciousness have in common the pursuit of truth and wellbeing. Truth is process, not an absolute. Not religion, not Church, not consciousness possesses the fullness of truth. Consistency and persistency enlighten the way. Insistency, however, as for example, "my truth is truer than your truth", easily fixates in obstinacy, intolerance and closed mindedness, and stymies consciousness in its pursuit of truth. Institutional self-interest too easily succumbs to the self-serving trap of arrogance and fixations that impose on others and compromise trust.

Ecclesiology and theology in Roman Catholicism are of divided minds, that of the mind of Trent and Vatican I, as opposed to the mind of Vatican II. Happening at this time is focus on what is called "The Roman Imposition" (The National Catholic Reporter, Vol. 41, No. 39, pp 7 & 8, September 9, 2005), referred to by Arthur Jones as "the Wojtyla-Ratzinger continuum". More recently COMMONWEAL, (Richard R. Gaillardetz, "Between Reform & Rupture, The Council According to Benedict XVI", October 12, 2007, pp 16-21) updates the "continuum debate" on differences between Vatican I & II. Some see the differences of ecclesiology/ theology, prior to and after Vatican II, as starkly contrasting. The right semantics to describe the differences are not yet satisfactorily worked out. What matters is the continuity of truth, of theology and of ecclesiology; the status quo cannot credibly obtain without exacerbating damage to Church.

Issues of ecclesiology/ theology matter because they define Church, in structure (form) and work (function). The conflict of structure is whether Church will insist on its hierarchical, imperial structure (as obtained pre-Vatican II) or if it will become in fact communal and collegial in character as put forth by Vatican II.

Politics and theology are manifest in structure and function. Their relationship is reciprocal: function follows form (spirituality is apt to physicality); function supposes form as form supposes function; theology supposes ecclesiology as ecclesiology supposes theology; truth supposes consciousness as consciousness supposes truth; grace supposes nature as nature supposes grace; faith supposes reason as reason supposes faith. Church faces its truth-test right now.

It is my sense that truth is "green", organic, alive, still flowering — so too Church. What say you? What is truth?

## 7. Ideology, Worldview, Subjectivity

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on February 16, 2008 - 2:55am.*

Ideology, worldview, subjectivity and objectivity intertwine with each other in their reciprocal effects on us personally. All of these are implicated in self-understanding, education, and religion.

The ideologies we personally hold to qualify how we understand ourselves, each other and the world. Our personal ideologies are tiles in a mosaic, sometimes not always quite right. Our personal character is revealed to others by how we communicate our subjective selves to each other.

Ideologies are acquired from genetic/ memetic inheritance and from experience. Gender coding pertains to our spiritual/ physical persona. Memetic coding pertains to cultural coding, that is, to understandings acquired from experience in family/ social/ culture and our personal reason/ belief. "Nature" is about genetic coding; "nurture" is about familial, social, and experiential (cultural, memetic) coding.

Personal gender and how we understand ourselves, is shaped by all the above. In our subjective persona we create our own calculus of objectivity, by which we color everything. Our spiritual lives are indeed a continuing work of testing our subjective selves, the tint of the glasses we wear, if you will, against cultural presumptions and expectations of objectivity.

When I say that education needs to change from bottom to top, I am not saying that everything about education is wrong, but that the objectivity of education (religion) is prejudiced by false coloring; namely, that we all have come to be subjectively prejudiced by over-wrought fideism cultured in static-centrist-dominion thinking.

The transformational (evolutionary) worldview (EWW) is ever open to the dialogue of faith and reason, by which, our subjectivity is ever in transformation — and by necessity — by which our objectivity is ever under scrutiny and challenge.

The hierarchical culture and structure of patriarchy/ imperialism suffer the discoloration of worldview objectification, and castes subjectivity in false light. All of society, all of us personally, and all of nature, suffer from the culture of falsified objectification. These are what the needed changes in religion, education and culture are about.

The political opportunity to begin a radical cultural shift to change is before us presently in this 2008 presidential cycle. Let us not miss this opportunity.

## 8. "Axial" Age and "Postaxial" Age

### **New Search -- New Name**

*Submitted by rottsch on May 29, 2008 - 9:46am. --- Spirituality & Culture*

"...As the tension between the pursuit of truth and obeying the teaching authority of the Church relaxes, the discrepancy between the results of academic freedom and the teachings of the Church fades. The result is that we will exit one age and begin another. Exiting the Axial Age religion known as Christianity, specifically Catholicism, we enter a post-axial age faith. Because of the work of experts in well-developed and emerging

fields of scholarly endeavor Homo sapiens has made a giant leap forward in the last 2000 years since the founding of Christianity. The sciences and other disciplines are converging to show that Christianity had a beginning that is now leading to its ending. Humanity's faith in the future as elaborated in Christianity is once again metamorphosing into a new faith -- a post-axial age one. This process is part of our cultural evolution. Evolutionary theory has preempted the assumed dichotomy between the hypothetical sacred and secular realms. Sacred and secular reality and truth are one. "

## Marie, just so my ignorance

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on June 3, 2008 - 9:29am.*

Marie, just so my ignorance doesn't get in the way of meaningful discussion, I need to get a better fix on what "axial" and "post-axial" mean here.

My sense of "axial" is of a centering object about which things turn, i.e., an axle or axis, whether a radius point or the axle of a vehicle around which its wheels turn. If we think of culture as the axis around which civilizations turn, then we must address the cohesive center of culture, the gravity center holding civilizations together.

Off the top of my head, if I were to consider "axial" and "postaxial" from the perspective of Western culture, then, it seems to me, that what holds cultures together and around which they pivot, is "worldview". In that Roman Catholic religion has dominated Western culture, we need to consider and identify the dominant worldview of Western Christian culture.

A time of great turning that departed from the accustomed Catholic axial viewpoint began in and through the Middle Ages (?), through the Renaissance and in conjunction with the Protestant revolt against the corruption of institutional Catholicism.

The Thirty Years Wars of Religion culminated in the Peace of Westphalia (1648), by which time humanism, rationality, and Enlightenment and Positivism (somewhat later) seriously challenged theological/political dominion and began looking to new learning for new centering (e.g., Giordano Bruno, Copernicus, Galileo, the "Philosophes", Comte, etc) to replace the Aristotelian/Scholastic worldview.

It seems that there is not yet an acceptable new axis (worldview) around which people can find consensus, and by which global cultures can come to sustainable grounding and agreement.

It's suggested here that the "static worldview" (**swv**) is the broken axle that's been rejected because it doesn't make sense and it doesn't work any more, and that the evolutionary worldview (**ewv**) is the replacement axle that is surfacing as the understanding that best serves cultures and religions in their common pursuits of universal wellbeing.

Insofar as Roman Catholic (Western Christian) philosophical/theological discussions continue to be premised in **swv** thinking, they will find themselves suspect from the point of view of evolutionary consciousness. That's still a problem for the Roman Catholic hierarchy and its cohorts. Am I off on a tangent, or am I advancing the subject matter?

## **You say, “The sciences and other disciplines**

*Submitted by Sylvester Steffen on June 14, 2008 – 11:08pm.*

You say, “The sciences and other disciplines are converging to show that Christianity had a beginning that is now leading to its ending. “

Every age, every civilization has its worldview, a complex of consciousness that holds things together at the center. Many things about consciousness, in every age and every civilization, are the same because of the unity of origins and the continuity of evolution.

Christianity, based on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, represents a quantum leap in civil consciousness by which civilizations and cultures are sustained and able to thrive. In that sense, I do not see that “science and other disciplines are converging to show that Christianity...is now heading to its ending”, notwithstanding Christianity’s misdirected culture in the politics of dominion.

What I do see, however, is another quantum leap in the offing, namely, an end to imperial politics and the theological culture of dominion politics. This will come about because of the global change of consensus consciousness now awakening to the irreversible disasters caused by social/ ecological waste and destruction that result from exploitation fueled in consumerism.

What I see an end to is not Christianity but to the cultural paradigm of consumerist economics, dominion politics, imperial theology and Western capitalism, greed-based. If these do not come to an end, there is great risk that human civilizations will suffer extreme die-off.

Every Age has its axle around which it turns; but axles wear out and need replacing. New Ages need new axles that fit, that are in good repair and lubricated. If reason fails to apply, to “grease the axle”, the Age is handicapped and falls short of its potential.

The SWV (static worldview) is an unfit axle for Postmodernity; the EWV (evolutionary worldview) fits and works.

## **Marie, correct me if I’m wrong,**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on July 5, 2008 - 2:57pm.*

Marie, correct me if I’m wrong, but it seems to me that your “exit/ entrance” correlation is the equivalent of Louis Dupré’s correlation of “end/ means”. In the transformational dynamic of evolution, everything is means/ end to everything else.

The global evolution of human communities is by way of transformational consciousness evolving from prior understanding (status-quo-ante) to newly informed understandings (status-quo-post). Means/ end continuity in personal/ social consciousness is prior “end” (outcome, “exit”) which becomes new “means” (“entrance”) to a new outcome (“exit”). This iterative process ever continues in consciousness processing (evolution), as in “trimorphic protennoia”, i.e, communication-consciousness-conscience.

Metannoia, (conversion, “metamorphosis”) is a trimorphic process of protennoia, that is, of the evolution of “first knowledge” in the ever evolving consciousness of new knowledge, changed consciousness — “cogitata perficiendo, cogitando sic perfecta”

Louis Dupré, "Reason...functions in a system where everything has become end and means", from ("The Enlightenment and Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture", pg 17, © 2004, Yale University Press; also, THE POSSIBLE JOURNEY, Sylvester L. Steffen, © 2006, www.authorhouse.com, "Eucharistic Process: Means as Ends, Ends as Means, Appendix E: E-Consciousness, the Science of Religion", pg 54

"Axial Age" (Christianity-based culture, imperial, up to Trent) effected, for one thing, the categorical schism between matter and energy, soul and body, and spirituality and secularity. People and nature have come to be sacrilegiously exploited as a consequence of dominion theology's cultural disdain toward nature, toward materiality. Postmodernity ("Postaxial", Thomas Berry's "Eozoic Age") is moving into new quantum-science understanding of the unity/ continuity of energy/ matter, soul/ body, and spirituality/ secularity, i.e., the "Sacrament of Natural Order".

[An aside: In May of 2005, my wife and I spent the month of May in Madrid, Spain, celebrating the graduation of our first grandson from the International College, Spain (ICS). I took Loyal Rue's book "Religion isn't about God" with me and studied it thoroughly. I made copious notes. I know Loyal Rue personally. I have discussed the future of religion with him in his Luther College Campus Office at Decorah, Iowa, prior to the publication of his book. I gave him some of my writings. One of our daughters teaches religion at the largest Decorah Lutheran Church. I may be a bit better informed in your subject matter than my postings suggest; all in good faith, all in good humor. I wish you every success in your every enterprise.]

My question is if other new terms for historical periods are needed; whether "axial" and "postaxial" contribute anything more than the terms already being used.

I understand the "axial age" as the time period in which the static-centrist worldview (SWV) prevailed in European Christian culture up to the Council of Trent — what is "Premodernity".

I associate "Modernity" with First Enlightenment and the deconstruction of SWV, imperialism, etc; I associate "Postmodernity" with the findings of quantum science and the new understanding of Earth-cosmic unity and continuity, since the early 1900s; Einstein's  $E=MC^2$ , specifically.

"Postaxial", it seems to me, corresponds to Postmodernity which is replacing SWV with EWV. I like the term "Second Enlightenment" as an equivalent to Postmodernity. "Second" Enlightenment seems useful to distinguish from the deficiencies of Modernity and First Enlightenment, i.e., energy/ matter equivalency.

My sense is that Axial and Postaxial are unnecessary proliferations of terms that confuse. I'm sorry if what I write is unhelpful.

I have a sense that Loyal Rue's book "Religion is not about God" is to the point that the "Axial Age", its theology, religion and politics have come to a dead end because among other things it condoned and fostered the pillage and waste of people and nature, in God's name, and advocated(s) for dominion theology and patriarchal politics.

I must say that I subscribe to the belief that the theology and politics of guilt and fear lead to desperate and dead ends, and that the religion of guilt and fear has been (is) more about irreligion and incivility than it is about God. Witness the Karl Rovean (ala

Rush Limbaugh) tactic of political warfare that hyper ventilates rightist vitriol in order to demonize opposition candidates and polarize the electorate over hot-button religious/ social issues.

The tactics of slander and religious pretense are at work this election cycle. When the religious right, the absolutists of all stripes are party to calculated mean mindedness it seems very clear that they behave irreligiously and uncivilly; "religious" contention that aligns itself to such behavior cannot claim to be "about God". We need to ask ourselves "what are we coming to?"

Thomas Berry and his School have developed the insight of needed religious awareness of human dependency on ecology/ zoology, and the need to secure ecozoical nature (google "Ecozoic Era"). The word "ecozoic" is apt and elegant in that it reinforces the Land/ God/ Human Covenant of the Old Testament and the sense of Sacrament in the New Testament.

In my writings I customarily refer back to what I call the Sacrament of Natural Order, "Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis", whether it is with respect to the "Eucharistic" work of natural transformation, or whether it is with respect to the co-existential equality of maleness and femaleness in Godhead understanding.

The word "ecozoic" embodies Sacrament for me. Sacrament is essentially about "sacred remembrance" (sacrum meminisse). Cosmic intelligence is embodied in "ecozoic" reality (relation, religion), which is expressive in cosmic evolution. The dynamic unity and continuity of cosmic creation is well captured in "ecozoic nature".

The "ecological" aspect (eco) of Natural Sacrament is its sentient "forms", its physical "signs" that characterize the organic complex of web-life from its aboriginal beginnings to its present global complexity.

The "zoological" (zoic) aspect of Natural Sacrament is the energetic dynamic of vital spirituality (substantiated light), that is, nature's "function" which is "housed" ecologically, and which is always apt in the physical accomplishment of transformational purposes and the unfolding reality of Intelligent Design. Ecozoic Nature is harmonized in form and function, in sign and grace — which harmony is essentially one in matter/ energy and soul/ body, whether matter/ energy in the cosmic system or in the bodies/ soul(s) of organic Earth's ecozoic systems of life.

Eucharist in Nature is purposeful prevision/provision, which at the instance of Divine Presence signifies in form what it effects in function, namely, evolutionary purpose and process. Thus, when Teilhard de Chardin celebrated Mass he celebrated the "Mass of the Universe", that is, his Eucharistic consciousness of "ecozoic nature" — from and in which we have our being, to which we are "covenantally" obligated and return.

Global awakening to ecozoic mutuality is the "Great Work" Thomas Berry calls for. The "work" of Church, Nature and God is inseparably linked; if we fail nature, we fail Church, we fail God, and when Church fails nature, all life suffers, the Cosmos suffers, God suffers. "Religion is not about God" if it is mindless toward nature and when it is a party to the sacrilege of Divine Presence and purpose in ecozoic nature.

## 9. Conscience is the Means/ End

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 5, 2007 - 7:13am.

Conscience is the means/ end of evolution's intelligent design. The narrative lesson of the Original Sin Story is essentially about the consequences of failed obligation to covenantal relationships in the essential Order of Natural Sacrament. Yes, humankind is ordered to "increase and multiply", but, is equally ordered not to consume the continuum of web-life, the sustainable necessity of ecological health — the "tree" of vitality in the middle of the Garden.

All other truths contained in the Original Sin Story derive from the fundamental truth: GRACE SUPPOSES NATURE. This truth speaks to the mistake of the collusive act of giving corporations standing in law as persons. Corporations today are morphed structures of feudalism intending foremost personal profit without regard for the exploitive damage done to nature and people. Thus, the corporate "person" rationalizes and reinforces the fraudulent "doctrine" of dominion right (male-corporate theology/ politics) over all other. The corporate exploitation of nature, yet and again, is the fraudulent collusion of eating the apple of Vitality, the fruit of the Life-Tree in the "middle of the Garden".

Reality is relationship. The relationship pattern in nature, the reciprocal working of means/ end, is with outcomes of essential transformation, what is evolution. Evolution is more than theory, more than speculation, as John Paul II has said. The reality of reciprocal working in nature is the reality of evolution.

To ignore evolution is to reduce it effectively to status of non-reality, to meaninglessness, which is to deny the cause/ effect of transformational continuity in the moral order of essential evolution. The dismissal of evolution and the relegating of it to the nebulous category of "speculation", disposes of the obligatory role humankind plays in the essential intelligence of symbiotic continuity, and devalues the role of human judgment (reason) in the causality of grace's supposition of nature.

Regarding the conclusion as to the "method of evolution", our faith-fixations in static-centrist theology need to be re-thought in the light of evolutionary consciousness. This to me is the weight of the Introduction, #5, of *Gaudium et spes*, Constitution IV of the Second Vatican Council.

## 10. HUMAN PERSONALITY:

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on April 9, 2008 - 11:38am.

HUMAN PERSONALITY: E-Letter to Pope Benedict XVI, April 8, 2008

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI

Dear Holy Father:

In this day and age, professional ignorance of human biology/ psychology is unconscionable. From the perspective of neuro-biology, Faith represents the feminine person and Reason represents the masculine person; Faith and Reason, woman and man together, distinguish the human person in the harmony of emotional/ rational intelligence.

Scholastic science/ philosophy yet hold an understanding, with respect to female/ male harmony, that prevailed before the 1200s. The extrapolations of religion/ theology on that ancient understanding are misinformed and misguided, and continue to be humanly demeaning, socially disruptive and morally defective. I speak with respect to "Scholasticism's Blunder", that is, the discrediting of women, and "the other face", male super-arrogation.

I take no pleasure and find no consolation in bringing these matters to your attention. Yet, my conscience gives me no escape because of global malicious outcomes (e.g., social and environmental wasting) I witness from the culpable ignorance also of religious professionals vis-à-vis the defective philosophy/ theology of female/ male relationships.

If I am mistaken in the facts (see the Appended Attachments below) and in the interpretation of the facts, it would serve Church well and God's People to be instructed as to the errors of misrepresentation.

Your attention to these matters is greatly appreciated and solicited.

With respect and filial affection, I am, Sylvester L. Steffen

APPENDED ATTACHMENTS: "Scholasticism's Blunder" / "The Other Face"

## **11. Women and Scholasticism's Unrepented Blunder**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 7, 2008 - 11:34pm. --- Spirituality & Culture*

As to the status of women in cultural history, there is indeed a long train of philosophical/ theological thinking back into the deep past of consciousness by which thought advances the ascendancy of insight into self-understanding as it obtains in the "Sacrament of Natural Order" — the cultural source of intrinsic order and remembrance in the divine/ human hypostasis.

The PARADIGMATIC HUMAN (female/ male in God's image) is the continuity medium of the gendered personae (not the presumed male model) in which divine/ human hypostasis (understanding, consciousness) obtains and by which intrinsic order in nature sustains and evolves.

It is quizzical but notable to observe in Sacred Scripture the male accounting of females in the genealogy of Jesus. All female persons accounted are notably less than reputable in the male estimation. One wonders about the "rationality" behind the selective accounting by writers who have Jesus arise from less than reputable female ancestry.

Perhaps the answer is found in the "rationality" brought forward by St. Thomas Aquinas in the philosophy/ theology of Scholasticism, which still obtains officially in Roman Catholic Theology. In patriarchal culture/ theology, the female is memorable (demeaned) for the "intrinsic disorder" that she introduced into the human heritage, i.e., Original Sin.

"St. Thomas [reflected] the best science of his day when he said that a woman is a misbegotten or defective male ('mas occasionatus' I.99.2. ad 1, Summa Theologica)

" 'The active power which is in the male seed is intended to produce a perfect image of itself, a masculine sex', he said. 'When a female results it is either because of a weakness in this active power or because of some indisposition of the materials provided by the woman or

even from a change produced by some outside factor... for example, from south winds, which are humid." (ID: I.92.1. ad 1)

"Clearly such erroneous biology easily leads to other equally bizarre conclusions. Thomas says, for example, that women need the virtue of sobriety more than men 'because there is in them a greater proneness to concupiscence... sobriety is more required in women' (ID: II.11, 149. 4)

"These supposedly scientific conclusions led to spiritual implications as well. Women cannot be validly ordained to the priesthood, said Thomas, regardless their other qualifications, since 'no status of prominence can be signified in the feminine sex, because women have the status of subjection, and so cannot receive the Sacrament of Orders.' (ID: Supp—39)

"Thomas and other great thinkers [accepted] what was almost universally believed to be scientific fact. It illustrates, however, the kinds of baggage we need to sort out to understand better the relationship of men and women in human society and in church. Ultimately the answer appears in the fundamental equality between men and women as taught by Jesus and the rest of the New Testament, a position these theologians found it almost impossible to integrate with what they 'knew' to be scientifically true." [John Dietzen, THE NEW QUESTION BOX, "Status of Women", Guildhall, Peoria, IL 61651]

As long as Church hierarchy leaves this ancient and fraudulent characterization of women stand, Church is seen to endorse the destructive consequences of it on the man/ woman relationship. The Church's endorsement of discredited "science" discredits Church and the episcopacy, for bishops are perceived to objectify themselves and Church in an unwarranted arrogance that puts them above paradigmatic humankind.

Before bishops advance other ill-conceived pronouncements regarding gender differences and discrimination against women, they do well to distance themselves unequivocally from this long-standing cultural error of religion, and to deal with the "baggage" of wrongful theological extrapolations advanced on it, e.g., denying women their rightful place in the priesthood of humankind, for such denial agitates and aggravates intrinsic disorder by demeaning sacramental femininity and corrupting interpersonal relationships and ecological economics (Eucharist).

## 12. The Other Face

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on April 8, 2008 - 1:32pm.*

The Other Face: Not to be overlooked is the other face of "Scholasticism's Blunder". The first face is the ancient mistaken notion as to female "disordering" in the gestation of the male embryo; the other face is presumptive male singularity in the fathering of human life.

The ancient presumption is mistaken as to what the "male seed" is. The male sperm is not, as Scholasticism represents, a miniature male. The contribution of the sperm in bringing into existence a new person, *conceptus* (male), *concepta* (female), is one-half the DNA of the cell nucleus; the other half is provided in the ovum. Other DNA, as in mitochondria and plastids, is provided also in the ovum only, and NOT in the sperm.

Philosophy's radical mistake of wrong science is perpetuated in theologies and impacts societies in harmful ways. The Judaic, Christian and Islamic traditions even now are all culpable in the matters of the putdown of women and the super-arrogation of men.

Science and philosophy both know better; it remains for religions, theologies and cultures to correct the blunders they advance on mistaken presumptions. Ignorance is no excuse for continuing fraudulent cultures which are based on formal error; the perpetration of personal injuries and social havoc stemming from the known errors of philosophy/ theology is arrogant, malicious and idolatrous.

Mistakes of theology affect religious practice also, as for example, rituals and understandings of Eucharistic. In regard to Eucharistic bread, cereal grain science may be spiritually instructive with respect to "virgin birth" and the wrongly presumed "macula" of woman in the gestation of life and contribution to "original sin".

The identification of God as Light reflects on the synthetic capacity of life to derive food (autotrophism) from light energy, as in photosynthesis. Chlorophyll potentials for capturing photons and constructing sugars and carbohydrates from water and carbon dioxide are coded in the DNA of plastids.

In cereal grains, the plastids abound in the seed endosperm which is of wholly female origin. Modified plastids abound in cells of higher organisms, e.g., chloroplasts. The flour of cereal grains is made from endosperm (starch), which is of "virgin birth", that is, wholly of female origin. This is equally true of all cereal grains, corn, wheat, oats, rye, rice, etc. It makes no sense to assume that one cereal grain (e.g., wheat) has some greater ontological significance in making bread wafers than other cereal grains. And this reality can be of life-and-death importance to persons who suffer celiac disorder (gluten intolerance).

[For more detailed understandings about the science of cereal grains, visit the website <http://www.secondenlightenment.org/> and see free download, Booklet on Corn Ecology/ Economy: Right as Grain]

### **13. How does Scholasticism's Blunder disorder**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 11, 2008 - 5:40am.*

How does Scholasticism's Blunder radically disorder theological thinking? By radically misinforming religious consciousness in its gender sense; "Male and female in God's image" is humankind.

The priesthood of humanity is male/female, not exclusively male. The presumptive exclusion of women, to the contrary, radically disorders social consciousness in the Sacrament of Natural Order. The arrogation of male priesthood is intrinsically disordered.

This breach of Covenant corrupts male self perception in his attitude toward ecological fruitfulness, and in his justification of the exploitation of nature and women. As Walter Brueggemann says, humankind's disordered relationship with nature will not be healed except his disordered relationship with women is also healed.

Humankind is hell-bent in its disordered "religious" thinking. Perhaps Rome is now ready to reprioritize a new sin-list.

## 14. Bernard Lonergan speaks

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on April 5, 2008 - 3:38am.

Bernard Lonergan speaks of the “kairos” moment in the sense of coming to “critical mass” understanding, as the tipping point that brings about a major cultural shift of cultural consciousness. Knowledge of truth isn’t enough to cause a mass shift, but broad scale social awareness of truth’s consequences can build toward the kairos moment and cause consciousness to be dislodged from destructive habits and to depart from old understandings. New and correct ideas are not enough to bring about the kairos moment because ideas alone tend to stir resistance against a change from the status-quo. (B. Lonergan, “Insight, a Study of Human Understanding”)

[Haight, John F., *Is Nature Enough? Meaning and Truth in the Age of Science*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

‘What naturalism overlooks, and what I shall emphasize instead, is that you can understand the world in depth only if you take into account, starting with yourself, the subjective insideness of nature that science usually leaves out of consideration. A full understanding of the universe is inseparable from the project of coming to terms with your own critical intelligence. By following a few basic ideas of the philosopher Bernard Lonergan I hope to convince you, beginning in the following chapter, that you can reasonably be led beyond the naturalist enclosure into a more encompassing view of reality.’ (p. 29) The author relies also on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Alfred North Whitehead to answer the title question in the negative: ‘Is nature enough?’

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Lonergan, Bernard. ‘Bernard Lonergan’s Draft Pages for Chapter 3 of his Doctoral Dissertation, ... that notion, then, of kairos. The individual has to see ... [www.lonergan-iri.ca/pdfs/newsletter/2007/09\\_2007.pdf](http://www.lonergan-iri.ca/pdfs/newsletter/2007/09_2007.pdf) - Similar pages]

Arguably a tipping point is being reached as to eco-environmental understandings. Public corporate consciousness is being dislodged from its erroneous consumerist presumptions in the face of the gathering eco-environmental crises. Institutional religions are still held captive to the for-profit corporate paradigm, and with them presume that nature’s resources are unlimited and can be exploited with impunity. Global warming, environmental pollution and ecological collapses are products of the profligate wasting of nature — the modern version of Original Sin.

Status-quo presumptions of consumer economics and religious morality are challenged along with eco-environmental understandings. At this time in the Postmodern period, global communities are moving toward new eco-social awareness, what might be called the “post-consumerist” period; this latter post-consumerist consciousness can be understood as the maturing of Second Enlightenment.

The challenge to religion is how to understand God present and at work in nature. Human words and understandings of God and nature are handicapped, and even misdirected, and so, the enterprise of putting God and nature together is bigger than present limits of human understandings allow. The God/nature relationship will always be an imperfect understanding, even so, it can be very much perfected in the understanding of faith, which makes the case for the dependency of faith and reason on each other.

Failure to make the God/ nature connection is a disjunction that has catastrophic, even mortal consequences. The new enterprise of making such connection requires nothing less than rethinking and reinterpreting the religious human story from the Garden of Eden to the Crucifixion of Jesus. The kairos understanding that can effect social/ religious rethinking and reinterpretation calls for the integrated insights of faith and reason, religion and science, from the perspective of quantum-science, EVOLUTION.

[See NCR Story: LIFELONG SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE, MEANING

By Chris Herlinger "Childhood of displacement left its mark on Templeton winner Fr. Michael Heller". Full story]

BECAUSE NATURE IS ALWAYS IN PROCESS, so are Law and Religion; that is to say, both are "unsettled". By nature, all that is "in process" is in flux, so that new relationships are governed by new priorities in new and changing contexts. It is in the nature of organic life to be open to newness of process, to be open to new contingencies in new contexts. In the process of change, the role of Reason is necessary in settling Law and Religion, even as the role of Faith is necessary as established precedent for the effective working of the "Process of Reason", by way of open communication/ consciousness/ conscience.

Religion and Law are both about the work of settling unsettled matters of natural necessity and morality, that is, matters of Earth/ human relationships — what are processes of Cosmology, Philosophy and Theology.

## 15. To Think with the Church

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on April 16, 2008 - 9:55am. --- **Spirituality & Culture***

On this 81st birthday of Pope Benedict XVI it is not inappropriate to reflect on the ambiguous response of Church to the Call of Vatican II for updating as put forth by a predecessor octogenarian Pope John XXIII.

Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World  
SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, December 7, 1965, Introduction #5

"History itself speeds along on so rapid a course that an individual can scarcely keep abreast of it. The destiny of the human community has become all of a piece, where once the various groups of men had a kind of private history of their own. Thus, the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. In consequence, there has arisen a new series of problems, a series as important as can be, calling for new efforts of analysis and synthesis." Joseph Gremillion, "The Gospel of Peace and Justice, Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John", pg 247, copyright © 1976, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545

The failure of cultures (Church) to update in critical matters of human knowledge can have persistent and pernicious outcomes (as for example, "Scholasticism's Unrepented Blunder", see at <http://ncrcafe.org/node/1661>); which consequence Vatican II recognized and for which reason called for "new efforts of analysis and synthesis."

From personal experience, reason knows that personal/ social circumstances evolve "of a piece" and that faith accommodates the necessities of transformation and evolution; which fact of experience identifies precisely why faith and reason are necessary to each other and

why we and they change. By the continued updating of faith and reason, the urgencies of social consciousness and moral conscience are accommodated.

The need for updating is urgent and continuing. The Call of Vatican II, however, has been largely unheeded and even sidetracked. Pope Benedict XVI, in urgently asserting the equal partnership of faith and reason, challenges the People Church and individual persons to engage personal intelligence, personal reason, in the pursuit of personal/ social faith-life.

In his 39th McGinley Lecture, "A Life in Theology", (AMERICA, April 21, 2008, pp 9-12), Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ, writes: "Without in any way comparing myself with Pope Benedict XVI, I feel that I can make his word my own: 'I have never tried to create a system of my own, an individual theology. What is specific, if you want to call it that, is that I simply want to think in communion with the faith of the Church, and that means above all to think in communion with the great thinkers of faith. The aim is not an isolated theology that I draw out of my own self but one that opens as widely as possible into the common intellectual pathways of faith.'" ("Salt of the Earth", 1997, 66)

Pope Benedict, "thinking with the Church" and with Vatican II, calls each and every Catholic to live a conscionable life whose pathways accommodate as faith and reason necessitate. The mutual expectation of the conscionable Christian/ Catholic, whether pope, cleric, minister or lay person, is to personally "think" and inform individual conscience, and to live in fidelity to conscience and trustfully with one another. Every faithful Catholic is called to "think with the Church" in life's common journey. We are enjoined personally and individually to live by and to own our consciences, informed by personal reason.

## 16. Energy and Reconciliation

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on May 21, 2008 - 12:22am. --- Spirituality & Culture*

ENERGY and RECONCILIATION belong together like lyrical words and music. They belong together because they make sense and intensify each other. Lyrics without music are flat and less inspiring; music without lyrics is so much background noise.

The effective togetherness of lyrics and music, of reconciliation and energy, is the togetherness of special fit, as in "packaging". In this case, "packaging" is in dimensions of harmonic energy (superstrings), as in the resonant bonding of energy packets, in the substantive arrangements of durable configurations that seek out and correspond by means of compatible (sensible) resonances (energy waves). [Reference: Brian Greene, "THE FABRIC OF THE COSMOS, Space, Time and the Texture of Reality" © 2004, Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., New York]

Gradations of energetic accommodation (cooling) allow for the coming together of wave energy in infinite possibilities. The infinite varieties of wave combinations allow for infinite possibilities of substantiation. All molecular arrangements, including our bodies, are substances of energetic accommodation, of wave-energy packets reconciling and coordinating new "words", new music. In the case of life, they are conducted on the notes of DNA scores.

Consider water, for example. When cold, water hardens into crystalline ice structures; as water warms, it acquires energy and the ice turns to liquid. As water molecules attenuate even more energy, they dissipate into the air where they become accessible for further

breakdown and recombination, as in photosynthesis and live incorporation in cellular arrangements. The compatibilities of molecular energy (harmonics) account for particulate joining at the wave/ particle level in the formation of substances.

The words we speak, the thoughts we entertain, are resonances of energetic substances devised by soul/ body harmonies. We are “the music of the spheres”, and so is all life, all resonance of cosmic energy.

Humans are uniquely equipped (intelligently, harmonically) to seek and to reconcile with all that comes in sensible contact, and this they can do “intentionally” as well as unintentionally. Reconciliation happens intentionally, that is, by purposely making the effort to find harmony, compatibility and sensibility in interpersonal relationships. We reconcile by talking, reasoning together, by pursuing consonance, not dissonance.

By reconciliation it is possible for us as individuals to be more than background noise. We can become lyrics in the lives of others. The energy that accomplishes lyrical compositions is love, the power of intentional communication by which we tune in to others and resonate with them.

Love (religious sensibility) compels us to do what is right and good for wellbeing — what harmony and reconciliation are about. An understanding of the codependency of energy and reconciliation gives a whole new meaning to the process of “WORD-made-flesh”.

The open understandings of quantum science and evolution are uniquely accessible in this time of Postmodernity. Religion loses credibility and potential to motivate hearts to love if it becomes concretized in closed thinking of the past and in mistaken notions of relationships.

Divisions, separation and alienation don't just happen; they are driven by willfulness, and it takes willfulness, intentional energy, to stem the violence and heal the hurt. This is specifically true of the cultured alienation between the sexes. The arrogation of Church hierarchy in cultural dominion is a sad and tragic willfulness that requires much energy to reconcile.

## 17. Reflections on Faith and Frustration

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on December 7, 2007 - 5:18am. --- **Ethical Debates***

Far be it from me to be so arrogant as to think I could influence the Jesuits as they seek a new Father General. However, at this juncture [NCRCAfe.org, Daily News and update, Allen posting, Dec. 5, 2007, "Theological dialogue with Islam 'impossible', top Jesuit says"] of our common faith-journey we should reflect on the enduring values that derive from the open dialogue of faith and reason, from objectivity and subjectivity. Dialog between fideism and rationalism, and between objectivism and subjectivism, has proven to be impossible. The radical fixations of these “isms” are sources of all manner of personal/ social frustration, of psychological disease, alienation, abuse and calculated “civil” violence — a sorry legacy, indeed.

The fideism of religions and the rationalism of Enlightenment have worked and still work at cross-purposes, as is also true of the objectivism of theological absolutism and the relativism of individualistic subjectivism; their standoff frustrates purposeful outcomes and puts religion in conflict with science. The schizophrenia of their conflicted voices is a bi-polar cacophony

that disturbs psychic order. The remedy to disabling bi-polar disorder begins with the restoration of healthy interaction between faith and reason, objectivity and subjectivity.

It needs to be understood that reason and faith, subjectivity and objectivity, are means and ends to each other. Mental health is a growth outcome in which the balanced interaction of faith/ reason and objectivity/ subjectivity functions effectively and mutually.

The supposition of means and ends to each other is a supposition of evolutionary consciousness by which the achievement of a specified end (objective) becomes a new means for a newly specified (subjective) end (intended outcome). The evolution of intentional (subjective) means toward purposes of specified (objective) outcomes is what education and morally fulfilled living are about. ["Cogitata perficiendo sic cogitando perfecta": working-through thoughts and rethinking thought-through works — the “method of evolution”]

Developmental education needs to conform to the psychology and physiology of human growth and development. One is not born with the functional perfection of interactive faith/ reason, objectivity/ subjectivity. The tuning of these skills is gradually learned and acquired with practice. The foundations for these skills need to be put in place in synch with developmental stages and capacities.

The harmonies of faith/ reason, of objectivity/ subjectivity, are the harmonies of science and religion, of reconciled personal fulfillment and social civility — what are the sustaining and enduring values of education. The reordering of social priorities begins with the reprioritizing of education. The harmony of these accomplishes the reconciliation of religion and science.

## 18. How timely.

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on February 8, 2008 - 1:37am.*

How timely. Rich Heffern's "**Mystery of the Mind**" (NCR February 8, 2008) speaks to "science's deepest mysteries" and the reveal of the cosmic bridge, the "angelic" passageway common to human and cosmic consciousness, what is the holistic consciousness joining science and religion.

Baffling science is the vast and predominating realm of "dark energy/ matter" (check google/wiki) that escapes the calculus of science. Dark energy/ matter is everywhere, the amniotic supposition of all relativity, creativity. The best evidence is that it is the "pure" realm of "potential qualification" that substantiates all matter and characterizes all "soul".

Do we rightly understand this realm as the universal place of "psychic precondition", of the harmonic potential that is the source of all electromagnetism in which the transfer of wave energy to particle happens? The "graviton" is the least particle which is postulated to be a closed superstring loop, derived from the harmonic wave realm of superstrings.

Is this the realm of atomic/ subatomic regeneration that sustains all body substance and soul consciousness? Might we suppose that this "cosmic conscious" realm is the universal source of consciousness, the "psychic precondition" of substance quantification and conscious qualification, the place of perpetual, creative renewal, the realm of psychic inspiration accessible to us always in every least element of our bodies? I would suggest that this is the deep well of amniotic supposition, the cosmic womb of creative gestation, the evolving design of intelligence.

## 19. The Oneness of Nature

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on February 6, 2008 - 1:30pm. --- **Spirituality & Culture**

It is by way of "religious" consciousness (spirituality) that the cultural disconnect from ecological necessity might be healed. The "science" of religion reads on Einstein's theory of Special Relativity,  $E=mc^2$ . E is energetic consciousness;  $mc^2$  is matter, the substance of energy, materiality, "secularity".

"Religious" relativity is "eucharistic" consciousness, the theology of sacred remembrance (Sacrament) and the science of energy/ matter relationships. From the reality of essential relationships we might derive an equation of sorts, the "eucharistic equation of oneness":

$E = e(3) [e(1) \times e(2)]$ ; E is Eucharist; substance self-donation/ transformation  
e(1) is environment;  
e(2) is ecology; and  
e(3) is economy

Environment is the economically balanced ecology of web-life interdependency; Eucharist is the economy of web-life, self-donation, transformation; environment is the sustainable means/end of economic balance and authentic exchange. I invite any and all mathematical minds to improve on this less than perfect calculus I propose here.

No economy is workable/ sustainable except it accounts for the coefficients of intentional conservency, and except these coefficients are in place in human reckoning and interaction with web-life. The absence of these coefficients destines ecologies and humankind to come to precipitous dead ends; the absence of these coefficients accounts for the present wasting of life, environment and ecology, associated with the fraudulent economics of corporate consumerism that ignores the essential coefficients of sustainability.

Vatican II speaks in religious terms that support the rationality proposed here:

"(14)... body and soul, man is one. Through his bodily composition he gathers to himself the elements of the material world... man is not allowed to despise his bodily life... the very dignity of man postulates that man glorify God in his body... man...is more than a speck of nature... by his interior qualities he outstrips the whole sum of mere things...when man recognizes in himself a spiritual and immortal soul

"(15) Man judges rightly that by his intellect...he shares in the light of the divine mind... his intelligence is not confined to observable data alone. It can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable... The intellectual nature of the human person is perfected by wisdom and needs to be. For wisdom gently attracts the mind of man to a quest and love for what is true and good. Steeped in wisdom, man passes through visible realities to those which are unseen... [f]or the future of the world stands in peril unless wiser men are forthcoming. It should also be pointed out that many nations, poorer in economic goods, are quite rich in wisdom and can offer noteworthy advantages to others.

"(16)...the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically, do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged... In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in search for truth... the more that a correct conscience holds sway, the more

[persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by objective norms of morality.

“(17) Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness... authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image in man. For God has willed that man be left ‘in the hand of his own counsel’ so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence man’s dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice... Man achieves such dignity when...he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procures for himself, through effective and skillful action, apt means to that end.”

[Joseph Gremillion, “The Gospel of Peace and Justice”, *Gaudium et Spes*”, Copyright © 1976, pp 244-256, Orbis Books, Maryknoll N.Y. 10545]

## 20. Einstein’s Theory

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on February 7, 2008 - 3:26pm.*

Einstein’s theory of Special Relativity casts “new light” on religion, on the conscionable necessity of ecological fidelity. It’s time for new and renewed reverence toward nature. It’s time for Church re-formation, time to take a reality check.

Einstein’s theory of Special Relativity,  $E=MC^2$ , states that all matter derives from energy, is energy. E is cosmic energy (spirituality, if you will), the source of all substance.  $MC^2$  is mass times the square of the speed of light ( $C = \text{Celeritas}$ ), which calculates the energy content packaged in molecular substance, matter, mass (M). This energy relationship applies to all matter, including the human body.

The economy of energy in changing systems (all living tissue) is renewed constantly by wave/particle exchange at the subatomic level. The laws of God are script in the laws of nature. Grace supposes nature, so grace supposes the functioning of nature. The better we understand nature, the better we might understand grace.

In my very recent posting at "Spirituality & Culture", I attempt to read on nature's "ecological economy", the economy of Eucharist, of spiritual enlightenment. Intelligent design is in Divine Instance in nature's purposeful working, ever transforming (evolving) — human intentionality represents human purposefulness, which, as is apparent today, doesn't coincide with nature's self-sustaining purposes.

The correspondence of light in Einstein's science with Light in Christian consciousness is quite an amazing correspondence — something of great significance to spiritual enlightenment and to harmonious accommodation with and in nature.

I don't pretend to be a theologian, much less a physicist, but I have seriously struggled in my lifetime to accommodate science and spiritual understandings. I hope this is helpful.

## 21. The universe is quantum-electric

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on November 14, 2007 - 3:50am.*

The universe is quantum-electric. Electricity powers evolution. Electrical power is everywhere, distributed and stored in positive-negative potential.

Electrical power is fearsome as lightning and subtle as a neuron-spark. It is harsh and all-controlling, it is pliant and subtle. It is straight-line and hot, it is diffuse and cool. It is the ripple of a thought; it is the shattered trunk of a lightning-struck tree. It is the contentious energy of warfare and the gentleness of a mother's cradle song. It is the hard-wired power of instinct and the soft energy of sensation, of purpose, of love.

Electrical power is the energy of communication, consciousness and conscience. It is the energy of convergence, divergence and emergence. By communication, ideas come together; in bringing ideas together, understandings converge and diverge; and by the intelligence of converging and diverging ideas, newness emerges. All of the above come together in intentional consciousness, in purposeful living, in organic symbiosis, in evolution.

Organic life is quantum-electric. As in the universe so in the neural system, some electricity is linear and hot (hard-wired) and some is diffuse, parallel and "soft". Hard-wiring is direct and high voltage, soft power is diffuse and low-voltage. Soft power circuits are easily zapped by high-voltage power — power surges mess up computers.

Thinking like all processes of consciousness involves diffuse, low-voltage electricity. Some conscious responses are reflex, directly responsive and unthinking (instincts), and some are reflective, thoughtful and intentional. Hierarchical dominion is high-voltage, hard-wired. Shared authority is parallel-wired, diffuse and equilibrating — what makes for harmony. Reflective consciousness accommodates soft messaging in the iterations of social harmony, as in intentional responsiveness to naturally occurring contingencies. Institutional hard-wiring is less sensitive to the soft impulses of diffuse circuitry.

Intelligence is what intelligence does. Intelligence is the evolving design of diffuse energy at work in reflective consciousness.

In early evolution, the parceling of power was more direct and less subtle. Early "wiring" was linear and direct, reflex and involuntary — what served survival needs in situations of high risk ("startle responses") that required flight or fight. In the category of survival responses are sex-linked reflexes. Aggressive and over-powering males passed on the survival genes of aggression and dominion.

In the course of evolution, as subtle accommodations came about so did the substances (neural networks) and processes of consciousness. Effectively, nerve networks throughout organic bodies link up with brain centers and diversify the capabilities of energy potentials. Complexity-consciousness continually opens to greater complexity.

Humankind is not fated to be driven by the unmitigated control of instinctive hard-wiring rather the equipment of human intelligence is open to the necessity of engaging complexity-consciousness beyond the limitations of hard-wired instinct. Males do not solely possess the potentials of consciousness. Mono-polarity is ineffective except for bi-polar electrical potential as represented in females and males together.

Communication, consciousness and conscience are about the work of mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity, and these are about the work of convergence, divergence and emergence — what is the intelligent design of evolution.

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## 22. Natural Polarity, Natural Ambiguity

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 30, 2007 - 6:35am. --- Spirituality & Culture*

Government, corporations, churches and education are obviously misguided. We are only beginning to learn about natural polarity, natural ambiguity and vital complexity. Human misdirection is occurring at all levels of authority and leadership.

Direction and misdirection, natural ambiguity, are outcomes of cosmic polarity at work. Evolution has come a long way. We are now enlightened by the dead-end crises we have created. It's been the human habit to pursue an objective single-mindedly until it becomes an obstacle to common sense. Human understanding of truth is never "absolute"! We have to deal with the boulders we make. They become "walls of separation" that alienate, divide and frustrate. What to do?

We first need to recognize that the boulder in front of us is a human construction. To find our way over it we need to overcome social division, separation and alienation. Our root problem is our radical disconnection of mind from matter — it does matter when we don't mind.

The first challenge is to heal our cultured schism with nature, which begins in dealing with the schisms between the sexes — the male habit of dominion and obsession to control females. The way of symbiosis will surely become clearer if we can heal the breach of male/ female correlation. The mutuality of the sexes is sustainable; power games are not. The clarification of interpersonal mutuality can open the way to other matters: Earth/ life connections; parent/ child connections; faith/ reason connections; and religion/ science connections; eco-social justice.

## 23. The Cultural Spectrum & Intrinsic Order

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 15, 2008 - 8:37am. --- Ecological Sustainability*

The cultural spectrum is the whole diversified range (spectrum) of interdependent life and the energetic, Earth-cosmic environment that is self-authenticating and intrinsically (from within) ordered. The cultural spectrum is the universal biotic/ energetic continuum, the eco-social environment from which life depends and advances. While the cultural spectrum is the "constant" of life, it is always changing, always in process. Of great moment to all life and to humankind, at this time, is the adverse impact of cultural habits of thinking and doing that preys on life and others, and wastes culture and the human self.

The cultural spectrum has two aspects, the “physical” and the “psychical”. Within the cultural spectrum, the human person is both subject and object. The physical, objective aspect is qualified by “in-tension” as in molecular cohesion (syntropy), and the psychical, subjective aspect qualifies culture by “intention” as by energy expenditures (entropy). Experientially we know that the roles of persons within the cultural spectrum are both active (as subject) and passive (as object). The collective inputs and outputs of subjects qualify objective outputs and transform the cultural spectrum, for better and for worse.

Conscience, what is unique to self-reflective consciousness, pertains to the active, subjective, “intentional” aspect of human agency. Collectively, people both qualify the cultural spectrum and are qualified by it. What is of immediate importance to us is how the cultural spectrum has been adversely qualified by human agency and how humans are irreversibly damaging themselves and the capacity of the cultural spectrum to sustain them and other life.

Why does the cultural spectrum matter so much at this particular time? because, globally a widespread loss of public confidence in the presumptive economics of consumer-capitalism has occurred with respect to ecologically based sustainability. Unbridled economic growth premised in the assumption of unlimited natural resources is a fatally flawed assumption that is unsustainable and not a presumption on which cultures can rely and endure.

We need to consider, 1) the “physical” spectrum as the Earth-cosmic continuum (wave/particle, electromagnetic), and 2) the “psychical” spectrum as the controlling worldview (consciousness). If worldview consciousness is misinformed, it misleads with respect to authentic human behavior. The long prevailing static-centrist worldview and its faulty rationalizing still obtain in their damaging consequences, and their misinformed fixities still drive habits of cultural degradation.

The “physical” and the “psychical” relate to each other as matter relates to energy, as body to soul, that is, as aspects of the same reality. Matter and energy cannot be disassociated from each other as physical in-tension cannot be disassociated from psychical intention, as body cannot be disassociated from soul (spirituality), as secularity cannot be disassociated from religion.

What is addressed here is “intrinsic order” within the cultural spectrum and the role of human ignorance and arrogance as to damaging consequences on self and all other. The status-quo attitude of religion that yet prevails toward human dependency in and on the natural cultural spectrum is obviously no longer an option, if humankind would reverse its self-destructive habits.

Religion, theology, and understandings of just, equitable and sustainable relationships have to undergo conversion and deep-rooted updating. Life is one in substance and consciousness; authentic religion is first, a universal, conscious ethic; either we discover natural unity and continuity, and thrive, or we continue to deconstruct and self-destruct.

## **24. The Sacrament of Natural Order**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 24, 2008 - 9:28am.*

The Sacrament of Natural Order is about Sacred Remembrance, the working of Divine/human Hypostasis ("in-God's-Image-He-made-them-male-and-female") in the intrinsic, paradigmatic ordering of nature. To be dismissive of Divine/human ordering is to demean the human person and insult God's Intelligent Purposes (Sacra Mens).

In the intrinsic ordering of Natural Sacrament, the Divine supposes the human, and the human supposes the Divine — what is Divine/human reciprocity. The natural ordering of Intelligent Design in Divine/human ordering is genetic/memetic re-membering — what is life's process of evolution.

It offends religious sensitivity when the Sacrament of Divine ordering in nature is disparaged, especially by persons representing to have religious credentials. It is right for people to speak their minds and raise questions. Forthright questioning allows the surfacing of forthright understandings.

As a conscience-check on fidelity to Covenant, we might consider divinity in the role of "ecological necessity".

For a reflection on Communal Divinity (Trinity) one need look no further than the human person. The human person is the Earthly expression of transcendent spirit, symbiotically cast in the flesh-cloth of Earth-necessity. The human person is an iteration of the cosmic weave of necessity (in-tension) and of open potential (intention).

IN-TENSION is wave/ particle necessity, the amniotic dynamic of cosmic, maternal nurture; INTENTION is the insight of Pure Light, resonating dream and destiny in the dance of nature/ nurture. Nature is nurture's love expression — amor et caritas — male/ female.

Every human person is a unique casting of nature/ nurture, of the complementarity of female and male — a unity spiritually cohering in intentions of other wellbeing. The human person reflects the Trinity unity of divine intention in-standing in spirit/ matter community. Religion is conscious light — fidelity to original necessity and the light-weave of nature.

From the perspective of human consciousness, insight, intention is "trimorphic protennoia" (tri-form original consciousness), what is "trinity divinity", reflected in the human person; herein is the inherent authenticity and dignity of every person.

## 25. Inside the Cultural Spectrum

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on May 1, 2008 - 3:27am. --- Ecological Sustainability*

At worst, religion eschews evolution, and/or is intentionally ambivalent toward it. Disdain and ambivalence are untenable positions because evolution is in fact the universal dynamic that sustains and fulfills life.

Though not every aspect of evolution is known or can be known, the fact of evolution cannot be denied without doing violence to our understanding of self/ reality. Vatican II formally acknowledges of evolution and calls for ongoing "analysis and synthesis" so as to come to a more valid understanding of interpersonal relationships and theological implications. [The Second Vatican Council, Const. IV, "Gaudium et spes", Intro, #5]

The literal interpretation of the Genesis Creation account generally supposes the denial of evolution, for the acceptance of evolution implies, in creationist thinking, the denial of God's active role in creation.

The so-called *culture wars* root also in conflicts between creationist and evolutionary thought. Evolution and Creationism are seen as two extremes of belief that are necessarily in conflict. Evolutionary consciousness inside the cultural spectrum is not antithetical to creation, in fact, evolutionary consciousness illuminates awareness of the causes of eco-social undoing.

Cultural disconnection from evolutionary consciousness is at the root of cultural ignorance, arrogance, and disrespect toward nature and each other. Corporate exploitation, feudal predation, and wars for social supremacy and resource control are enabled by ignorance, arrogance, obsession, greed and violence. The cumulative destruction of these anti-social tendencies now put cultural civility and natural environments at mortal risk.

A shift away from cultural degradation cannot happen by the habituated cultural misdirection of consciousness that now prevails. The mistaken presumptions of culture that deny relational sensitivity and evolutionary dependency continue to advance the same old disconnections and degradations that cause the crises we are in.

Religion and politics co-inform each other in cultural inauthenticity. Religionists and politicians rail against each other and aggravate the despair of cultures; both need to reconsider their common priorities and change in order to accommodate a holistic rationality that alone might rescue humanity from the perils of its own making.

A science-based consideration of the dynamics of cultural evolution, religious and civil, might give us a *green*, vitalizing sense of conscious life, if we are ready to take evolution seriously. How is religion, culture, "GREEN"?

G is for GOD, Intelligent Design, Who/ what consciousness experiences and recognizes as the Provident, purposeful Personality/ Rationality in Creation.

R is for RELIGION, the consciously mindful human insight (religere, faith), and the divine bonding of necessity (religare, reason) that gives inherency and coherency to the Vital Continuum of purposeful Intelligence.

E is for ECOLOGY, the means of vital provision, the "house", the network domain of life, built of and by light energy (electromagnetism). The living complexes of eco-social environments sustain diversification, the conscious continuum from which humankind obtains.

E is for EDUCATION: consciousness derives from within life's network; consciousness is a subtle energy complex and process that is transmitted from generation to generation, and which enlightens humanity to divine sense, and expands the self-originating potentials of learning, teaching and prevision.

N is for NATURE/ NURTURE: Nature is about ecological balance; Nurture is about learning and teaching the sustaining lessons of ecology, of reciprocity — intentional symbiosis. Self-reflective consciousness is in-tensional and intentional. The deep wave/ particle bonding and transformation of cosmic substances, is internally tensioned (ex opere operato) and intentionally motivated (ex opere operantis); internal tension is in the nature of strong force bonding, as in the atomic nucleus; and intentional motivation is force-dependent, as in the weaker bonding (nurture) of electrons.

## 26. In the evolving...

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on April 6, 2008 - 2:26am.*

In the evolving interdependent systems of Cosmos, Earth and Humankind, the "analogies of reciprocals" reveal subject/ object relationships as means/ end, in which the object-outcomes (end) become subject-means (agent). The reciprocal relationship of faith and reason, for example, has faith as the subject-means (cause) of reason's object-end (effect), and vice versa.

The process of evolution advances by means/ end reciprocity in which subject/ object correlations obtain. The "analogies of reciprocals" principle helps us understand the practical implications of faith/ reason, reason/ law, conscience/ morality, religion/ civility, and intrinsic order/ civility/ humanity/ sanctity.

Purposeful living is by the intentional correlations of means/ ends as subject/ object. The fullness of humanity and holiness (humanitas/ social, and sanctitas/ personal) obtains in essential mutuality within intrinsic order, that is, of faith, reason, morality, conscience, lawfulness, civility, etc, what constitute virtues in the "Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis". Personal/ social evolution is by way of the method "cogitata perficiendo, cogitando sic perfecta" (by processing thoughts, and thereby thinking [more] perfected), a process of intentional resonance

NB: the limited inclusion of means/ end virtues here doesn't imply that there are not other means/ end virtues. "Go and be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

## 27. I mean resonance in two senses...

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on April 25, 2008 - 4:33pm.*

I mean resonance in two senses: the first is "harmonic" resonance as in physics; for example, when the sun shines we feel its warmth because the radiating wavelengths of infrared (solar) energy are harmonically attuned (resonate) with wave energy of cell molecules. The greater radiant energy of the sun is available for the body to absorb (attenuate); and when "attenuation" occurs, greater energy is sensed as warming (heat).

In the second sense I mean psychologically. In your personal experience you have probably been in company of people who radiate energy and lift your spirits by their mere presence; and then there are those whose negativity, closed-mindedness, is so palpable that a discussion with them goes nowhere and drains your energy. It's because they attenuate your energy from you; they siphon your energy from you.

We naturally tend toward people with whom we experience resonance, harmony, uplift of energy. The Christian expectation is always to seek harmony, what serves personal and common wellbeing. As Christians we seek to avoid discord, dissension, etc, and to always facilitate reconciliation and personal/ social harmony. In living this way we behave trustfully toward others. Trust is a relationship that comes with integrity of intention in every aspect of relationships. Trustworthy people are soon discovered for who they are, as are "tricky", less trustworthy people.

The culture of imperial Catholicism proceeds on assumptions of distrust. We are taught from childhood to distrust ourselves and to trust the Church and clergy who possess knowledge of

The Truth. We are told that we are born with original sin, but are not told about original grace — that God saw that all of creation is good. So we begin life distrusting ourselves and naturally develop a distrustful attitude toward others because of the distrust authorities have toward us.

Trustfulness toward others begins with trustfulness toward self. Authentic relationship is a learned insight; and if we are deprived the experience of trust from childhood, it is very difficult to learn and reciprocate trust in personal/ social relationships. Trust and harmonic energy are physically/ psychically correlated.

## **28. TRUE Religion, TRUE Priesthood**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 19, 2007 - 10:10am. --- Parish Life*

From times immemorial, social/ religious sense motivated people, men and women, to serve communities in the capacity of “priests”. The “religious” service of priests is in matters of deep consciousness, of the mysteries of life, spirituality, of “ultimate realities”, all of which are matters “that pertain to God”.

The Latin word for priest is “sacerdos”, meaning “holy giver”, a person who does sacred things for and on behalf of the people, the community. Priestly work and priests have historically been respected and valued. However, in the course of time, cultural ideologies have subverted the priestly role and sidetracked religion to serve ideological pretexts and political purposes.

Such subversion happened to early Christianity and to its priesthood when Constantine formally invested Christianity as the official religion of imperial Rome. Christianity took on the ideologies of the dominion culture advanced in/by Roman imperialism. Culture and worldview radically defined religion and priesthood. European history evolved on a dominion ideology/ theology that subverted nature’s essential paradigm of symbiosis advanced in gene-meme complexes. “Intrinsic disordering” happened(s) when culture subverts essential natural authenticity with ideological inauthenticity.

After the model of Jesus Christ, all people without discrimination, are called to be and are shared “givers of sacred things”. Such calling conforms with paradigmatic nature which requires all life to self-express in processes of “self-donation”. We exist not for ourselves apart from others, but for and by necessary relationship with others. “Self-donation” is the universal work and call of priesthood, of “religious” fidelity. Jesus instructs us, “As I have done, so also you should do”.

In the tradition of dominion culture, the Roman Catholic Priest is primarily understood to be the agent of the institutional church, a “bureaucrat” who enforces and teaches the ideologies and objectives of imperial Catholic culture. The bishop (“episcopos”, from the Greek meaning “overseer”) is called from the ranks of priests to serve as “chief” priest who keeps priests schooled in institutional protocol. Imperial Catholic culture is in stark contrast to the example and teaching of Jesus Christ.

Jesus stood a child up before his disciples/ apostles and informed them that there was no place for them in his kingdom except they were childlike. We should ask, what is “being like a child?” Children are “innocent”; they mean no harm and they do no harm. Children are

“altruistic”; they give of themselves without measure and are accepting of each other. Children are “imaginative”; they are open to and search for creative relationships.

The “preferential option” of the Church of Vatican II reaffirms the preferential option of Jesus Christ, namely, for a servant priesthood which serves the needy, the marginalized, the hungry, the sick, the “different”, the social outcast. Jesus precisely identified himself with the hurting children and women.

Authentic priests, authentic religion serves the urgent and specific needs of the time. The enforcement of old and irrelevant ideologies of handed-down culture is not what religions or priesthood are about. The obligations of faith require “aggiornamento”, updating, in context with contemporary urgencies.

Bureaucratic priesthood, as it functions today, is “intrinsically disordered” because of its dogmatic fixation in imperial enthrallment. True religion is not a party to institutional overreach and exploitation — no matter the forms they take. The urgent matter at hand, for priests and for the Church (The People) is how to reclaim religious authenticity IN THE CONTEXT OF TODAY’S SOCIAL/ ECOLOGICAL URGENCIES.

## 29. ABOUT MY PERSONAL LIFE

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 31, 2008 - 12:54pm.*

By my 10th year in the Seminary (1956, age 23) preparing for the Catholic priesthood I began to question more seriously my lifetime intention to be a priest. From my earliest childhood I had the unswerving intention to become a priest; so why did I change my mind?

I have given much thought to this question, and from the perspective of a 75 year old man, I have come to what I think is closest to the real answer. I was from birth to my adult years brought up imbued in Vatican I culture. (By the time of Vatican II my wife and I already had three children.) I think I was “good material” for the priesthood due to family upbringing and personal disposition. I enjoyed Seminary life and I treasure greatly to this day my Seminary years. I got along well with Superiors and Seminarians alike. It is my sense that my decision to opt out was very much unexpected, even shocking, especially to my family — and I’m sure it was difficult for my mother and two sisters who were/ are (my oldest sister is deceased) Dubuque Franciscan Sisters.

While I grew up in circumstances conducive to cocooning me in what I call “religious paralysis”, my childhood experience and education taught me to be personally responsible and intellectually discerning in matters of reason and conscience. While I grew up in the culture of dominion-faith, I didn’t lose my rational capacity to make decisions of personal conscience, even in matters of faith. My rational intelligence was not captured in childhood by the emotional bonds of fideistic religion, and with maturity it eventually asserted itself in an all important life choice. How so?

That my rationality preserved its independence goes back to my childhood years and to my eight grades of schooling in a one-room public country school which had one teacher who taught all eight grades. I was exceptionally fortunate to have exceptionally good teachers. I give them (and family) credit for the healthy balance of emotional/ rational intelligence that I came to acquire. I have preserved a mind of independent inquisitiveness and openness to question all matters of doubtful credibility. There is no doubt in my mind that had I spent my

grade school years in a Catholic Parochial School, taught by God-loving Sisters, I would likely have been emotionally captured and would not have come to the rational clarity I now have.

I choose to remain a priest, but a universal priest, faithful to my conscience, not indentured to the rigid traditions of inflexible faith expectations; this choice I have never doubted or regretted. Before God and man, I continue to pursue a life of fidelity to faith and reason.

What is the point? The point is that male/ female personae of paradigmatic humankind recognize the equal importance of faith and reason in preserving intellectual balance (emotional/ rational intelligence). But there are wonderful saintly people, faithful to the ancient tradition of Church culture, who inadvertently perpetuate the "scholastic blunder" and "religious paralysis".

Scholasticism's blunder justifies the alienation of women in theological rationalizing; clerical fideism paralyzes personal conscience, and patriarchal dominion violates the female persona and idolizes the male persona.

### **30. "SUFFERING", What Eucharist Is**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on May 4, 2008 - 1:54am. --- Human Sexuality*

St Paul speaks of the "groaning" of Earth under life's constant strain of transformation, even as it ever self-renews in cycles of pro-creation. The very person of every woman, and of every man by association, is to be in concert with nature (groaning) to self-fulfill life, to sustain the human species and other species.

The processes of sustaining Earth/ Life are about the pro-creation of all life (each its own kind), processes of perpetual renewal and terminal transformation, in which the human self, in the iterations of birth, prevision/ provision, and death, transforms from self-identity into Other, on and on, and on — and — by which transformation, the individual self is subsumed by and into other, what is "the process of evolution".

The process of self-transformation into Other (what the Mass celebrates), by instance of Divine Presence and Purpose, is the "Process of Eucharist", in which life-potentials of Divine In-tension/ Intention come to be revealed in the perfecting processes of evolutionary unfolding by way of communication, consciousness and conscience.

The process of Eucharist, of physical/ conscious perfecting, is the process by which all individuality "suffers" change into other, both to the "advantage" of other and the "disadvantage" of self. Eucharist is "suffering self-disadvantage to the advantage of other".

To the Purposes of Eucharist, all are born; all live and change and die in the giving over of self to other; what is "suffering"; what is "Eucharist"; what is the Sign and Destiny of the "Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis".

Eucharist is Destiny, over and above all other petty and ephemeral ideologies, whether of institutions or hierarchies or the arrogations of self-serving purposes. All priesthood, all female/ male mutuality, complementarity, and subsidiarity are of a kind, that is, about the universal transformation of self into other. The People is Eucharist; the People is Church transformed in Eucharist, in Suffering.

Where do you see yourself, your church, in this picture?

### 31. "Suffer" means more than pain;

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on May 21, 2008 - 12:17pm.*

"Suffer" means more than pain; it means transformational relationship, what happens to everybody all the time. Eucharistic grace is intentionality, the purposeful giving of self in "compassion" with others, what happens in nature, whether we like it or not.

I use "perfecting" in the sense of what "succeeds", that is, what comes to be programmed into the strategies of the evolution of life and encoded in DNA, for example.

What I am suggesting here is that the ecological/ cultural crises of Postmodernity require a radical departure from the accustomed beliefs and practices of the past. The case I make is that Old Covenant "science" does not well serve the quantum leap needed from the staticism of class culture (patriarchal politics and dominion theology) to the culture of transformational Eucharist in which lives individually and universally participate and contribute to evolutionary consciousness (morality) and political holism (civility).

The question I see is "how to move from the status-quo-ante (patriarchy/ dominion) to the status-post-factum of evolution, participatory politics and Eucharistic holism?" My thesis is that the status-quo-ante of dominion theology advances a politics of patriarchal culture, and that they, dominion and patriarchy, cannot lead us from the "kingdom" culture to the "kindom" culture.

PROPOSITION: from the beginning, Old Covenant consciousness lacked developmental competence by which to conclude to Eucharistic participation in Evolution, what is the New Covenant Revelation of Christic Consciousness. New Covenant Consciousness has now come to understand the physical/ rational necessity of mutuality, complementarity, and subsidiarity, the reality of Intentional Eucharist and the politics of the real. This proposition rests on two premises:

1. Patriarchal culture, which presumes theological dominionism, and which imposes dominion (exploitation) by means of the traumatic impositions of guilt and fear, is ill equipped to advance the "kindom of love" [that supposes the compassionate and conserving mind of love and harmony] from its "kingdom" of oppression, suppression, repression and depression.
2. The "kingdom theology" of Creationism, which supposes original, created perfection and The Fall and continuing departure from "perfection", is not a theological supposition that is naturally open to accept the transformational worldview of evolution that supposes progression from the less perfected (less complete) to the greater completeness of complexity-consciousness, what is the process understanding of Eucharistic Participation.

What can be logically concluded is that Old Covenant Consciousness (patriarchy/ creationism) is insufficiently informed in, is defectively connected to reality and is not able to lead to Eucharistic Evolution, i.e., intensional and intentional participation in the ascendancy of evolving Life. The connectedness of consciousness (soul/ body unity) is by Eucharistic Providence, the New Covenant, Christian Insight (of Self-Donation) in the reality of the divine/ human hypostasis and the God/ Man—Mind/ Body Connection.

## 32. From the perspective of Evolution

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on February 28, 2008 - 8:48am.*

From the perspective of evolution I puzzle how "original" sin is to be understood and what we must learn from it, for it surely seems that "original" sin is ongoing. What makes sense to me is a process I call "guilt transference". The evil we do "is on the throne of the good"; the good (we think) we do has future and unknown consequences that also may contain evil.

This is what I mean: cultured habits of wasteful consumerism (trashing nature) are outcomes of intentional and unintentional wrongdoing, whose consequences could not be and were not known at the time of the doing. It is the fate of future generations to experience the cumulative crises of wrongdoing and to feel the burden of guilt.

The many natural crises of our time give us a sense how they originate in intentional and unintentional wrongdoing in the past. The unrealized guilt of past generations surfaces in future consciousness, what is "guilt transference" of past doing to future consciousness. Our children and our children's children will suffer the guilt sense for our sins against nature today.

Personal/ social conscience (knowledge and will) is the means of lessening the destructive impact of sin against nature, which means, we must personally take seriously the consequences of actions done in intentional and unintentional ignorance, and do what we can to mitigate future catastrophe; in conscience, we owe it to our children.

## 33. We are also taught by omission.

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on October 18, 2007 - 10:26am.*

We are also taught by omission. Church has not been strong against the colonial (corporate) exploitation of nature. We can only hope that the crises of the moment will bring Church to affirmative teaching. We too easily blame technology, and it deserves blame, while refusing to direct the finger of blame at our own (Church's) failures and omissions. The blame game frustrates truth and integrity.

My problem is not specifically with parochial schools. My problem is that religious instruction fails to teach beyond childhood intelligence. There is no effective theology for, or education of, adults. Grace is learned by experiencing it. It is hard to get an authentic sense of grace when one doesn't learn to recognize grace connections.

**As Church, we fail in Eucharistic modeling; children should experience Eucharist in family, in Church, in their growing years.**

It seems that Church (people) is so hung up in its old habit to impose submission and surrender of soul to it that it fails to teach the rudiments of natural sense. As adults we fail to discern the grace connections of nature because we never learned them as children. I don't believe that parochial school kids have a better appreciation of nature than non-parochial kids do. Grace is from on high, we are taught, through the hierarchy. We have a too "parochial" understanding of Sacrament.

### **34. Now we get to the nub**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on October 17, 2007 - 6:16am.*

Now we get to the nub of our spiritual/ material crisis: “The Problem of Education”. Modern education does not have a sustainable worldview. Because we are taught priority connection to an inadequately informed super-nature (spirituality, grace) and disconnection from nature (material, secular), we learn to think disconnectedly and behave disconnectedly. We victimize ourselves and nature, and the toll of misinformed, misdirected living is social schizophrenia, ecological disregard — disaster.

Because we are not taught how to live in and with nature we grow up “naturally” uneducated. Mostly we learn that food and everything that matters in life comes in packages from store shelves. Drug commercials bombard us to convince us that the cure-all to life’s problems is found in pills and elixirs.

Because we are urban cultured and educated, in worldview and ethic, we are taught to think and live irrespective of nature. This is a fundamental failure of all education, religious and public. We learn to obsess in “the city of God” and ignore God’s Country — Earth-connection, Earth-necessity — our rootedness in land, in nature.

From bottom to top, education is fundamentally flawed and we are impoverished because we eschew the natural roots of grace. If “grace supposes nature”, and, if we are ignorant of nature, we are ignorant of grace and behave disrespectfully toward nature and grace.

We need to revamp the entire “philosophy of education” by teaching the essential connection to Earth-life to our children from their earliest years. Growing up with pets doesn’t alone do it. Earth-connection comes from hands-on experience at an early age. Kids naturally get frustrated in school because life isn’t linked to Earth experience (evolution). The prison-like structures that schools are put kids in an environment uncultured in the first and really important lessons that matter, namely, that we come from Earth and we belong to Earth-Nature. It’s in Earth-connection that we intimately and constantly experience the Divine.

Because we are first and foremost cultured in ideologies of denominational religion, we learn alienation, disconnection and disrespect toward other cultures. In notions of alienation are the beginnings of violence toward others. Natural Law is primary in everybody’s life. All law and order begins in fidelity to Natural Law [See NCR, October 12, 2007, pg 4, “Natural law document studied”]

The problem of education isn’t money; it is a problem of social/ religious priority. The priority is life, and how to live connected to grace, connected to Nature. Before we move on to the redesigning of education in this strand, let’s first do some hard thinking/ dialoguing about the problem of worldview, the problem of education/ religion

### **35. Immediately following Vatican II**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on November 1, 2007 - 12:47pm.*

Immediately following Vatican II there was much hope and excitement attached to the prospect of the Church becoming more collegial and less imperial. Pope Paul VI had called for lay input to an encyclical that became “*Humanae Vitae*”, only to ignore lay input in the final draft. The encyclical was about population pressures and considerations of population

control. It forbade “artificial” birth control means, but for whatever reasons, the lay public has largely ignored the encyclical’s proscriptions. This lay response has been very damaging to the Church because of what the laity believes has been a breach of trust. The fact is that Earth cannot continue to abide the human population and its present levels of demand.

The politics of capitalism now operate globally. Corporate capitalism presumes continual growth of consumerism and GDP (Gross Domestic Product) as if global resources were unlimited. It is now clear from ecological waste and environmental degradation that exploitation based on endless growth and profit is doomed to failure. Ecological resources are limited and they cannot survive the assumption that the engines of profit will not run out of gas.

The survival of humankind demands that global societies adopt a new rationality and movement in new direction. Such new direction includes the realization that human populations have to reduce their demands on nature to below present levels, and that nature’s resource bases have to be stabilized, restored and sustained.

**POPULATION AND MORALITY:** human “right to life” is violated and mortally breached when ecological “right to life” is mortally breached. Religions need to teach the second mandate of the Genesis Story “not to consume the tree in the middle of the garden” with equal vigor as they teach the first, to “increase and multiply”.

**PROFITEERING AND MORALITY:** corporate feudalism and corporate consumerism are the ethics and economics that prevail. Because these ethics and economics are based on fraudulent premises of profiteering, humankind is a train rushing blindly down tracks that dissolve.

**RESTORATION AND EXPLOITATION:** new and sustainable ethics/ economics call for the hands-on work of people everywhere to bring healing and restoration to nature, and in developing new and less wasteful ways of living together justly, with mutual respect and purpose — specifically, moving away from customary habits of ignorance, arrogance and the obsession to possess in excess.

**SCIENCE CONSTRAINS RELIGION:** religion supposes theology; theology supposes biology; biology supposes ecology; ecology supposes consciousness; consciousness supposes science; and science supposes religion. Authentic religion teaches the equivalent morality of personal “right to life” and ecological “right to life”.

## **36. The documentation of female/ male**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 26, 2007 - 7:39am.*

The documentation of female/ male “ontology” (being) is universal in sexual origin — theologically and biologically based.

The biological basis is in maternal/ paternal DNA, common in the origin of every human person. Beginning with the ovum, every human cell has three distinct strands of DNA, maternally sourced; two are outside the cell-nucleus and in the cell plasma, and one is within the nucleus. Plastids are outside the nucleus and carry their own distinctive DNA; mitochondria are outside the nucleus and carry their own distinctive DNA. The nuclear component of genetic DNA is provided half in the nucleus of the ovum and the other half from

a single sperm. The only male contribution to embryonic cells and the consequent human person is the DNA component carried in the sperm. Life in the main is maternally sourced...It is proper to question whether the penned scripture is more credible than DNA scripture. The spirit of scriptural intent is not locked in stone; both (scriptures) are open to correction and rewriting.

Arrogance that fixates on human words is a product of small mindedness; to over-write the proven scripture of DNA with the small mindedness of human script is an arrogance of a whole different category. Such arrogance flies in the face of divinity encoded in natural integrity. Where is the humility and moral probity? The answer might credibly be found in the consensus culture of integrity that celebrates and respects Divine Presence in the Sacrament of Life and Light.

Understanding DNA as life's primary scripture directing individual life in proven patterns of cosmic iteration goes a long way in enlightening life's mysteries and the meaning of Sacrament. Sacrament means "sacred remembrance"; that is "sacred" which makes whole (holy); in human terms, that which makes life whole are the imprint codes of genetic patterning that direct and maintain personal integrity through all phases of life, embryo, infant, child, youth and adult. Memory/remembrance is a psychosocial faculty substantively programmed in DNA." [Taken from the faith-sharing manual (pp 21 and 23) found as a free download at [www.secondenlightenment.org](http://www.secondenlightenment.org) ]

The theological basis for the common ontological identity of female/male is found in the Book of Genesis in which God is quoted as creating humankind female and male in Divine likeness. It shouldn't be surprising when biology is discovered to coincide with theology — which but supports the dictum that "good biology is good theology".

### **37. The DIVINE FEMININE & Church Competency**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on September 1, 2007 - 2:13am. --- Parish Life*

The topic of competency to "order" the female role in Church (ordaining), female "priesthood", is a matter deserving serious attention.

While we may look upon the life of Mother Theresa of Calcutta — tortured throughout with doubt — with sadness and compassion, she is for all her agony a more powerfully redemptive exemplar. Like men, women must personally develop and follow their personal consciences.

I have given a lot of thought to women and "ordination". My reflections on the life of Mother Theresa have affected my thinking. I've now come to the point of view that Pope John Paul II (perhaps inadvertently and not intentionally) acknowledged the defect of male incompetency as to ordination as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church, vis-à-vis competency to ordain women.

Because institutional Catholicism is cultured in male sexism, the exclusivist male hierarchy does in fact lack competency in the matter of "ordering" women; when Pope Benedict XVI observed that "women will find their way (in Church)", he was speaking in awareness of male incompetence. It is not for males to tell females their way with respect to "ordination" and their roles in life; in Church; with respect to priesthood; with respect to anything. It's for women to determine the forms their "ordination" and priesthood must take, and they need on their own

to define these roles without coercion from misdirected male dominion. Women can do better than contort intuition to conform to the unenlightened, exclusionary male model.

Female conscience is sensitively different than male. Females come to sensitivity in personally original ways. As nurturer, female conscience is inclined naturally to be more "green" (organically aware) than male conscience. I think no pope would be so rash and irrational as to excommunicate women en masse for their conscionable forming, informing and reforming of faith consciousness.

The present experience in Church of the steep decline of males choosing priesthood as a way of life is creating the need for women to come forward. The sex scandals of hierarchy are speeding the process and deepening the need. It can be expected that communities will more and more solicit female priests to come to their rescue precisely because of demonstrated male incompetence.

I REALLY EXPECT AND HOPE TO SEE IN MY LIFETIME women moving ahead on their own toward their own self-determination as to the priestly role they need to assume within the Church and not be frightened off by the cultured wizardry of males. Only by doing this will their voice acquire an equal standing and bring healing to the Church — to civilizations — what is divine ordination.

Church is destined to function ineffectively, even self-injurious as long as it stymies female authenticity and essential female expression within the human family. I grieve the lifelong suffering of Mother Theresa from male clerical super-arrogation and the suffering of the People of God from sexist alienation.

## Every individual person

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on May 3, 2008 - 4:17am.*

Every individual person, female and male, is female (Marian) and male (Petrine) qualified, as is the effective structuring within society of institutional, social groupings, including Church. [In re: Abbot Kodell's message on the Marian and Petrine]

Emotional/ rational integrity (faith and reason) is authentic in its (their) codependency, that is, in the reciprocity of mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity. The interdependency of these is humanly/ divinely fulfilling in the reciprocal harmony of communication (mutual trust), consciousness (intentional complementarity), and conscience (judicious subsidiarity) — in the communitarian likeness of Trinity Godhead.

Male brain and female brain alike are bipolarly structured (and functions!) in the lobar psychology of humankind's dual nature, i.e., "Marian" (emotional intelligence) and "Petrine" (rational intelligence). In the reciprocal nature of humanity's dual characterization, institutions, but especially Church, find authentic spirituality (theology) and structure (ecclesiology).

Scholastic Philosophy, still relying on the misinformed sexuality of Aristotelian Philosophy, is defective and still obtains in misogynistic cultures of churches and society. The clerical culture of Church, steeped in patriarchal politics and dominion theology, is blind to its self-advanced defects and their injurious impact on the human person and on nature that suffers them.

Unaware of its own paralysis (RPS, Religious Paralysis Syndrome), Church is radically handicapped in self-understanding (its "ecclesiology") and its function ("theology"). The understandings of quantum science and evolutionary nature might yet liberate human consciousness, and Church, from defects of vision and culture. Evolution does "matter", as Vatican II testifies.

### 38. Evolution clarifies Original Sin

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on September 28, 2007 - 9:50am. --- Church Leadership*

Louis Dupré in "The Enlightenment & Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture", pg 17, states an operative principle at work in evolution, namely, that everything is end/ means to everything else. Means and ends are reciprocally related, that is, every outcome is a means as well as an end.

Professor Daryl P. Domning, author of "Original Selfishness: Original Sin and Evil in the Light of Evolution", writes in The National Catholic Reporter "**Unfinished Business**", September 28, 2007, pg 13, how evolution gives a better sense of Original Sin than the Garden of Eden Story in Genesis.

It is my belief in the larger sense that A UNIVERSAL CONVERGENCE OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION IS INEVITABLE IF THEOLOGY AND SCIENCE ARE DONE RIGHT, FOR THEY NATURALLY AND NECESSARILY CORRELATE.

The correlation of science and religion calls for depth psychology that thinks connections through and works through thinking by "analysis and synthesis" of reciprocal analogies and correlations; thus the observation of "the method of science: *cogitata perficiendo, cogitando sic perfecta*" (by completing thoughts, thereby, thinking perfected). In other words, the evolution of consciousness cannot be rushed by jumping from topic to topic without thorough and complete thinking that connects rationality by analysis and synthesis.

There is one far-back aspect of evolution that has profound implications in human socializing today and on the impact of humans on natural ecologies and human/ natural reciprocity. This consideration is important because of the contradictory outcomes (good and bad) that come from the same religious consciousness.

The thesis I propose here is this: the atavistic animal sex-instinct to herd and dominate has been brought forward by evolution in male consciousness and does damage to the human psyche, to social relationships, and to ecology. The rationality of dominion, of political imperialism, of control and exploitation of web-life, find grounding in the early hard-wired coding of animal instinct. Dominion in Church-culture, male-dominant clericalism, hierarchical sexual abuse and insensitivity toward women are inherited proclivities.

Theological absolutism leads to excess in evoking contrasting outcomes: ecstasy and depression, elation and despair, love and hate, peace and violence. The success of human dominion over other life is an outcome of human evolution, but so is the violent and terminal wasting of ecologies. Confronting humankind now is how to prevent its (our) self-destruction by stemming exploitive instincts that are bringing us closer to "absolute" success.

Our future lies less in our capacity for dominion than it does in our capacity to engage universal consciousness and do an about course from the dead-end paradigm yet in place.

The radical potentials of cortical brain processing (reason) need to be invoked in universal effort to escape the culture-traps of absolutism and dominion.

As The Second Vatican Council has recognized, and as consensus public thinking has come to recognize, ALL IS "OF A PIECE". [Vat II, Cons. IV, "Gaudium et spes", Intro, #5] Evolutionary consciousness now knows that success and failure are "of a piece"; ecstasy and depression are "of a piece"; elation and desperation are "of a piece"; love and hate are "of a piece"; peace and violence are "of a piece". The correlated sense of religion and science needs now to be made "of a piece". Can we "think" our way out of this dilemma? Thinking is an essential step that should come before action. We have to try. We can think and we can make it work. Let's do it.

### 39. This is a non-conventional

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 17, 2007 - 9:45am.

This is a "non-conventional" analysis and synthesis of the Original Sin Story. Though it is non-conventional, it is not irreverent or antithetical to Scripture. It is not conventional because it sees the sin of ongoing generations as *falling out with nature/ God*. Infidelity to nature is infidelity to God. God speaks now as in the past in and through nature. Conversation, divine/human is "natural".

The natural approach is in contrast to the accustomed "fideist" approach that advances the ideologically purposeful theology of male patriarchy and dominion theology. The fideist approach presumes a literalist understanding of the story of creation and of God operating TOTALLY OUTSIDE natural processing and experience-driven evolution/ consciousness; and that divinity operates by extra-natural interventions (supernatural).

The thesis of the natural interpretation is that it is presumptuous and arrogant for humans to impose on God by presuming to tell how God operates (intervenes) in creation. Natural sense sees divinity functioning by way of "instance" in the every working of the transformational cosmos, Earth, and life. It stakes its faith claim in the understanding: "grace supposes nature".

Justification for the "natural" interpretation is found in the hermeneutical instruction of Pope Pius XII in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (Divine Inspiration), and, in the acquiescence of The Second Vatican Council to evolutionary consciousness, Consitution IV, Gaudium et spes, Introduction, #5.

Pius XII endorses the use of scientific methods in interpreting scriptures from the perspective of circumstances at the time of writing; understanding the author and the writing genre used by the writer; and the intent of the writer. Vatican II understands nature to be "of a piece", that evolutionary consciousness is widely accepted, and that old presumptions and misdirection based on misinformed presumptions require new "analysis and synthesis", updating, also with respect to reading and interpreting scripture.

Creation isn't a disconnected process; nor is humankind outside process-creation. The continuity of cosmic/ Earth evolution evidences and authenticates intelligence, whereas, disconnection evidences irrationality. Divine intelligence is above the imperfection of disconnection, discontinuity. Continuity saves past gains and passes them on; the past is forever lost to the disconnected mind. The natural continuum advances holistically the

potentials and achievements of intelligence implicated in nature. Divine consciousness is operative in and at all phases of the creative process, in conformity with and in the laws of nature, not outside them.

Self-awareness is a component of the process of cosmic consciousness, and is conditioned experientially over the long stretches of evolutionary time also by its manner of intentional interaction with nature. Self-awareness is the introspective perfection of "natural" intelligence; it is in constant process of advancing, ("cogitando sic perfecta", always thinking beyond the status-quo perfection). Scriptural stories contain analyses and syntheses of updated self-consciousness, experientially derived over time and based on evolving consciousness occasioned by and within the natural, relational occurrences of complex, interactive systems.

Original sin is an evolved insight in the real world sense that the cautionary lessons contained in stories, myths and parables arise out of actual human experience. Such experience is long in the acquisition. The wasting of "the tree of life in the middle of the garden" is actual experience of cultural waste of local ecologies and of the need for people to leave trashed localities and relocate in search of better "gardens" in which to live. America represents such a place to other world cultures who emigrate here for better opportunities.

The big question is how long will it take humankind to trash America's wealth if it (we) refuse to reduce our demands on nature and its fragile ecologies? Ecological collapses and desertification, drought and wildfires even now represent the Angel with a fiery sword chasing people away from the calamities humanly created.

The desecrated-garden experience is something global humanity has to deal with now. Looking to escape Earth and fly off to another planet is no solution. It's just a high-tech way of hiding. We cannot escape from ourselves. But, we can learn to live with ourselves if we put our minds to it. In fact this is the only realistic option we have. Necessity, the Mother-Nature of invention is talking to us now. It's time we respond to God asking "Where are you?"

#### **40. In the Book of Genesis**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 28, 2007 - 1:58am.*

In the Book of Genesis (15:1-21) is the story of Abram's vision of awakening to the God/Land/ Human Covenant. It's a story of aspiration and exasperation. Its details are laid out in such a way as to clarify the divine requirement of human dependency/ fidelity.

Abram aspired to have children of his own blood inherit his prosperity. He was childless, yet at the age of 75, and his wife was aged and barren. But God gave fresh wind to his aspiration and reassurance against his exasperation. The story has God using hyperbole in assuring Abram that his children would outnumber the stars in the sky.

Abram knew that except for the fruitfulness of his wife he was powerless to produce progeny to succeed him; as a male he represented only half the human potential. In a dream God revealed the Divine Promise in Land and Life. Abram's fruitless body and Sarah's barrenness were like the two halves of the splayed carcass of an animal on the altar of sacrifice. God's dramatic dream appearance in the forms of a cloud and a shaft of light between the carcass halves exposed male helplessness absent the divine promise of water and light. Male and female, in their separateness are as two halves of carrion on the altar of sacrifice. God asks obedience, not sacrifice and blood offerings. What God joins, man should not divide.

God's Promise alone intervenes the futility of flesh and barren soil. Abram experienced the truth of divine promise in realizing the fruitfulness of Sarah, his wife, a person in her own right by divine ordering. The complementarity of soil and flesh, of femaleness and maleness, brings fulfillment to Covenant. Male disdain of femaleness is equivalent to consumerist waste of land. How well Walter Brueggemann understands this connection:

"Adam, that is, mankind, has a partner and mate, adamah, land. Humankind and land are thus linked in a covenantal relationship, analogous to the covenantal relationship between man and woman ...unfortunately, in our society we have terribly distorted relationships between man and woman, between adam and adamah, distortions that combine promiscuity and domination.... Likely, we shall not correct one of these deadly distortions unless we correct them both".

Together, the secular exploitation of soulless consumerism and the dominion culture of patriarchal religion, in concert, sacrilege land and woman. Religious pretenses aside, males alone are not possessed in ontological potential. Ontological potential (the capacity to give rise to life renewed) is a Covenantal grace dependent on divine/ human fidelity in the God/ Land/ Human Trust. The obligations of Covenant bind the children of Abraham to this day. Modern crises of human/ ecological waste are crises of infidelity to the God/ Land/ Human Covenant.

## **41. To be fully human**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 17, 2007 - 7:49am.*

To be fully human is *to effect in one's lifetime the convergence of faith and reason and to emerge renewed from their convergence.*

We all live in the same reality, at this same time. We do not know with certainty all the dynamics that have brought us to this convergence. While knowing past dynamics may enlighten to the way forward, more to the point is, knowing the conscionable necessities of authentic living. Faith and reason mutually inform us in these matters.

Humankind, personally and socially, is conditioned by nature (genetics) and by culture (nurture). Going forward, we know that we condition the future (human genetics and memetics) by the way we correlate with each other and nature. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is for Christians the Way, the Truth and the Life (Light). Faith and reason both compel us to conscionable behavior, to love's symbiotic fidelity.

The "Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis" is "sign" and "grace", nature and nurture, intention and intuition. Reason tells us, "grace supposes nature", i.e., culture supposes nature. Faith tells us "nature supposes grace", i.e., nature supposes culture.

The fullness of Sacramental living requires the reciprocation of sign/ grace, nature/ nurture, reason/ faith, and intention/ intuition. Faith needs reason, reason needs faith; intuition needs intention, intention needs intuition; religion needs science, science needs religion. Faith's motive of love supposes reason's motive of symbiosis; reason's motive of symbiosis supposes faith's motive of love.

Intentional consciousness (conscience) is a two-cylinder engine. When only one cylinder fires, life arrives at fulfillment with greater difficulty. To be fully human means to enable faith (belief) with reason (knowledge), and to enable reason with faith.

Human living lacks full integration if/ when faith demeans reason, when reason demeans faith. Rationalism (First Enlightenment) eschews fideism (imperially imposed belief) and fideism (imperial belief) eschews rationalism. Second Enlightenment (conscionable rationality, rational conscience) eschews the disconnection of evolving faith/ reason. What God has joined man should not separate

## **42. Faith, Reason and Dysfunctional Marriage**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on April 18, 2008 - 8:53am.*

As gathering eco-social crises close in, the work of Church in the Third Millennium becomes ever more urgent. Pope John Paul II identified for Church in his encyclical "Tertio Millennio Adveniente" the task of the authentic assimilation of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. [See Maureen Sullivan's book review of "VATICAN II, Did Anything Happen?" AMERICA Magazine, March 3, 2008, pp 24-26]

Before root causes can be assigned to eco-social crises, the function and dysfunction of faith and reason need to be put in perspective. The fruitfulness of faith and reason relies on the committed intention of emotional/ rational intelligence, an essentially nuptial commitment. The dispositions of mutuality and intentional harmony are preconditions of nuptial fruitfulness.

Fruitfulness is bonded in faithfulness, in purposefulness. Fruitfulness is the produce of universal connections and of fidelity to them. Faith is desire, reason is destiny. Together, emotional intention and rational reflection self-fulfill fruitfulness and the iterations of desire and destiny. Together, desire and destiny motivate evolutionary processes.

Human personhood is bonded in fruitfulness. Fruitful spirituality weaves the forms and the consciousness of personhood, female and male. The motivational spirituality of the individual/ social person is joined desire/ destiny, faith/ reason.

Faith has been and continues to be misused in the overreach of reason; frustrating reason is what fideism does, what cultic religion does, and what patriarchy does. Wisdom is the transcendent fruit of collective experience encoded in intelligence by the continuous and ubiquitous processes of communication, consciousness and conscience. Marital fruitfulness is first and foremost spiritual, even as all physicality is the complexity weave of cosmic energy.

Cultist religion derives from hyped faith and frustrated reason. Superstitions pertain to cultist religion, to frustrated reason. The alienation of reason from religion allows fideistic notions to take the minds in confused directions in search of escape from irrationality.

At this very time, our Roman Catholic Church is still a Church of two minds; one, the cultist, fideistic mind of Trent and Vatican I, and two, the faith/ reason mind of Vatican II. When the cultist mindset dominates reason, it effectively defeats the right functioning of reason and faith. The cultic habits and attractions of fideistic theology effectively compromise the spirituality and physicality of holistic relationships. The disabilities of spiritual and physical

dysfunction are handed down from generation to generation by the dominion overreach of religious cult.

Dominion Theology, as advanced in patriarchal culture, creates a schizophrenic consciousness that violates the personal/ social characterization of emotional/ rational intelligence. The failure of the faith/ reason nuptial frustrates marriages, families and personal authenticity. In its expectation of blind and absolute trust in the pronouncements of the controlling hierarchy, the cultic Church of pre-Vatican II distrusts and disdains reason. In contrast, Vatican II sees every person in equal standing before God and in Church. Everyone is commonly gifted in emotional/ rational intelligence, and is female/ male characterized.

The task of Church in the Third Millennium is to affirm the authentic female/ male personhood and to facilitate the essential correlation of emotional intelligence and rational intelligence.

### **43. Virtual Reality and New Age Metaphysics**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on May 1, 2007 - 8:48am. --- Everything under the sun ...*

Faith traditions through history have gotten many things right but have also gotten some things very wrong. In his beautiful little book "Praying a New Story", Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2004, Michael Morwood suggests that we need to learn to pray "in" God, not "to" God. He opens us to our place in the "real" world of transformational consciousness.

Intentional consciousness has been long and slow at the work of evolution, an essential aspect of which is self-reflective consciousness. Life tends to do what works in life's best interest, for the individual and for the community. The power of intention (purpose) is a "virtual" power and a consciousness that has been personified in the individual and in the communal (Trinity). Each is reflective of the other and each is instructive of the other. Virtual power, consciousness, is a universal awareness that governs relationships which are the bases of reality — a reality that is not static but which is perpetually dynamic and evolving.

Throughout its evolution, humankind has gotten many things right virtually and intentionally, subconsciously and consciously. But, humankind sometimes traps itself in dead-end deceptions. Self-deception occurs in fundamental matters of self-reflective consciousness and "virtual reality". The reconciliation of the virtual and the substantive-real is complicated and implicated, for the conception of reality and reality itself are inseparable and not easily grasped except they are broken down in "parts".

The deconstruction of the 'virtual" (ens rationis, a mental construct) deceives consciousness to think of aspects of reality as real in themselves. In the same way that matter and energy are not separable, so also body and soul, and the spiritual and secular are not separable.

The Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, cultural events arising out of the conflicted imperial Church/ State, are about antagonisms between faith and reason and worldview fixations that radically divide people of faith and people of reason. Rational enlightenment eschews *religious fideism* and religion eschews *Enlightenment rationalism* (humanism, secularism).

For times untold, patriarchy co-evolved with religious culture which politicized imperial (patriarchal) hegemony with its theology. Until this day the radicalized animus between faith

and reason is a schizophrenic, patriarchal consciousness that dominates in personal and public consciousness.

**CIVILIZATIONS ARE SCHIZOPHRENICALLY TORN BY THE RADICALIZED ANTAGONISMS BETWEEN VIRTUAL REALITY (FAITH, METAPHYSICS) AND SECULAR REALITY (REASON, PHYSICS).**

Unless and until "metaphysical" consciousness and "physical" reality discover their essential mutuality in faith and reason, humankind will continue its self-radicalization in the deceived conceptualizing of self in reality. All religions are challenged to reconsider the premises of their **theo-logic**, for if the premises of theological metaphysics contain absurdities so do their conclusions.

How can humankind disrobe itself from its self-woven fabric of disinformation?

#### **44. Equal Opportunity Sin**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on December 1, 2007 - 2:46am. --- Spirituality & Culture*

In a representative form of government, the election of a person to high office is to the purpose of serving the people and the greater public good. Public election is a sacred privilege, an honor and obligation. Except elected representatives are faithful to their trust obligations to the people and their country, there is risk of great harm coming to the people and the nation.

Perhaps the worst form of public infidelity and sin against the people is pretentious and false representation, that is, the use of an elected office for purposes of exploitation and self-gain. This despicable practice of pretense and self-gain has in recent years become almost a high-art form for retiring Senators and Congressmen. There has been put in place a rotating door between the offices of corporations and those of Senators and Congressmen, by which elected members can retire from the business of the people and take employment in the business of corporations — and make even more money than they could as representatives of the people.

For shame! "What would Jesus do?" There is only one occasion described in the Bible when Jesus vented his anger in a physical form. He scattered the tables of small merchandise peddlers and moneychangers and drove them out of the Temple.

Now is a time for public anger. It's time to throw the cheating Senators and House members out of the temple chambers of government. Put the issue to the candidates you vote for in every election. Right now, require your presidential candidate to support a bill that outlaws Senators and Congressmen from exiting their office through the rotating door and becoming lobbyists for favor-seeking corporations. The breach of public trust and the corruption of elected representatives can never be prevented until this corrupting practice is shut down.

Support this urgent public matter right now. This needs to happen if the authenticity and credibility of America is ever to be restored amongst nations and if the interests of the people are to be served. Thank you.

#### **45. COGITANDO SIC, method of evolution**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on December 21, 2007 - 3:28am. --- Everything under the sun ...*

The METHOD OF EVOLUTION, of "by completing thoughts, thereby thinking perfected", that is, working again what's been thought-through, and thinking through again what's been worked through" [cogitata perficiendo, cogitando sic perfecta] has been proposed in the earlier strand "cogitando sic, method of evolution".

To carry the above rationality of evolution a step further, I call attention to nature's method of accommodation (REFLECTIVE SYMBIOSIS), that is, "her" purposeful method of applying the "analogies of reciprocals" principle.

Louis Dupré says: "Reason...functions in a system [evolutionary] where everything has become end and means." ("The Enlightenment & the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture" pg. 17, © 2004, Yale University Press, New Haven and London) In effect, everything in an evolutionary system functions interactively as subject/ object, which is to say, "subject qualifies object as object qualifies subject". This states the principle of the ANALOGY OF RECIPROCALs and the METHOD OF EVOLUTION.

By this method of evolution, dialog is enabled by which polar opposites come to be accommodated and a middle ground established (reflective "symbiosis"). The example, "subject supposes object as object supposes subject" illustrates the "both/ and" rationale of accommodation as opposed to the "either/ or" rationale of stalemate and conflict. Case in point: objectivity supposes subjectivity as subjectivity supposes objectivity; absolutism supposes relativism as relativism supposes absolutism; and, the Religious Right supposes the Religious Left as the Religious Left supposes the Religious Right.

When polarized differences turn toward each other and acknowledge each other, the possibility of dialog and accommodation exists and the possibility of finding the middle ground of accommodation. Is this a possible path toward peace and reconciliation, toward the avoidance of violence and war, toward "social evolution"?

#### **46. From William Madges,**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on March 3, 2008 - 9:35pm.*

From William Madges, "God and the World", copyright 1999, pg 123, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., U.S.A.

"Like Kant, Hegel held that the mind stamps its seal on all knowledge... Hegel held that the rational is real and the real is rational. THINGS THOUGHT ARE COMPLETELY PRESENT IN THINKING; AND IN THINKING, THOUGHT IS COMPLETELY PRESENT IN THE THINGS THOUGHT. (Emphasis added.) Objective truth for Hegel, then, is the conformity of objects to their concepts."

#### **47. This strand (45 and 46) is important**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on March 6, 2008 - 11:55pm.*

This strand is important because of the critical importance of social evolution to everyone. Cultured dogmatism eschews the fluidity of evolution; cultures stagnate and retrograde if they fixate in the past. That is a problem for dominion theology and patriarchal politics, which yet underlie Western (Abrahamic) cultures.

It is important that the philosophy (rationality) and theology (fidelity) of spirituality collaborate (dialog) pro-actively toward purposes of social betterment, human and ecological. The detour of subjective consciousness into side roads of ideological fixes is not conducive to personal/ social growth and wellbeing. Thus, attention and intention should be focused on the social purposes of evolution, and its "method". It's something in which we all need to participate actively.

#### **48. The philosophical worry**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on May 4, 2007 - 8:03am.*

The philosophical worry I vent is an appropriate civil lament for our personal agony is a social tragedy. It is right and necessary that we examine fully the cultural breach of Faith and Reason, its causes and consequences, for we are personally and socially entangled in webs of our own wrong doing.

By entering the entanglement we may discover the reasons of desperation but also redemptive and hopeful outcomes. By understanding and acknowledging the weave of self-deception we may discover the apology underlying the rationality of Vatican II, namely, the fundamental insight that goes beyond the desperate theology/ politics of Tridentine fideism and Enlightenment rationalism, i.e., the enlightenment of evolutionary consciousness.

As important, if not more important, is movement of public consciousness to a new synthesis of metaphysical (spiritual) reality, and the remedial application of justified living that can bring healing to our blighted souls and global ecologies. Dwelling in retro-reflection can become a demeaning pathology if we fail to take the next step, namely, to "Second Enlightenment" insights that heal breaches of Faith and Reason and the cultural desecrations of the Earth-cosmic continuum.

The healing of the rift between Faith and Reason is the sine-qua-non condition of virtual ascent into New Age consciousness and real commitment to equality in human rights and personal self-worth. The full recognition of the mutuality of Faith and Reason might for the first time open civilizations (churches!) to the realization of human potential, free of cultural alienation and egotistic arrogance for power and control over people and Earth-cosmic resources. This, after all, is the mature consciousness Jesus came to in his desert retreat before entering his public life. His example and teaching are held out for all to imitate and emulate. This is Christian Faith. This is cosmic wisdom.

#### **49. David C. Korten's**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on July 10, 2007 - 8:02am.*

David C. Korten's (author of "When Corporations Rule the World") book "The Great Turning from Empire to Earth Community" and his Prologue "In Search of the Possible" tells of his personal transformation and journey to the realization "that leadership to create *a world that works for all* can and must come from the bottom up through the creative work and political activism of ordinary people who know from their experience the consequences of these policies" (the overreaching policies of centralized authority and control).

From global experience, cultures SHOULD be wary of big government, big business, big finance, and big church. What is universal and diverse cannot be centralized in a singular controlling bigness. The universal validity of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ exposes the invalidity of corporate bigness and centralized control.

If we say "no" to big church, corporate bigness, centralized control and invalidity, we must then say "yes" to the validity of alternatives. When there is a clear vision as to what is wrong, there should be some insight as to what is right. We may throw out the catechism of centralized control, but we must at the same time open to the lessons that "create a world from the bottom up that works for all." This means authenticating oneself in family, community, Earth and Cosmos.

We all begin in and function first and always in family and community. A catechesis of self-family-community is needed to enable everyone to function effectively in the small picture if one would find place in the big picture.

## **50. American Corporate Feudalism**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on October 19, 2007 - 6:38am. --- Everything under the sun ...*

The developmental economic model of Western societies is based on the continued growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and ascendancy up the corporate ladder. This model is now exposed to be ecologically and economically unsustainable.

The exploitation of Earth and corporate investment in war to obtain and assert control over global resources are undoing societies and corrupting them from within, whether in Western capitalist societies or whether in former communist societies now emulating the Western model. Western Capitalism may have won over Communism, but is the "victory" making losers of everybody?

Strong arm state control (Communism) and corporate-vested control are philosophical inheritances of GWF Hegel. Under Communist control slavery was real and mostly unvarnished. Corporate control varnishes its form of slavery. The American corporate model can be characterized as a morphed form of Hegelian feudalism. The farm and laboring public are in fact indentured to a corporate oligarchy which dominates economically and politically. American Republicanism in recent years has "unvarnished" its purposes of intentional dominion.

Karl Rove and the Republican Party capitalized on Hegel's model by which the one-man/one-vote policy could be manipulated and circumvented. Their political strategy was not to appeal to the whole public but to engage ideological interest groups and play on their fears and special interests, thus dividing the electorate over special interests. Hegel eschewed the one-man/one-vote approach to democracy and preferred a republicanism in which the individual vote mattered less than group allegiance. Obligation to the group ends where the group fails in its obligation to humankind.

Not before has American governance been so overwhelmingly and crassly surrendered to corporate control as it is now. Unfortunately, the lobby control of corporations is so strong that democrats and republicans alike give themselves over to corporate money interests. It's time for a change. Who of presidential candidates is less beholden to corporations and more likely

to adopt change from indenture to the corporate feudalist model? The answer to this question should influence voting decisions.

Ecological spoliation is radically aggravated by global corporate feudalism. Aggravated environmental pollution and climate warming are direct consequences of corporate exploitation and disregard for ecological sensitivities/ necessities. The paradigm of corporate dominion is mortally destructive. A new worldview and political paradigm is needed which seeks first to sustain global ecologies and to avail public resources justly, recognizing the equal dignity and rights of every human being.

The problems of corporations cannot be dismissed with simplistic jargon and half-true slogans. Of course all corporations are not bad. Corporations have played important roles in social life.

As creations of human imagination, corporations take on the purposes and designs of the human imagination, some good and some bad. So, as good and evil exist in the designs and purposes of human doing, so they exist in the purposes and doing of corporations.

Neither human beings nor corporations are free to run rough-shod over people and nature. Both must be held accountable for the abuses they inflict on others.

In the last four Administrations, a kind of libertarianism has been awarded corporations as though they are ends unto themselves. Their mantra is "privatizing". The open license of corporate imagination to profiteering has resulted in conspiratorial liberties that have hurt a lot of trusting people; there was Enron and the likes, now its money lenders defrauding homeowners in loan scams.

Corporate globalization, e.g., NAFTA, is profoundly and fatally flawed by the dissolution of corporate ethics. Religious fundamentalism, not to its credit, has hitched its wagon to corporate absolutism and has been party to republican overreach. Corporate profiteering on war and weapons of war by the U.S. is a world scandal doing incalculable hurt to the American people.

The social ethic of another era, which held employers accountable to their employees and to the public, has been ravaged by an anti-social (religious "right") republicanism which abides arrogance, ignorance and obsession to control and plunder. Such corporate libertarianism defeats fundamental civility and moral rationality.

## **51. RELIGIOUS PARALYSIS SYNDROME**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 20, 2008 - 3:01am.*

Who knows if it will do any good, but I e-mailed this "HOLY THURSDAY REFLECTION" to Pope Benedict, my Archbishop and my Pastor on this Holy Thursday morning:

RELIGIOUS PARALYSIS SYNDROME / Social Sin and Cultural Disconnection

Pope John XXIII, of blessed memory, and Vatican II recognized that humankind suffers spiritually and culturally from a profound depressive and destructive disorder, what I call the RELIGIOUS PARALYSIS SYNDROME — RPS.

WHAT RPS IS: It is an immune deficiency disease (IDD) acquired in childhood — what might be called a psychological version of “infantile paralysis”. RPS is a disease of cultural repression in which mental depression roots. Few people are completely unaffected by it. It is a disease that disables information-processing. It affects judgment, worldview, and the functioning of communication, consciousness and conscience. It is an acute mental disorder that limits intellectual capacity to the minimal capabilities acquired in childhood.

RPS SYMPTOMS: A person suffering from the disease lacks a capacity for critical judgment. Vision and judgment are impaired by small-world processing that is fixed in anachronistic experiences and misinformed valuation. The impairment processes new experience in the framework of religious reductionism, and it conforms reason to the mold of hierarchical, authoritarian suppositions fixated in deity dominion. Victims lack progressive consciousness and real world connection. Their rationality is regressive, that is, consciousness is backward directed and closed to accommodation and change.

The suppressed mindset acquired in childhood remains in place for a lifetime. Evidence of the damaging consequences of the syndrome accumulate only gradually in outcomes of cultural inauthenticity and eco-environmental collapses caused by the actual denial of the disease; and with denial, persistence in ignorance, arrogance and the culture of violent imposition and obsession. Eco-environmental collapses infect vital immunities and open life to catastrophic deficits.

RPS CAUSES: The transmission of the disease is accomplished by adult imposition, that is, by adults who themselves suffer from it and whose consciences are rigidified in conformity to the mold of RPS and who cannot think outside it. The disease is genetically predisposed, that is, it is culturally (in memes) and biologically (in genes) ingrained. The grave crises of the eco-environment are now awakening people to seek causes and solutions.

The crisis the people are discovering is the radical degradation of the eco-environment, whose cumulative damage has been long in the process of developing and which has its cause in part in the social disease of the Religious Paralysis Syndrome. RPS is perniciously difficult to eradicate because of deep religious and cultural habits and because of inheritance imprint. Recovery from eco-environmental degradation and societal violence cannot happen until RPS is recognized and remedied in personal/ social consciousness.

## **52. Odious Stereotyping**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 27, 2008 - 23:30pm. --- Church Leadership*

When people straighten others in jackets of one stereotype or another it is too often for purposes of demeaning others and advantaging self. I am as guilty as anyone in odious stereotyping for I have grown up in the common culture in which it prevails.

The truth is that every person is nuanced in beliefs; and even though all may be culturally inclined toward stereotypical belief, everyone deep down has moments of openness to newness beyond habituated sameness. This counter tendency is also present in human nature; in other words, CONVERSION remains the CONSTANT of personal/ social REDEMPTION.

I admit to having qualities that may fit me in categories of what some might call “ultra liberal” and “left winger”, even though I think of myself as conservative and traditional.

I am “conservative” in the sense of being fiercely defensive of equal personal moral responsibility in the conservancy of nature, ecology, and the individual rights of everyone — not just “individual” rights but of personal/ social responsibility.

I am “traditional” in the sense that I believe this conservancy is precisely what Old Testament Covenant was about and what the life and legacy of Jesus Christ, Christian morality, are about.

It is my belief that the abuses of patriarchal politics (dominion culture) and imperial theology (the religion of guilt and fear) are counter-productive to Christian (universal) morality and evolutionary (transformational) consciousness. Those who yet cling to the politics of patriarchal culture and the theology of imperial dominion act adversely against common sense and the teaching and exemplification of Jesus Christ.

From the informed perspective of Postmodernity it seems very clear that patriarchal politics (Church and State) and dominion theology fail the test of conservancy and the authentic tradition of Christian Faith, of universal, cultural, moral responsibility.

People of good faith can, and need to move cultures forward toward political conservancy and other-sensitive religion. This is the challenge of Thomas Berry’s GREAT WORK, the human challenge of sustainable living on Earth.

### **53. What Do You Expect?**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on March 30, 2008 - 7:37pm. --- Church Leadership*

Pope Benedict XVI will in a few days be coming to the United States of America. The advanced billing he is getting promises that his every word and action will be scrutinized from every possible direction. What signals will you be looking for and what message do you hope for? I am hoping that he will come across as the Pope of "green religion", emphasizing universal moral obligations to the God/ Land/ Human Covenant. As to Church discipline, etc, I will be watching to see if he comes across as a "conciliarist" pope, open to Church collegiality, or if he will continue in the cultural precedent of Vatican I "infallibilism".

The Vatican wars over internal authority, infallibilism vs. conciliarism, are the oldest and most damaging of Church issues, not just to Church but to public good faith.

The Italian Vatican II Popes, John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul I, were conciliarists. Pope Paul VI began the encyclical "Humanae Vitae" (the "birth control encyclical) with conciliarist intentions, but along the way he succumbed to the “Germanic” infallibilists, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla and Joseph Ratzinger (?) and disregarded lay input. And so, the conciliarist intentions of Pope Paul VI and Vatican II came to an end before they got started.

I'll be looking for signs of conciliarism in Pope Benedict's words and manner. If there is no place for conciliarism in the Church, it seems only too obvious that the exodus of laity from Church will be given impetus, and the moral authority of the Church will be diminished.

### **54. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on April 20, 2008 - 10:39pm. --- Church Leadership*

Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI has come and gone. What an unexpected, refreshing and inspiring experience! It is my sense that his trip to the U.S. was a historical event of considerable magnitude, whose consequences are yet to unfold. Pope Benedict has more than met my expectations.

What has been perhaps most striking was the Pope's humble and repentant admission that the Church has handled sexual abuses very badly. While he spoke specifically to abuses of minors, the reality is that when mothers (females) are alienated from Church because of preferential male sex privilege, minors suffer abuse from that kind of bad handling also.

[Speaking in Australia (July 2008), Pope Benedict called sexual abuse by clerics, enabled by the complicity of bishops, a "grave betrayal of trust".]

I think the Pope expects the People of God to move forward with the work of being "Church in the Modern World" (Vatican II, Constitution IV, "Gaudium et Spes"). What he affirms most strongly is the essential mutuality of Faith and Reason in the work of Church being Church. The correction of the bad handling of sexual relations in the Church bears directly on the full hearted work of the People Church in implementing the mutuality of Faith and Reason. In the implementation of this, the Church, the People has hardly begun.

If one believes that faith and reason are fulfilled in their mutuality, then one has to accept the premise that faith and reason must both be trustful and trustworthy in their mutuality. If reason is mistaken in its science, it is not being trustworthy but is breaching its trust obligation of mutuality. If faith persists in mistakes of the past and refuses the truth that reason (new science) advances, then faith is failing in its trust obligation of woman/ man mutuality.

It seems to me the beginning of healing in the Church, the work of being "Church in the Modern World", starts with the work of establishing trust between the sexes, between emotional intelligence (faith) and rational intelligence (reason). If the Church Universal is in disagreement on the mutual necessity of faith and reason to the people and to it, the corporate institution of the people, it will continue to speak with conflicting voices, and the paranoia and schizophrenia will continue, and so will "sexual" abuses. Now, the expectation of hope is directly on the people, to live with one another by affirming in their personal relationships the mutual necessity of Faith and Reason, as Pope Benedict rightly insists.

## **55. Exclusionism vs. Inclusionism**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on May 30, 2008 - 6:36am. --- Church Leadership*

While many of the faithful hoped it wouldn't come to this, including myself, it probably shouldn't be surprising that it has. I speak of the sharpest language yet in the matter of official Church positioning against the ordination of women to the priesthood.

The exclusionary caste system of the male hierarchical priesthood dates back to the OT Judaic culture of patriarchal electionism, of the priestly order in the line of Melchisedek. By birth, I am a Roman Catholic. I was early drawn to the Catholic priesthood and I entered the High School Seminary in preparation to become a priest. Eleven years later, at the age of 24, I opted to discontinue my pursuit of the institutional priesthood.

The call for Church "updating", formalized by Vatican II, confirmed me in my decision to opt out of the male priestly caste system. I am however, too confirmed in my belief in

Roman Catholic Christianity to leave the Church of my childhood, even though I take exception to the dominion role of the male exclusionary hierarchy. I am convinced that cultural history prior to and after the time of Christ plays a stronger political role in priestly exclusionism than does anything Jesus said and did in his lifetime.

The continuing exclusion of women from the priesthood, if it is a mistake, is not the first mistake of institutional Catholicism. Nevertheless, it remains the case that the “right” of choice rests with those who have the “might” of choice, as has been the culture of Christian imperial Church for the greater part of two millennia.

The priesthood of baptism vs. the priesthood of hierarchical electionism is a faith issue seeking resolution. It is likely that more than a few decades (more than a few centuries?) may yet be needed to find resolution. My choice is to continue within the Church and to advocate for the causes of inclusion.

What I expect to happen is that the Church will move forward in two directions simultaneously, one in which exclusionary priestly culture continues to affirm itself, and one in which the inclusionary culture of universal priesthood seeks affirmation.

The road into the future is likely to be increasingly rocky for both Churches. It won't however, be the first time that internal power conflicts caused bitter anathemas to be hurled back and forth. In the early second millennium, the papacy backed itself into the unseemly situation of the Great Papal Schism. Fasten your seatbelts.

## **56. Tithing Nature, Restoring Faith**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on Jun 12, 2008, 23:08 --- **Ecological Sustainability***

The over-reach of human populations and appetites is threatening the existence of life on Earth as we know it and as we depend on it. Exploitation and pollution have to be reversed and serious work taken up to sustain and restore habitats and network ecologies. This urgent endeavor is nothing less than a moral duty imposed by personal conscience acknowledging respect for and human dependency on nature and other life.

Life will not be restored and ecologies will not be saved unless humankind changes its ways from wasting to conservation and restoration. A mentality of change needs to be cultured by churches, by whole communities.

What shape should change take? In preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, for example, all “confirmandi” should be engaged in specific local works of habitat salvage and restoration. Service organizations, like Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, should be eager to cooperate and encourage young people in altruistic works.

Salvage should involve works of cleaning up nature and in recycling all waste items that poison and clutter air, water and land. Restoration should be in forms of habitat recovery and in reintroducing threatened flora and fauna. Restoration should involve “faith-tithing”, namely, local reclamation of swamps, prairies, woodland, lakes, streams, etc. Every landowner should be involved in the project by supporting reclamation and habitat recovery.

“Confirmandi” should be organized to contact property owners and explore ways of participating in “natural” tithing. Plans for clean up and reclamation should include setting aside (tithing) land for woodland planting, purification of run-off water and ways of water collection and holding for wildlife security.

Conservation professionals, landscape architects, nurseries, greenhouses, etc should be sought out in land-tithing and recovery work. All churches in the community can find common ground in non-controversial, real life works of faith-building and restoration.

Retired women and men (grandparents!) are naturally, altruistically motivated in the spiritual/ secular work of exemplifying to grandchildren faith and good works. The work of “salvation” requires nothing less than total intergenerational commitment.

[An aside: Seven years ago today (June 12, 2008), family, relatives and friends, my wife and I, celebrated the Funeral Mass of our daughter Monica (born April 5, 1960). Her interests and talents were very broad-based. What she loved most to do was to finely detail landscape proposals for people (without charge). Her drawings would detail, land profiles, water and terrain flow, locations and types of plantings, etc. How helpful today would be her altruism and talent in developing strategies and designs of habitat recovery sensitive to local ecologies. I have faith though that there are many others eager for the opportunity of using their talents in the altruistic service of God, humankind and life on Earth. Let’s seek them out.]

## **57. Living in the person of Jesus**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on November 29, 2007 - 4:52pm.*

Living in the person of Jesus requires more of us than to "want Salvation" for others. Salvation isn't a passive gift that comes with surrender to the belief that Jesus has done everything that is needed for personal salvation.

The mental disposition of recognizing that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Light (Life) opens us to the active life that is required of us. Grace supposes nature. We must cherish, respect, honor and secure life's means and source of grace. “Divine Instance” is in the Sacrament of Natural Order. It is in natural relationships, in works of intentional wellbeing toward others that grace flows.

## **58. TRUST issues: Faith, Ecology, Natural Law**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on August 15, 2007 - 12:37pm. --- **Ecological Sustainability***

Stephen Kent who has been editor of the archdiocesan newspapers of Omaha and Seattle has a published editorial “Global Climate Change” in the Dubuque, Iowa, archdiocesan newspaper The WITNESS, 8/12/07, page 5, under the caption "Sign of the Times".

Kent is very much taken by the fact that ecology has become the leading-edge moral imperative of the times. He first calls attention to New York Times writer Thomas L. Friedman who sees fossil fuel dependency as a situation that “calls for the ethic of stewardship... Stewardship is what parents do for their kids: think about the long term so

they can have a better future. Our kids will only call us the Great Generation if we rise to our challenges and become the greenest generation.” What happens in parent-child communication is faith-formation.

He then cites the book “The Assault on Reason” in which author Al Gore sees the overcoming of the carbon crisis as “a common moral purpose compelling enough to lift us above our limitations... By rising to meet the climate crisis, we will find the vision and moral authority to see all these not as political problems but as moral imperatives.”

But most compellingly perhaps, from the perspective of religion, Pope Benedict XVI warns of the destruction of the world, not as one might expect from nuclear threat and waste of war, but his greater concern for the everyday abuses of nature and the gradual destruction of the world. The Pope says: “Everyone today can see that man could destroy the foundation of his existence — the earth — and therefore we can no longer simply use this earth, this reality entrusted to us, to do what we want or what appears useful and promising at the moment, but we must respect the inherent laws of creation.”

The Pope responded to a question how to educate children and inform consciences: “I would propose a combination between a secular way and a religious way, the way of faith.” He went on to make the telling observation that secular morality, stewardship, ecology, teach that some things are right and some things are wrong; their lessons lead young people to “the true voice of conscience.”

## **59. Yes! Natural Law, cosmic law**

Submitted by [Sylvester L. Steffen](#) on October 16, 2007 - 12:27pm.

Yes! Natural Law, cosmic law at work in nature in myriad form(s) and function(s) is the "truth" paradigm for consciousness, intensional and intentional, in all life's transformational ways. I have written two trilogies, the Second Enlightenment Trilogy and the Conscious Light Trilogy. The first book of the first trilogy, PRIMARY SCRIPTURE, introduces "Natural Law" as the premise of authentic faith-consciousness. This is the introduction of PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

“The premise of “Primary Scripture” is that the essential lessons edifying all consciousness are communicated uninterruptedly in Nature, and that in their natural place, humans commune with divinity — the Source. Natural reason (complexity consciousness) is a self-renewing genesis. Nature’s consciously enduring word/work is God’s.

"Introspective nature-consciousness authenticates Earthlife; but because of humankind's ignorance, arrogance, and greed-obsession, societal sensitivity toward nature has been trashed; the poison of humankind's self-obsessive disconnect diseases civilizations with mortal conflicts.

"The geologist Thomas Berry calls for societal awakening to an ecozoic awareness. In 'The DREAM of the EARTH', Father Berry says: 'Professional education should be based on an awareness that Earth is itself the primary physician, primary revelation of the divine, primary scientist, primary technologist, primary commercial venture, primary

artist, primary educator, primary agent in whichever activity we find human affairs' (quoted with the author's permission.)

"If humankind would desist from its self-undoing, it needs to recapture its naturally instinctual and sustaining consciousness, relocate its societies in harmonious relationships with global Earth life, and become a conservator of life's diversity rather than its destroyer.

"Except for the fundamental fact of essential, codependent relationships, the physical/moral basis of vitality, of Natural Law, all other law pales in meaning and effect. Humans waste themselves and Earth life unless they conform their living to the codified scripture of the NATURALIS SACRAMENTUM ORDINIS.

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"The Very Reverend John Musinsky, S.V.D., past Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word and the onetime Theology Professor of Sylvester Steffen, expects that the reconciliation of science and religion might help Church be more effective in reaching people who are now more scientifically informed, '*...I would like to encourage you in your apostolate. The Church today does not know how to address modern man in such a way that she gets through to him. She will have to find new approaches. Modern man is certainly caught up in science and the approach from within his world is indeed promising.*' December 5, 1999.

## **60. The HOLY TRINITY Triduum (Retreat Exercise)**

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on Jun 11, 2008 at 00.04 --- **Parish Life**

VOX DEI, VOX MUNDI: God's Voice is Earth's  
VOX MUNDI, VOX TERRAE: the Earth's Voice is the Land's  
VOX TERRAE, VOX POPULI: the Land's Voice is the People's  
VOX POPULI, VOX DEI: the People's Voice is God's

In the beginning was the WORD...God said, "Let there be LIGHT". WORD and LIGHT are expressive of all other bonded in LOVE's Purpose, in reciprocal Self-expression.

The Paschal Mysteries celebrate WORD/ LIGHT/ LOVE in the mutual purposes of self and other — what Eucharist is, what Cosmic Evolution is about.

Life proceeds by and in WORD/ LIGHT/ LOVE. Humankind becomes community, in purposes of self-expression, by intentional communication, informed consciousness and conscionable love. Creation is the ongoing WORD/ WORK of Divine Communication, Consciousness and Conscience.

The heart of Triduum Reflection (Retreat Exercises) is the celebration of WORD/ LIGHT/ LOVE, from which we receive "indulgences", the graces of Community bonded in Cosmic Awareness, in the Instance of Divinity, and in the Intelligent Design in Cosmic Process. Evolution and its "method" is a valuable Triduum reflection: "cogitata perficiendo, cogitando sic perfecta" (thoughtful working, perfected in thinking).

Words, communication, are the means of how we come to mutual understandings;

consciousness (enlightenment) is how mutual awareness serves personal/ social complementarity; and conscience is love's means of subsidiarity, of serving people and community in the specific needs of time and place.

By analogy, in the growth of self-awareness and community, we grow into Godlikeness, into Trinitarian Community; FAITH from mutuality; HOPE from complementarity; and LOVE from subsidiarity.

The personal/ social Call — of each and everyone — is to become more Trinitarian in insight and intention — the way of peace, sustainability and self-fulfillment.

Resources:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15041c.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter\\_Triduum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_Triduum)

<http://www.secondenlightenment.org/possiblejourney.pdf>

<http://www.secondenlightenment.org/rejoinder.pdf>

### **The discussion invited here**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 19, 2008 - 2:00pm.*

The discussion invited here is to explore what difference in content, nuance, etc, the exercise of Triduum (retreats, etc) might have when reflection moves beyond traditional Catholicism's closed understanding of "salvation" history to a new perspective of God at work (divine instance) in the creative dynamics of evolution.

To be a bit more specific, how might St. Ignatius of Loyola change the thrust of his Spiritual Exercises in light of quantum science (evolution), global social/ ecological circumstances, and in light of the Call of the Second Vatican Council for updating and new "analysis and synthesis"?

### **61. Evolution and Intelligent Design**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 24, 2008 - 6:36am. --- Ethical Debates*

Evolutionary consciousness brings to human awareness the transformational dynamic of rational "trimorphism", the three-form processes of communication, consciousness and conscience. From this "process of rationality" (the design of intelligence) we come to understand other social dynamics that parallel and deepen the process implications of communication, consciousness and conscience.

1. Mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity: The trustful communication between parties energizes their mutual working. Consciousness gives rise to understandings of the potentials of likenesses and differences; and conscience compels right conduct to accommodate likenesses and differences to the necessities at hand, what is the working of subsidiarity. In the working of these, intentional mutuality affects social ascendancy and personal authenticity.

2. Ecology, economy and Eucharist: All communication happens in the ecological context for our origin and sustainability are in the ecological context. Distrustful and

misinformed communication intervenes ecological purposes and effects the exploitation and degrading of natural ecology. Misinformed presumptions about natural/ ecological dependency misinform consciousness and unwittingly give free reign to consumptive excess and unjustified behavior. Misinformation and misbehavior intervene the Eucharistic intentionality of ecological intelligence and thwarts the work and obligation of conscience.

3. Faith, hope and love: Trustful (truthful) communication is the basis of authentic consciousness working, and of consciousness coming to hopeful expectations; thwarted consciousness and frustrated hope betray love, the motivation of conscience, the action agency.

Presented here are three sets of intelligent design mechanisms by which human community is enabled to exemplify the Christian understanding of the divine Trinitarian Community. Personally and socially, we are supremely accountable to emulate Godlikeness in the intentional living of faith, hope and love, what are virtues common to religion that is true.

## **62. Faith — Eucharist**

*Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on June 30, 2008 - 6:36am. --- Parish Life*

Faith is a journey. Its infinite potentials forever challenge reason to explore its own dimensions and to expand into its possibilities.

Closing the door on faith by fixating it in consciousness, at one level, of one time and to a closed worldview, is to imprison God in cranial darkness.

The seed of faith is carried in the deep subconscious. The senses are the windows that enlighten it, water it and feed it. Faith is the Gospel Mustard Seed. Its vegetation houses Eucharistic consciousness.

Faith consciousness manifests at several levels, in the subconscious, in infant consciousness, in child consciousness, in youthful consciousness and in adult consciousness.

Patriarchal politics and dominion theology educate people to infantile/ child faith consciousness. Most of us have advanced not much beyond child faith consciousness. Earth is in crisis in no small part because of the failure of human consciousness to remain open and to grow in adult vision and altruism.

Eucharist is at the heart of open faith. Eucharistic consciousness cannot imprison God in a golden box on the altar of small-minded consciousness.

We are Eucharist. Divine Love, warm and deep within our hearts, is cosmic illumination, Cosmic Eucharist. The fodder of photosynthesis is fuel of body consciousness, the natural candle that flickers at the instance of Love, of divine intelligence that compels reason to glow warmer with each transformative moment.

Go and be the "Mass of Life" that you and I are called to be.

### **63. THEOSIS and the Pursuit of Godlikeness**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on July 7, 2008 - 11:51pm. --- Spirituality & Culture*

[St. Athanasius: "Becoming by Grace what God is by Nature"] Theosis is about the revelation of divinity in the Sacrament of Natural Order. Fidelity to Sacrament is fidelity to divine revelation, what is, understanding Godlikeness and conscionable, Godlike living. Authentic living is enabled in the pursuit of Godlikeness, in understanding and in living.

As Christians who seek to live faithfully to divine purposes, we must ask ourselves, "how do we advance or frustrate divine revelation? How have we culturally digressed from Godlikeness and caused the frustration of nature, of divine revelation? How do we fail to understand that RELIGION IS ABOUT GODLIKE RELATIONSHIPS AND IRRELIGION IS ABOUT UNGODLIKE RELATIONSHIPS?"

Theosis, as a consciousness of divinity, originates in the self-awareness of Creation (the evolving Cosmos), by which conscious purpose can engage in the divine purposes of symbiotic wellbeing.

Gradually awakening consciousness stimulates intelligence to anticipate potentials of communal/ personal benefit and to intentionally motivate personal and communal action which actualizes the envisioned potentials of nature.

The expression of natural potentials in action, characterizes organic forms and function. The intentional intelligence of nature (self-reflective in humankind) is realized in the purposes that come to be actualized in nature.

Thought and intentional consciousness motivate to higher understandings of purpose, and to action that actualizes the ongoing perfecting of thought and the ascendancy of personal/ social forms and functions.

Theosis is gradual conscious awakening to divine implications in the processes of cosmic evolution; the Earth and all processes at work on Earth are of cosmic origin and dependency; all processes of life, in organic form (structure) and function, are of Earth/ Cosmos origin and dependency. In every aspect of form and function, the implications of divine unfolding (revelation) pertain and obtain.

In the universal processes of Cosmos, Earth and Life, the unity and continuity of origins and expressions of potential obtain, so that, all transformations, all evolutionary change, are expressions of original potential implicated from the beginning.

Original potentials, implicated from the beginning, represent Divine Instance (Presence). The expression of Mind occurs in the relationships that effect the actualizing of potentials. This process, the actualizing of potentials, is the "apocalypse" (manifestation, revelation) of Divine Presence — what is "Theosis".

In our purposeful, conscionable relationships, we express the Mind of God. The collective consciousness of humankind is a collective representation of divine mind. As consciousness deepens in the physicality and psychology of nature, and in fidelity to the

purposes of universal wellbeing, so does understanding of God and authentic revelation of the divine.

When the evolution of natural processes is frustrated, so are understandings of God and the purposes of Creation, that is, the Intelligent Design of Creation/ Creator. To deny evolution is to deny God; to obstruct the consciousness of evolution is to obstruct divine working/ presence in the Sacrament of Natural Order.

A change of mind (“metanoia”, conversion) has to first occur before changes of habits can. This “conversion” is the momentous task of the “Great Work”.

### **We become GODLIKE by THEO(GENE)SIS:**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on July 12, 2008 – 3:05am. --- Spirituality & Culture*

We become **GODLIKE** by **THEO(GENE)SIS**: except for the Word voiced in Nature, God is ineffable; except for the Godlikeness Process of Trimorphic Resonance, there is no self-fulfillment, no domestic tranquility, no religion, and no civility.

In Word and in Work, in live witness of communication, consciousness and conscience, I am, we all are, caught up in Trinity’s processing of Faith, Hope and Love.

The Work of “Word becoming” is in Truth the Intentional Sacrament of Cosmic SOUL/ SUBSTANCE: SOUL “naturally” transubstantiates the natural self in the Works of Confession, Confirmation and Priesthood; SUBSTANCE naturally arranges the available texts of Light (birth), Water (consciousness) and Soil (return, death).

“Nurture” is intuitional Work editing the scripted Word of Nature. For me this is the Cosmic Evidence of Science, of History: TRINITY IS SCRIPTED NATURALLY.

God is experience “within”, naturally exposed “without”; God is Process-Creator, Self-expressed in Process-Creation.

Communal civility unveils the God-connection spontaneously, incivility, irreligion, obscure it inevitably; obscuring God-spontaneity obstructs completeness with the frustration of incompleteness — the inner fault of distorted consciousness.

God Consciousness comes to Earthlings in Nature’s scripted history, or it doesn’t come to them at all.

Communication is God-Talk;  
Consciousness is God-Sense; and  
Conscience is God-Sensitivity.

Cosmology is Faith-experienced God-Talk, Naturally;  
Philosophy is Hope-expressed God-Sense, Naturally; and  
Theology is Love-exposed God-Sensitivity, Naturally.

In communal necessity, we are meant to be Godlike; this is “The Possible Journey”, the personal necessity, the Cosmic Necessity.

## 64. Earth's Ecozoic Crisis

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on July 21, 2008 - 10:32pm.

Not just faith-life, but the very “ecozoic” (ecological/zoological) basis of life on Earth is at risk of further radical collapses with the massive die-off of life, including human. The present political climate indicates a public awareness of wrong political direction and the need for change. Humankind in fact faces a global survival conundrum that demands much change in thinking and living.

The reality of this conundrum makes the case for understanding how faith consciousness and evolutionary consciousness relate critically to each other. Until now, not only do religions deny evolution, they deny the Earth-human crisis of ecozoic degradation. Male political supremacy and cultured male primacy in theological matters dominate culture and contribute to the radical exploitation of nature’s “sexual favors”, what can only be categorized as “religiously sanctioned prostitution”.

The assault on nature’s ecozoic system by human prolixity comes from two directions, from the widespread invasion, exploitation and pollution of global ecologies by human populations, and from “successes” in extending human life expectancy. The lengthening of life expectancy increases pressures on Earth resources, even as does reproductive prolixity. Whether humankind can succeed in softening its footprint and stop the desecration of ecozoic nature remains the question yet to be answered.

If present trends continue, that is, as to human excesses of exploitation and the poisoning of web-life ecologies, the writing on the wall is clear, namely, that radical collapses of life and die-off of species, including humankind, will increase.

Hope-for-the-future demands a two-prong approach toward resolving this conundrum: first, reducing human consumption and pollution pressures, and, secondly, increasing human effort to restore and secure ecozoic balance and sustainability. The reduction of population pressures isn’t likely to happen unless and until human populations level off with what is naturally sustainable; what the sustainable capacity of ecozoic life is, depends on the condition of ecozoic life, whose degradation is becoming daily more desperate and problematic.

Churches cannot conscionably continue to deny evolution and their culpability in matters of public infidelity to Covenant. Faith is authentically understood only in context with ecozoic fidelity — “grace supposes nature”. The hard fact has to be faced: if humankind lacks the good sense and will to curb appetites and restrain population numbers, nature will do it! One way or the other, ready or not, it will happen — better to do it intentionally and non-violently than to challenge nature to do it her way.

Perhaps the tipping point is already reached so that greater natural violence will continue, and, that the best humans can do now is to mitigate the situation by changing their ways and restoring ecozoic balance in the environment as best they can.

The moral issue of the population conundrum has yet to be faced by people, by Church, by governments!

## 65. Pursuing Truth

### — And don't forget Giordano

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on July 31, 2008 - 11:47am.*

And don't forget Giordano Bruno. The Church is still unrepentant for its "mortal" sin against him.

In 1600, the Dominican monk Giordano Bruno was ignominiously burned at the stake after being condemned by the Church for heresy in the matter of his new cosmology that contradicted Scholasticism, the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church.

Theological fixation in Earth-Centrism leads to dead ends, as the lesson of Earth's "ecozoic crisis" makes very clear to Postmodern consciousness.

At a very unsettled time in history, the Church's theology of staticism-centrism was challenged by the sun-centered cosmology of Copernicus, but even more insightfully by the cosmology of Giordano Bruno, who suffered the tragic consequence of being dragged before the Roman Inquisition (by Chief Inquisitor, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, SJ) and condemned to be burned at the stake.

This new cosmological insight is actually prior to, or at least contemporary with, the Copernican heliocentric understanding. The Dominican Monk, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), arrived at the cosmological insight of homogeneity (the properties of matter are everywhere identical) and isotropy (that the cosmos appears the same from any point of observation) as "the consequence of his discovery of cosmic acentricity and infinity". [Ramon G. Mendoza, "The Acentric Labyrinth", 1995, Element Books, Inc., P.O. Box 830, Rockport, MA 01966, pg. 74].

"Bruno's discovery of the infinitude, isotropy, and homogeneity of the universe... has been carried by Linde to its ultimate consequence. The All is no longer necessarily a sea of billions of galaxies and clusters of galaxies; the All may be an infinite ocean of infinite universes!" (Id, pg 184). This sounds like St. John Damascene's definition of God, "a sea of infinite substance".

Because of the overlap of Bruno's radical cosmology into [and its threat to] the centrist politics of theology, the Roman Inquisition, under Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, SJ, felt compelled to condemn the visionary monk and burn him at the stake. This event had a chastening impact on dissenters, then and now, "...[T]he autonomy and independence of reason from religious supervision...was the decisive reason for Bruno's condemnation and execution, since his position posed the most dangerous threat to the power of ecclesiastical authorities should they ever lose their tight grip on scientific inquiry." (Id, pg 167).

On its face, history documents not just a conspiracy of silence by Church but an arrogant determination of Church self-righteousness in its condemnation and discrediting of Bruno and its refusal to admit to any wrongdoing for this specific injustice. The matter is complicated by the fact that before his defeat at Waterloo, Napoleon had plundered the archives of the Holy Office and made off with the records of the original acts surrounding the Roman trial of Bruno; after Waterloo, the pope reclaimed them, and on the way of their return to Rome from Paris the records were lost. (Ramon G. Mendoza, Id, pg 52). [Sylvester L Steffen, "Pursuing Truth", QUANTUM RELIGION, 2003, pp 38-47, [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)]

If Church is to be credible in its pursuit of truth, it needs to be honest about past mistakes, admit errors, and set the record straight.

As Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was the successor to Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, SJ; so it seemed right to me, and in the best interest of the Church, to petition Cardinal Ratzinger to correct the sorry injustice against Giordano Bruno, and to set the record straight with history. To this end, I wrote then Cardinal Ratzinger the Open Letter that follows.

10 February 2002

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect,  
Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith  
The Vatican,  
ROME, ITALY — EUROPE

Dear Cardinal Ratzinger:

As successor to Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, SJ, and regarding events surrounding the condemnations of Giordano Bruno and Galileo (which occurred under his watch), I call your attention to the admission of the Church for its wrongdoing against Galileo but no such admission for wrongdoing against Bruno.

In contrast to Galileo, Bruno's punishment was execution by burning at the stake. This is a tragically harmful scandal that cries to heaven for a specific response by the Church. The Church's perceived arrogance in refusing to resolve this publicly apparent conspiracy of silence, intended to credit the Church and discredit Bruno, can only aggravate the scandal of the injustice—to the Church's discredit. Unfortunately for the Church, in cosmological vision, Bruno, to his credit, is perceived today more correct than the Church.

I'm enclosing the excerpt "Pursuing Truth" from an upcoming book "QUANTUM RELIGION, the Good News of Rising Consciousness", which directs attention to specifics of the wrongful discrediting of Bruno.

Please act to resolve this scandal before you retire from your watch. Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely, (Signed) Sylvester L. Steffen

Not surprisingly, Cardinal Ratzinger did not respond. Perhaps, as Pope Benedict XVI he will take a new look with his successor Prefect to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. It is refreshing to see Pope Benedict's commitment to the mutuality of Faith and Reason, as well as his new emphasis on the compelling moral issues of human waste and exploitation of nature, what is the "ecozoic crisis".

## 66. The Fraudulent Prerogation of Male Primacy

Submitted by **Sylvester L. Steffen** on July 15, 2008 - 9:56pm. --- **Human Sexuality**

History testifies that theological discrimination against women by institutional religion is advanced politically in patriarchal societies, and, with destructive and dysfunctional effects on the individual person and on society.

The fraudulently evolved prerogation (presumption, arrogation) of male primacy is the underpinning of traditions of cultural discrimination against women. Misinformed patriarchal theologies have poisoned women and men in their relationships and have brought about familial and societal dysfunction.

Anti-social violence against women comes in forms of unhealthful male obsession in sexual power, obsession [to] control, and in physical and psychological abuse.

When all is said and done, the working of Eucharist is quintessentially sexual and interpersonal, for quantum-electric bi-polarity is the cosmic motor of transformational energy/ matter...

There is, with bi-polar sexuality, a certain alienation of consciousness which identifies with moral loneliness. Male and female have to make distinctive choices in life which have effects of equal authentication though qualified by sexual difference. The subject matter of the procreation of the species is a deeply personal matter that affects both sexes, but with distinctly different consequences...

In the face of life's complexity, making decisions of mutual sensitivity can be agonizing [and fraught with uncertainty]...

The personal experience of making life decisions of Eucharistic consequence, of altruistic sacrifice, is ultimately a lonely decision. Eucharistic consciousness is radical in the personal sense of evolutionary necessity, which involves unavoidable transformation, whether we want to focus on the fact or not. We do age and die [which is for the better interest of future life].

In the end, it is important that we have something to show for our having been born. It is well that we make personal choices now in our lives that harmonize personal and social wellbeing.

We cannot in right mind want to bring violence and ruin to others, to nature. Religion, personal and group, is rightly purposeful and exemplary when its word and work motivate others to altruistic living. The test of human authenticity is love's motive and its consequence, for love alone endures.

[See: Sylvester L. Steffen, RELIGION & CIVILITY, pp 207, 208, [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)]

Lessons of history testify to the need for a global change of consciousness and conscience, NOW; political decisions have moral consequences for the long-term future. Change begins with honest communication, and, religious/ political integrity rests on honest communication.

## Perhaps you ask, what is "fraudulent"

Submitted by *Sylvester L. Steffen* on July 19, 2008 - 1:50am. --- **Human Sexuality**

Perhaps you ask, what is "fraudulent" about the male prerogative (presumption) of primacy over female.

In the reproductive evolution of life, there was first the asexual maternal method of live continuity by way of single cell division, and only very much later was the complexity of the division of the sexes introduced.

The cultural myth that woman is from the rib of man reverses the biological facts of evolutionary history and falsely feeds the male presumption of primacy over female.

What does this say about "religious" culture as it prevails? About Eucharist? About Priesthood? Whither the future?

## 67. Eucharistic Evolution & Resurrection Consciousness

In the Apostles' Creed we profess: "I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting". Both, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting are mysteries beyond human knowing, and yet, like the revelation of God in nature, insights into nature open understandings of Eucharist, Resurrection and Life Everlasting.

Divine Intelligence in nature, in evolutionary consciousness, in ascendant self-reflection, reveals how in fact Divine Consciousness, Cosmic Soul, is ascendant, little by little, generation after generation, in the essential continuity of genetic/ memetic Sacrament, what is the "Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis".

In the intentional celebration of religious consciousness, Sacrament is "sacred re-remembrance". Re-remembrance is soul/ body re-remembering advanced in the social purposes of mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity — by which every person is uniquely new-born in charisms and consciousness.

Re-remembering is a soul/ body reproductive process of Eucharistic altruism, advanced in female/ male mutuality, whose purposes tend toward other in the ascendancy of genetic/ memetic remembrance, in which the past, in flesh, blood and consciousness, is brought forward to the present in new-born persons.

Individually, personally, each of us is a unique and coherent re-incarnation of all life preceding us. In the very make-up of our genetic/ memetic selves we bring forward resurrected bodies/ souls, advanced in continuous and conscious ascendance. We are, personally and purposefully, resurrected enfleshment in the Community and Communion of Saints.

This much we know about the resurrection of the body and life everlasting; and we have every reason to believe that in the Intelligent Design of spontaneously evolving life, the mystery deepens with every iteration of resurrected life. Be conscious and live purposefully for your life counts and your soul lives on.

## 68. A UNIVERSAL SYLLABUS

[www.evolution101.org](http://www.evolution101.org)

**Serious-Adult-Faith-Education/Reformation**

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on August 22, 2008 - 3:42am. --- Parish Life*

The study of faith and evolution belong together like faith and reason belong together, for, by dialog with reason, faith is updated, and by updating we experience change of consciousness and come to understand transformation in female/ male mutuality.

Intentional evolution, driven by reason, determines personal/ social wellbeing, the reason of our becoming. Reason continually feeds personal consciousness in its growth into awareness of newness even as faith consciousness continues to secure the ground of our being throughout the growth of culture. Except for the intentional dynamic of joined faith and reason (female/ male mutuality), we are crippled in self-understanding and cultural authenticity.

In these times, it is all too evident that personal wellbeing and civil culture cannot abide the schism between faith and reason. The hyped culture of faith (by dominion theology, fideism) frustrates reason even as the hyped rationalism of Enlightenment (scientism) frustrates faith; the culture of this schism trashes the mutuality of the sexes.

Until now the role of evolution in faith-formation has been given little thought; this despite the fact that evolution continuously, and unobtrusively as Divine Presence, authenticates faith-consciousness, communal conscience and religious relationships. Because we fail to engage evolution with intentional purpose, we fail faith, conscience and relationships.

Failure to understand and engage evolution's authenticating power handicaps one's personal sense of self, one's religious sensitivity, and civil harmony. Self-respect, religious and civil culture are not about institutionally enforced faith ideologies but are about the personally harmonized culture of religion and civility, in common purposes of community, unity and "ecozoic" continuity, (word of Thomas Berry).

### **The Rationale for an Evolution/ Faith Syllabus of Study**

- 1) Nature's "Word" Controls;
- 2) Evolution as Sacrament;
- 3) Nature (Self) as Sacrament; and
- 4) Access to the Evolution/Faith Syllabus

- 1) Nature's "Word" Controls

"Word" is the means of communication, consciousness and conscience, the process-beginning of cosmically evolving forms and functions, whose substance (form) is qualified by function and whose functions are qualified by forms. All cosmic substance inter-relates as means/ ends in the unity and continuity of evolving forms and functions.

The physical dynamics of quantum energy lay down laws that govern sub-atomic particle inter-relationships and that qualify and quantify the evolving functions and forms of

energy/ matter: discovering these truths facilitates understandings, what meaning in life is about, what “centering”, focus is about, what sustains.

Humankind, quite uniquely, has the intelligence of reason that understands causes and consequences. This privileged talent of intelligence carries with it the responsibility of intentional reflection by which causes and consequences can be connected. Self-reflective intelligence brings with it not only the responsibility to understand causes/ consequences but also the responsibility to avoid actions that harm, and to choose actions that benefit.

## 2) Evolution as Sacrament

“Sacrament” is a religious term of art from the Latin words “sacrum”, the sacred, and “meminisse, mentum”, meaning remembrance. Sacrament is a ritual celebration of memorializing sacred events in the fortuitous evolution of life and consciousness. Sacrament celebrates that which brings us to a sense of moral living, that is, of understanding causes and effects and celebrating for the benefit of communal edification the natural events that advance wellbeing, worth, and personal/ social authentication.

In form and in function, evolutionary nature keeps in memory how to replicate forms and functions, and how to preserve the openness of forms and functions in achieving new means and potentials that affirm the established processes of reason, even as it allows for the creative potentials of reason, consistent with nature’s methods and means.

We understand nature, in her diverse forms and functions, to be universal Sacrament in which all other sacraments subsist. Sacrament is communicated and extended in its forms (signs) and by its apt functions (grace-conferring) that attend specific forms.

Ritual Sacraments are “of nature”, GENETIC, and “of nurture”, MEMETIC. Nature/ evolution engage genetics, and culture (nurture) functions epigenetically, that is, by acting upon the genes in such a way as to modify function and contribute to personal, cultural evolution. Defective culture impacts gene-modification negatively. Authentic culture that is informed and genetically faithful advances genetic potential, whereas, inauthenticity retro-grades natural accomplishments.

Fidelity to Sacrament, to evolving nature, is fundamentally religious for it illuminates and advances conscious purpose, meaning, self- worth and wellbeing.

## 3) Nature (Self) as Eucharist

“Eucharist” too is a term of religious art that has been advanced in Christian religious culture. Eucharist typically celebrates the divine mission and life of Jesus Christ, who lived and preached self-giving in service to others, even to the extent of dieing in service to others. The Mass is the ritual Sacrament of Eucharist that memorializes the life and teaching of Jesus, and that exemplifies how we are food to one another even as God is by reason of Divine Presence in all of nature, as in bread and wine when consumed.

Organic transformation into other, genetically/ memetically, bodily/ spiritually, and in form and function, is of the essence of Sacrament/ Eucharist.

## 4) Accessing the Evolution/ Faith Syllabus

Everyone is born for a lifetime of learning and teaching. Teaching and learning are simultaneous functions affecting everyone daily. By contributing intentionally and interactively to consciousness we function as Sacrament/ Eucharist to each other.

Understanding the evolution/ faith connection facilitates affirmative living. To live religiously, civilly, we need to be informed of behavior that contributes to personal/ social wellbeing and how we advance or obstruct religious/ civil relationships. Sometimes awareness of authenticity happens only by trial and error. We need to learn from past mistakes and stop repeating them, as happens when culture is fixed in the past and is disconnected from contemporary reality. The grave global circumstances of nature and humankind today shout for a quantum leap in evolving consciousness.

## **APPENDIX : Summaries**

### **1. Living Truthfully and Openly**

**Faith, the basis of moral consciousness**, is cultured authentically in the conscientious pursuit of truthful and open relationships. Truthfulness and openness, the light of “orthopraxis” (right living), are learned virtues — not fixed absolutes.

**Fixated beliefs and the culture of orthodoxies** divide people into conflicted and antagonistic camps. Fixation feeds violence. Openness to learn enables the enlightenment of consciousness and the mitigation of difference, without which people cannot live harmoniously.

**Theology is about Providential Purpose in life:** the Sacrament of God Present is the Enlightenment of consciousness. First Enlightenment reacted against the pre-Reformation fideism of Imperial Europe and was dismissive of imperial fideism long cultured. Thus, First Enlightenment developed its own fixations (rationalistic) against the fixations (fideistic) of dominion theology. Second Enlightenment seeks to join Faith and Reason and heal the rift between pre-Reformation fideism and First Enlightenment rationalism.

**Natural learning and religious culture**, reason and faith, need to learn from and teach each other. Second Enlightenment is distinguished from First Enlightenment by its openness to spiritual consciousness (theology) and to evolutionary consciousness as they are enlightened by cumulative knowledge and experience.

**Open and truthful (trustworthy) communication** is the process by which frictions are mitigated and violence avoided. By communication the inseparable necessities of the material (secular) and the spiritual (religious) can be socially discerned and sustainably cultured.

### **2. Cover-up and Breach of Trust**

**Corporations, whether business, governmental or church**, can be true to their public mission only if the public perceives them to be credible and trustworthy. Certainly, they must in fact be credible and trustworthy. Indeed, it is fraudulent if they are not truthful in

their representations. To act in a knowingly deceitful and hurtful way is a malicious breach of trust.

**Trust is not negotiable.** Institutional secrecy is always suspicious, especially in light of scandals and cover-ups that have plagued institutions from times long past. People have reasons to be suspicious of government, business and churches because of their egregiously hurtful cover-ups and deceptions. The role of Catholic bishops in hiding and transferring pedophile priests has shattered the trust and confidence of the faithful.

**Because of bad experiences,** any kind of corporate secrecy in matters of public concern virtually always causes people to be suspicious of cover-ups. This is true also in the election of popes, especially the last pope, given the circumstances surrounding the election of Benedict XVI (Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger).

**There is no justification to keep secret** the voting of cardinals. To the contrary, because of the prejudice used by Pope John Paul II in choosing bishops and cardinals (113 of the cardinals voting on the new pope were appointees of John Paul II), the public is understandably skeptical of motives of cardinals for voting as they did. The public ought now make known its expectation for more transparency by the church in all its corporate decision making. It is not enough to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide their decision for cardinals are humans, as was Jesus, but without the sinlessness that Jesus possessed.

**The trust of the people will never be fully gained** unless and until corporate transparency is made official church policy.

### 3. Original Sin

**Original Sin, the wasting of natural diversity** (web-life) and the frustration of cosmic/ evolutionary purpose, is *dissonance* that disrupts Eden's harmony — these are willful acts of man, who dares out of ignorance and greed to self-presume that he knows better than Nature how to use Nature. The open potential (vitality) of Eden's Middletree is naturally advanced in pluralism (evolved diversification), in cosmic harmony — *consonance*.

**Over trustful of his own rationality,** man gives in to arrogant self-reflectivity and self-consumes in accommodating to consumption that knows no limits. And so, by "first" man, sin came into the Garden, and with sin, the waste of Middletree Vitality and of man himself — in the *Culture of Death*.

**Ignorance, arrogance and greed** are a diabolic trinity plaguing self-reflectivity; and by their inherent dissonance they inflict sin's consequences on all life, which continues on into our time and by which Middletree Vitality now comes to be wasted globally.

**Fideism, imperialism and colonialism** are morphed complexities of original sin whose dark inheritances spread globally. Today, feudalism, corporatism and consumerism pass on to future generations the disruption of deep-rooted original sin.

**By human doing**, sin, misdirected Enlightenment, continues in the world. By his teaching and example Jesus has shown the way out of darkness into enlightenment. God calls us to reject the false Lucifer of consumerism, as Jesus exemplified after his forty-day fast in the desert at the beginning of his public life. Earth's resources are for common well-being; we

must avoid the waste of unsustainable profiteering; instead, we must preserve web-life vitality; not obsess in power and control over natural resources and others; we must enable the marginalized to share in Earth's bounty, and we must live by the virtues of harmonic community — faith, hope and love. These are the Way of Truth, light and life.

**Faithful to the redemptive example of Jesus Christ**, Second Enlightenment challenges the arrogance, greed and ignorance of First Enlightenment. In the harmonious nurture of nature all can experience religion, civility and salvation; absent such nurture, all suffer the bad experience of irreligion, incivility and general degradation. Conscience compels all alike, individually and collectively, to honor this least condition of religion, namely, reverence and care for Middletree Vitality.

#### 4. The Sacrament of Natural Order

**I am occupied with a question**, “if Baptism, why not other Sacraments?” The conferring of grace is a people-to-people thing; it's what happens in relationships, in the experiencing of God in the “sacrament of the natural order”. The whole people is Church. Hierarchy is an institutional structure that exists to serve the People. The badge of honor the pope claims is “*Servus servorum*”, the *servant of servants* in the Sacrament of Natural Order.

**Sacrament is universal, inclusive not exclusive**: Baptism — the signing rite of personal authenticity in water — is validly administered by persons of good faith, in that all are “ordered” by the birth/ baptism of water. Why are people of good faith excluded from commonly ordered Sacraments? There is no evidence that Jesus ever intended to exclude anyone of good faith in the common administering of sacraments. The exclusive ministry of Sacrament and privileged ordination have evolved under presumptive male assertions.

**Eucharist, for example, is a lifelong Sacrament**, happening continuously in the natural transformation of every person in his/ her lifetime. By natural transformation into other we are made to decrease as others increase, like the seed that germinates and goes through life's natural cycle. Age and maturity are the purchase of wisdom even as grace is their bonus. We are all called to the John-The-Baptist role, namely, *to prepare the way for Christ coming*. Every newborn is a “Christ coming”. In giving self in service to others we confer on each other the Grace of Eucharist and the witness of Divine Instance.

**The “transubstantiation” of food**, the incorporation of bread and wine, is the sign and the reality of growing into Godlikeness. Surely, if there are no priests to offer the Mass, the ritual Sacrament of the Eucharist, it does not mean that Eucharist no longer happens in life!

**If we believe that the voice of the people is God's voice** (*vox populi, vox Dei*) then we believe in God's Presence in nature, “everywhere”, as we learn when we are children. We must then believe that by being faithful *in living in right relationships* (*orthopraxis*), we live *sacrament* and authenticate Divine Presence for each other; Nature too is a “blessed sacrament”.

**At the Last Supper Jesus self-identifies with food**, with bread and wine. He solemnly tells us that unless we eat his body and drink his blood — *eat God-Present-in-food* — we will not have life in us. Further he instructs one and all, “Do this in memory of me!” Every time we eat, we “eat God”, by which we participate in Eucharist and are transformed. The act of eating is precisely an act of Eucharist, a moment of special grace when we reflectively commemorate personal transformation into Godlikeness.

## I do not lightly question

*Submitted by Sylvester L. Steffen on June 27, 2008 - 5:06pm. --- Church Leadership* I do not lightly question the determination of Church to stake its credibility and future in the dominion mindset to keep women on the margins of Church life and Eucharistic celebration.

No more and no less than any other, I come to the Table not with purposes of arrogance but to speak truth with sincerity as it's been given to me to understand. Nor am I cavalier in taking liberties of thought.

I respect neither inferiority nor superiority but equality before God. With equal conviction I affirm the insights of truth given me, fully aware that they are hardly detectable flickers in creation's vast display of Divinity, Who is Light.

My struggle to understand truth and to be faithful to Truth has not gone without the awareness of other persons of significant authority, accomplishment, judgment, and sensitivity.

On August 1980, Father Leonard Kayser, Acting Director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, speaking on behalf of Bishop Maurice Dingman, Des Moines Diocese, wrote to me: *"I must thank you most sincerely for myself and Bishop Dingman for your patient explanation and attention. We are in full agreement that we need and want to continue a dialogue and whatever else will be supportive of your efforts. ...It is not often, if ever, that we meet with someone who has a vision and theological understanding of the Church as you have"*.

On October 3, 1991, Monsignor C. Sepe, Assessor, Secretariat of State, First Section, General Affairs, Vatican City, wrote me on behalf of Pope John Paul II: *"His holiness Pope John Paul II has directed me to thank you for the book of poetry that you sent him. He wishes you to know that he is grateful for your thoughtful gesture and that he appreciates the kindness which prompted it. His Holiness cordially invokes upon you and your family God's gifts of peace and joy."*

In March of 1982, Bishop L. David Brown, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Northeastern Iowa Synod, Waverly, Iowa, wrote me : *"It is the hope of the author that this book might be (used in) the syllabus of an interdisciplinary study in colleges and universities to stimulate wholeness in living and learning. Our specialized, fragmented and truncated approach to many disciplines cries out for a more comprehensive view of the learning enterprise. ...The subject matter is significant. The form of communication is creative. The book is worthy of study. Science and religion are far too important realms to leave only to scientists and theologians."*

Father Thomas Berry, author "The DREAM of the EARTH", wrote me: *"Your own thought is a confirmation of my own. May all go well with this and all those other writings that are finding expression through you (Spring, 1992) You have indeed set forth the fundamental vision needed for effective entry into the future ... I do hope that your vision will become effective on a broad scale throughout our society."* (Fall, 1993).

On December 5, 1999, the late Very Reverend John Musinsky, SVD, the only American Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word, my Seminary Prefect and Theology Professor wrote me: *"I would like to encourage you in your apostolate. The Church today does not know how to address modern man in such a way that she gets through to him. She will have to find new approaches. Modern man is certainly caught up in science and the approach from within his world is indeed promising"*.

More recently, Sr Edith Matt, OSF, wrote me: *"It is important for you lay people to remind the Church hierarchy that they are not seeing how women are alienated in the Church."*

Church and Sacrament become irrelevant except they speak to the truth of the times. This is the point of Vatican II, and of my writing, and why new "analysis and synthesis" are needed. The content of my writings isn't about me it's about God, Sacrament, Church and the times. By day, the crises of the time become more urgent, and yet there are those who still fiddle to the tunes of the past while Planet Earth burns and the people scatter.

But now the Spirit is moving the hearts and the will of The People even as at the time of First Pentecost. Times are changing, and **it is the time for all to bring their light to the moment and to the "movement"**.

## **DREAM and DESTINY**

**Not by saying “Lord, Lord!” are we saved, but by doing the will of our Heavenly Father.**

**We get in touch with our true selves by keeping in touch with Deep Nature. Consciousness is at many levels. Consciousness is our means of self-discovery and of self-fulfillment.**

**Consciousness finds grounding in the certitude of faith — the means for living rightly and finding bliss together in community.**

**Bliss is by way of right living, which keeps our personal selves in tune with nature, and by which we come to salvation, personally and collectively.**

**It is by right living that we discover our dream and come to our destiny. Adult faith is about dream and destiny and right living — it’s what purpose and life are about.**

**Live rightly, discover your dream and celebrate your destiny with others.**

