

ANALYSIS and SYNTHESIS of the GLOBAL CONUNDRUM

CIVILITY in CRISIS

EVOLUTION and REVOLUTION

The **REVOLUTION OF EVOLUTION** is a rational process of cultural turning guided by the light of Faith and Reason testing each other.

The **EVOLUTION of REVOLUTION** is egoism run amok and cultural failure to accommodate Faith and Reason. Conflicted Faith and Reason conflict people in their relations and give rise to violence.

Neither **NATURE** nor **HUMANKIND** can long abide the insanity of failed Faith and Reason. Waste of Nature and intolerance of differences are outcomes of gathering civil calamity.

Sylvester L. Steffen

April 2011

DARWIN/CHARDIN, a Copernican/Galileoan Church-Repeat

Today no one questions that the Earth is round and not the center of the universe. Roman Catholicism in its “infallible” judgment was incapable of digesting this truth for centuries and could not admit its error until Pope John Paul II formally and finally apologized for its sin against Galileo and humanity.

Not so with evolution. The whole reality of the Catholic Church’s new “infallibility mistake” in the matter of the Cosmic Story (still evolving) is not yet admitted. The Evolutionary Worldview is the new reality that replaces the Static-Centrist Worldview of medieval theology, and, Darwin and Chardin are the new anathematized victims of infallible error. No pope has yet had the decency or humility to come forth and “smell the roses.” No pope has ever publicly mentioned the name of Chardin, much less acknowledged his contributions to new theological thinking. The church’s sin against the Jesuit Priest/Scientist Teilhard de Chardin (Darwin) is still unconfessed. [See Hans Küng, “The Beginning of All Things, Science and Religion,” © 2007, Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI 49505 www.eerdmans.com

Had Hans Küng been elected cardinal instead of his protégé Joseph Ratzinger, the Catholic Church today might be in full admission of its error and it might embrace one of its most important scientist/ theologians and the “Theology of Evolution.” Hans Küng’s book is probably the best and most significant single book on the correlated subjects of the Evolution/ Philosophy/ Theology to date.

Like no other author he has “analyzed” and “synthesized” the fields of Cosmology/Philosophy/Theology as pertaining to evolution. He is historically versed like no one I know of the significant thinkers of all these fields that relate critically to the continued updating of modern consciousness, precisely what Vatican II called for in “Gaudium et spes,” Intro. #5, § 4. On the pantheon list of writers of the Eco-Christian Story, Hans Küng deserves to be at the top.

Instinct, Intuition, Intelligence and Accountability

We live in a quantum-electric universe equipped with cortical brains that deal in quantum-electric terms. Instincts are associated with hard-wiring in the ancient avian-reptilian brain, whereas, intuitions are associated with soft-wiring of the cortical brain. Hard-wiring is linear, hot-responsive, which means reactions to stimuli are direct, immediate, unvarying and uncompromising, as in flight-fight response and sexual impulse. Soft-wiring in the cortical brain is flexible in response because it is parallel-wired with multiple circuits that draw upon many currents of experience in making decisions. Accountability is a function of intelligence, of intuitional faith/reason processing, based on best evidence.

The intuitional processing of faith and reason is soft-wired, that is, the outcome of decisions is based on nuanced currents of prior experience. Decisions and outcomes are

no less decisive and incisive than reflex hard-wired responses, but, they are better informed to deal with non-linear complexities of immediate circumstances — not so with fixed, predictable, iterative responses of instinctive hard-wiring.

The difference between dogmatic fixation in hierarchical, male-absolutist culture and faith/reason openness is the difference of hard-wired reflex-instinct and soft-wired reflective intuition. Religion is about faith/reason processing, i.e., engaging the cortical brain, and overriding the avian-reptilian instincts. As long as male-absolutist religions impose hard-wired fixations on females and other organic life, rationality and faith will continue to be overreached and violated.

Dominion theology, male-characterized and uncompromising, is a reflex iteration of hard-wired instinct, more animal-like than human. Culture and nature are radically bedeviled and compromised by institutional hard-wiring and cannot long be endured. The wheel of culture is forward turning not backward; cultural sanction of prostitution of nature and women, as in the past, can no longer be abided.

Humankind has the soft-wiring circuitry to circumvent the hard-wired irrationality of instincts; it needs to be engaged intentionally. Avian-reptilian brain instincts tend to lock on to dominion-culture, as advanced in the Councils of Trent and Vatican I, whereas, the cortical brain is open to liberation as heralded by the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II advances the mutuality of faith and reason, and forward looking currents of open vision; notwithstanding pressures to return to the past, the good sense of Vatican II will have its day.

I stand accused.

In seeking publication (ORBIS Books, Maryknoll, NY) of the manuscript “GREEN RELIGION, Inside the Cultural Spectrum,” I was rejected for meaning to “start over again the entire process of conceptualizing Christianity.” If changing from the static-centrist worldview (SWV) to the evolutionary worldview (EWV) involves *starting over again the conceptualizing Christianity*, as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council, Constitution IV, *Gaudium et spes*, Introduction, #5, para 4, then, I am guilty as charged. If, however, the rejection implies that I discredit valid religious/ cultural insights advanced from the past, I deny the accusation.

I confess that I mean to change the trajectory of Judeo-Christian history from “instinctive” tendencies to “intuitional”, that is, toward Eucharistic Altruism. WORDS are the missiles that can change the trajectory from violence to wellbeing, but only if conceptualized to peaceful purposes of the commonweal.

I assert that religious/ cultural consciousness must adjust even as faith and reason, and the *requirements of love* change. Neither faith nor reason compels, much less, justifies, fixation in old-world misconceptions that are exposed by new world understandings. I submit that the crises of the times root in dogmatic fixations, in instinctive hard-wiring of static-centrist thinking, i.e., of top-down theology (dominion) and imperial/ feudal culture (compelling submission of the under-privileged to serve the privileged.)

Top-down dominion-theology yet promotes the schism of energy/ matter, soul/ body, and the violent politics of guilt and fear, as advanced in patriarchal history and the exploitation of nature and people. The schism of disconnection, i.e., of spirituality from materiality is destructive and dead-end.

Culturally, humankind and nature together suffer precipitous, mutual self-degradation except nature is respected as the Place of Divine Instance and the Sacrament Condition of humankind and organic life; faith/reason mutuality accommodates common destinies by way of symbiosis and Eucharistic Purpose engaged in forward thinking, not backward thinking as in fixation in dogma, cultured absolutism and scriptural literalism.

Redemption and salvation are by way of growth of new life consciousness in the organic tilth of misinformed and dying consciousness. Human intuition seeks wholeness beyond the fractured consciousness of instinctive violence. Church is *The Global People seeking wholeness — gentes quaerentes sanitatem*. The culture of faith/ reason together and of intuitions brought-forward is the Way forward.

The Accountable Theology of Faith/Reason.

The Publisher's raised objection to GREEN RELIGION and the Evolution Trilogies *that they change everything* is true — except — as to implying disregard for past religious culture.

I will set forth and specify “conceptual” changes I mean. Change is inherent in the mutual accountability of faith and reason as they continue to test each other. Change of thinking has evolved and continues evolving but institutions have failed to change commensurate with the mutual advances of faith/ reason. In accepting the advanced changes of faith and reason, the needed changes of institutions should be more obvious. Together, religion and government should facilitate living justified by faith and reason, not frustrate it by demands of privilege, alienation and resource exploitation.

Envisioning non-exclusive “christic mission” does not demean Christian religious valuation or Sacrament and Eucharist, but, exclusionist presumptions of male-instituted patriarchy do demean religious consciousness. The change I propose is to open Judeo-Christian culture from its violent instincts and misinformed perspectives to new insights of faith and reason brought forward intuitionally in common. The original fallacy of Scholastic Theology/ Philosophy underlying cultural violence, presumes the male (Adam) as primary (non-corruptible, superior) in the divine order of the creation-event, and female (Eve) as “secondary,” i.e., male-dependent (corruptible, inferior.)

Given historically documented pathways to communal wellbeing, the recognition of the essential mutuality of faith (female) and reason (male), each holding the other accountable, should be evident in intuitionally grounded wisdom. Culture based on literalist belief in the Creation/Fall mythos is clearly misinformed, and (perhaps less clearly) misguided, but misguided, nevertheless. Argued here is the thesis that the common cause of societal violence, the rape of women and nature through history, roots in the cultured alienation of women (faith) by impassioned, irrational (hard-wired)

males. Cultured belief in the Genesis/Fall Story still claims divine justification and imposes on public commonsense.

Critically challenged misunderstandings include: creationism vs. evolution; male superiority vs. female inferiority; theology presumed from the top-down vs. organic evolution/consciousness from the bottom-up; and the revelation of divinity “from within” vs. time-people-selective revelation. The artifice of arbitrarily self-revealed divinity is a human fiction. The concept of divinity-consciousness “ab intus”, from within, includes the unqualified instance and involvement of divinity in the within dynamic of the expanding universe and consciousness.

Divine Instance, infinitely and efficiently graces transformational necessity, including the ascendancy of consciousness beyond natural symbiosis to the insight of intentional Eucharistic Altruism. The continuity and mutuality of salvation and redemption is a day-by-day process of fidelity to “the requirements of love,” i.e., to the necessity of faith holding reason accountable, and reason holding faith accountable — the essential meaning of female/male mutuality.

Sacrament, nature-based and grace-conferring, belongs equally to female/ male persons, and to female/ male characterization together distinguishing the “withinness” of every person. The distinction of mutuality extends to individual and personal characterization (complementarity) in the here-and-now circumstances defining potentials and limitations (subsidiarity.)

The hallowed Christian tradition of Trinitarian Godhead-consciousness opens to deeper and more personal understanding by way of Divine Instance operating in the unified realms of physical dynamics (quantum-electric intension) and physiological/ psychological dynamics (self-reflective intention), i.e., the ascendancy of Trimorphic Resonance in the physical/psychical processing of trustful communication (faith), informed consciousness (hope), and committed conscience (love).

The global dynamic of Trimorphic Resonance can accommodate religions and cultures in their quest of common-ground understandings beyond lethal internecine violence — change we all long for in the deep-heart hopefulness of Godlikeness seeking revelation from within; humankind is nature’s interlocutor with divinity and organic life. The trustfulness of organic nature and evolving consciousness gives wings to hope. Potentials are aired in discovery of and trust in deep nature’s intuitional wisdom.

“Beyond hard-wired Patriarchy”

If faith and reason grow together in female/male consciousness, it needs to be “concelebrated” in ritual Sacrament as a sign of divine/ human hypostasis. The celebration of Sacrament isn’t a guy thing, it’s about divine/ human covenant; it shouldn’t be an ego-event of male one-up-man-ship over females. Faith is the self-reflective inheritance of intuitional wisdom , evolved in the organic networking of intelligent design, and advanced by and sustained in cortical brain processing.

Inclusive Priesthood

Exclusionary clerical celibacy has come on bad times, aggravated by exposures of clerical sexual abuse and cover-up that have been going on in male hierarchical culture. The decline in numbers of priests and massive lay attrition are forcing hierarchy and laity alike to question the in-place male-exclusive paradigm of priesthood. The laity increasingly not only sees clericalism as irrelevant but as hurtful to morale and morality. The Church is “The People of God,” and the “gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Institutional Roman Catholicism however is less than the whole People under the present paradigm, and there is no guarantee it can survive except it corresponds with the sense of The People of God.

Issues confronting Church now are: can or should the exclusive male priesthood survive; and what changes can and should be made? I answer: male-exclusive, cultic priesthood cannot and should not survive; a change of paradigm must occur that is consistent and continuous with the evolving faith/reason paradigm of divine/ human hypostasis in which the Sacraments of life are “concelebrated” (by males and females together) in continuity with intuitional faith/reason of females and males.

On the issue of relevance and irrelevance: to be relevant means to be competent and informed in servicing the needs of the people. It is reasonable to observe that priesthood is relevant to the extent that it meets the needs of the people in the contexts of time and place, and it is irrelevant to the extent that it loses context of time and place and fails the needs of the people..

Roman Catholicism’s cultic priesthood has lost sense of time/place context because of its theological elaboration grounded in presumed male-superior hierarchy and primacy place in divine/ human relationship. Theological elaborations based on the more than 2000 year-old worldview have lost relevance in context of today’s worldview consciousness. Priesthood is in crisis because of its failure of mission, that is, to make relevant to the people their relatedness to one another in the organic context of the Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis. The failure of cultic priesthood is manifest in its complicit justification of the exploitation of nature by profiteering self-interest motives, i.e., feudal, colonial, and corporate capitalism, and the exclusion of women from equivalent standing with males. In the Sacrament of Natural Order it is absurd to deny and derogate the essential reality of female/male agency in the origin and maintenance of sustainable life. No aspect of organic life is male-exclusive, except in the hard-wired artifice of theological presumption.

Nature is the sustainable means of all life and the grace-conferring condition of human consciousness. Humankind belongs to nature, comes from nature and returns to nature. The demeaning of nature in any regard, demeans the human person. The demeaning of females by self-elective presumptions of male-priesthood radically alienates females from their rightful place and shreds the fabric of social/ cultural bonding.

The old order of cultic male priesthood is disintegrating precipitously at the present time. Cultic priesthood as is, is counter-intuitive and should not continue because it is

based on a schismatic, fictional paradigm of male super-arrogation. If male-exclusive priesthood is based on a fictional paradigm, is there an authentic (non-fictional) paradigm that can replace it? A new, authentic replacement-paradigm, consistent with female/male equivalency in the Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis, is immediately and universally accessible.

Faith/Reason: neither, superior nor inferior

The Creation/Fall Mythos in the Book of Genesis speaks to the ongoing need for redemption and salvation; in that regard, every community, every person regardless of age or sex, is an agent (subject) and agendum (object), both enabling community and enabled by community.

In community, every person is of equal personality by birth, in need, and in grace. It is therefore right and proper for female persons, in equal standing with males, to witness in “concelebration” the memorial events of life (Sacraments) common to all from birth to death. Life’s universal dynamics of nature and nurture implicate everyone in common ways and by common means; and everyone, as agent and agendum in vital processing, needs to receive and give uplift to one another. By the harmonized witness of female/male concelebration of Sacraments, all are reminded that each is grace to other, and each is repository of spiritual gifts received from ancestors to be passed on individually from one generation to the next. In the communal celebratory two-someness of female/male together, faith/ reason together, concelebrating Sacrament in community, is represented Trinitarian Godhead in human family/community.

Priesthood and parenthood together, as Sacrament of nature/ nurture, represent and are the spiritual/ material reality of Eucharist in process — what is divine/ human hypostasis uplifting life and consciousness.

Toward a New Paradigm: “CONCELEBRATING” Ritual Sacraments

The evolution of organic life involves the continuing processes of complexity and the enlargement of human potential by way spiritual/ material differentiation. The evolution of genetic complexity in the process of reproduction enables the expansion of opportunistic transformation within interdependent limits of organic life, above the (hard-wired) reflexes of physical /chemical intensionality to the open-ended intentionality of self-reflective, sensible community.

The sense and sensibility of self-reflective humanity, female/male, constitute the ground of religion and the con-celebratory capacity of the female/male characterized person. Paradigmatic Nature, in all matters physical and spiritual, grounds in the reality of the two sexes and the personal disposition of all persons as female/ male-characterized. Intuitional self-reflectivity is processed equivalently in the brains of females and males.

In woman and man, the human brain continuously deals with matters, sacred and profane, none of which is exclusive to woman or man, but which are authentically disposed by mutual fidelity to common interests of personal/ social wellbeing and sustainability. The concelebration of sacred remembrances (Sacraments) is equally

compelling for females and males, together committed to lives of service to each other and community, and to sustaining resources of other life in the organic interactions of web ecologies commonly essential to all life. The process of discerning wellbeing and of making morally justified decisions/ choices involve the faith/ reason processes of communication, consciousness and conscience.

Religious (moral) relationships that qualify the mutuality and complementarity of both sexes is a paradigm that envisions an inclusive priesthood that is more representative of the sacred dynamics of female/male mutuality/complementarity; female/ male concelebration of matters spiritual and physical better reflects the harmony of Godlike community.

Ritual Sacraments are participatory events in every one's life that call for concelebration. The Sacraments of nature (baptism, anointing, Eucharist) define nature's conferring graces in the order of Eucharistic Sacrament from birth (baptism) to death (anointing). Eucharist is the over-arching Sacrament of Nature.

The Sacraments of Nurture (reconciliation-confession, commitment-confirmation, and marriage-priesthood-covenant) are about the communal dynamics of mutual interaction, and communal authentication by way of the celebratory uplift of mutuality and complementarity. The Sacraments of Nurture impose equally on all the urgency to attain maturity and sense of social/ personal obligation in fidelity to continuing reconciliation, conscionable commitment and trust-obligations to family, community and nature. Priesthood, like the husband/ wife trust commitment, celebrates the bonded twoness of parents in the sacred process of producing and providing for soul/ body needs of newborns and everyone from birth to death — what is Eucharistic Altruism.

Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011.

1957 to 2011 Sylvester L. Steffen

In re: the EVOLUTION TRILOGIES and Faith/Reason Reconciliation

1956-1957: Crisis of Conscience: personal conscience vs. institutional expectation; discontinued studies for the priesthood with the Divine Word Missionaries, Techny, IL

Winter 1958: matriculated as special student preparatory to graduate studies with the Botany Department at Iowa State University with a research grant to study "Effects of Drying Method on the Germination of Corn"

1960 May: awarded MS degree in Plant Physiology, Iowa State University

Between the years 1960 – 1970:

Appointed Grand Knight, Knights of Columbus Council 1697, New Hampton, IA

President of St Mary Parish Council; President of St Mary School Board

Appointed Board Member of St John School of Religion, New Hampton, IA

Presided over discussions and decision in re the future of St Mary School and merger with St Joseph School

1974: "A Philosophy of Agri-Covenant" Religious/Ecological Statement to the National Catholic Rural Life Conference submitted to Fr. John McRaith, Director NCRLC (Future bishop, Covington, KY)

HARVESTALL Market Manual, "Managing Grain Electrically" 1974

Pope John Paul II comes to Iowa: arrangements by acting director of the NCRLC, Bishop Maurice Dingman, Des Moines Diocese (for contributing to fund the pope's coming to Iowa Steffen received the 13th numbered, hand-signed original commemorative portrait of John Paul II. (The portrait is now with the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters.)

Late 1970s: "philosophical" writings to daughters (students at ISU) copied to Bishop Dingman

Met with Bsp. Dingman and Fr Leonard Kayser (Director NCRLC) at Gateway Center, Ames, Iowa

Was asked to join NCRLC Staff with Charles Ryan, Joe Fitzgerald, Greg Cusack et al, under Bsp. Dingman

Bsp. Dingman suffered heart crises disablement. Wholesale changes made at the NCRLC

1982: Steffen physically disabled by osteoarthritis; focused on reading and writing on faith/reason issues

The most workable strategy was to respond intuitively and write randomly in prose/poem style without some preconceived outline; and over time to generally organize the wide-ranging topics under the faith/reason framework.

Collated and printed 100 poems, a copy of which was sent to Pope John Paul II

Self-published NEW GENESIS POEMS, G&R Publishing, Waverly, IA

1983: EARTHEOLOGY manuscript, "The Phenomenon of God"

1985: attended the *Theology of Land Conference* at St John University, sponsored by the NCRLC; discussed manuscript with some attendees (including Bishop Speltz) and was given a manuscript of Fr. Thomas Berry (The Dream of the Earth) to review.

2010 — GREEN RELIGION and "The Evolution Trilogies"

What is my objective, not just in GREEN RELIGION but in the Evolution Trilogies, the SECOND ENLIGHTENMENT Trilogy, the CONSCIOUS LIGHT Trilogy, and the JUSTIFIED LIVING Trilogy?

The objective of my writings, indeed, of my life work, is modest, not unlike what I think most people seek in their lives, i.e., to come to a satisfying purpose of life that is correct (consistent with religious/ scientific truths), practical and achievable. More specifically, to seek better informed understandings of the fundamental nature of life in order to mindfully affirm it and celebrate it, spiritually and secularly.

Admittedly, against the backdrop of cultural history this objective may seem to be “radical”, for two reasons, that natural science is its primary basis, and that it breaks from hyped faith conventions that covertly and overtly advance misrepresentations of reality. All life is ongoing (evolving) and radically grounded in nature, not institutional faith. The focus on the “primacy of nature” in updating faith/ reason understandings exposes fact errors of cultural history, which exposes unsettle fixed notions.

I submitted the book GREEN RELIGION to Orbis Books for possible publication. Chief Editor Wm. R Burrows, Ph.D, reviewed the book. The Board of Orbis Books decided not to publish it; the primary stated reason given was the radical change to religion I intended, and that it didn’t fit within the purview of Orbis Books’ publication mission. In response to the charge that I meant to change religious concepts, I replied, “Guilty as charged.” Dr. Burrows is no longer with Orbis Books but we continue to communicate. I have no regrets, no hurt feelings.

JUSTIFIED LIVING — Personal/ Communal Accountability

Before I present a quick overview of my writings and faith/ reason journey, let me summarize the conclusion I’ve come to: if one would live faithfully and true a trustworthy life, reason must be as rigorous in challenging faith as faith must be in challenging reason: the other side of St. Anselm’s “fides quaerens intellectum” is “intellectus quaerens fidem.” Only when people are equally faithful and true to reason and faith will religion and culture be true.

The POETREE TRILOGIES and the EVOLUTION TRILOGIES chronicle my personal enlightenment as I came to reconcile faith and reason in my life. The evolution of my enlightenment is revealed in my writing in the course of the past 54 years. My writings follow the intuitional time-table of inner inspiration, and no artifice other than inherited and developed intuition.

The SECOND ENLIGHTENMENT Trilogy

In the beginning was God, Word, Light, and Love. From Light all things are; all communication is word-expressed light. Light is the positive potential that opens negative darkness.

All order, lawfulness, is word-scripture of Love's continuity; Cosmic unity, continuity, and wholeness express (in PRIMARY SCRIPTURE) relational necessity. QUANTUM continuity is inherent to the cohesiveness of all relational sensitivity (RELIGION), and it establishes an inclusive order of hierarchy whose Good News ascendancy sensitizes all in the motive of Love. In relational inherency, the order of RELIGION & CIVILITY is advanced by and in the conscional unfolding of love's expectation—faith. Faith's rationality is the Primacy root of conscience. All creation is *involved becoming*, by way of Second Comings, Second Enlightenment. Every Newborn is Christ light of Second Coming.

The CONSCIOUS LIGHT Trilogy

Except for trustful word, informed light, and committed love, there is no faith, no hope, no continuity of purpose. The POSSIBLE JOURNEY of Word, Light and Love is enabled in the "constant of trust", Einstein's C^2 . The "thought-through" fullness of cosmic purpose advances in the GLOBAL THINKING COMMUNITY by way of intuitional reflectivity, objectivity and subjectivity. GREEN RELIGION is the florescence of self-reflectivity in organic word-light-love.

The JUSTIFIED LIVING Trilogy

Even with the instance of Light spreading from within, darkness holds a presence. That which illumines darkness is PREVISION which is the PROVISION-means of expanding light revitalizing "Summary Prevision." What begins in word-light-love harmony sustains the POETREE source of all greening and beauty of life's organic harmony. POETREE WORLDVIEW retains and sustains the continuity of Cosmic Being/ Becoming in Whom is all, was all and will be all.

The evolution of personal consciousness is an iteration of Christic consciousness in the long journey of cosmic evolution; it is Christic consciousness, Eucharistic Altruism, by which redemption and salvation are made sustainable. In the Trimorphic Resonance of Cosmic Harmony we are yet, in the present time, of the Original Continuity of Word-Light-Love, the Divine/ Human Hypostasis.

Moral Imagination: the divine & the human — two faces of the same reality

What is the difference between evolutionary symbiosis and Eucharistic altruism? The difference is moral imagination.

The driver of organic symbiosis has been the "within" tensions of the "survival of the fittest" instincts and with the subsuming of the less fit by the more fit. Internal intensional forces of natural physics put competing choices to work in sorting out sustainable options. That is the way it's been with competing organisms through history. Sustainable life is both the benefactor and beneficiary of symbiotic accommodation, specifically, in the matter of the evolution of DNA and the complex development of self-reflective consciousness.

The life and teaching of Jesus heralded a whole new insight into symbiotic consciousness; the new dimension of “mindfulness.” Mindfulness is in awareness of symbiotic opportunity, not just in the slow way of quantum-electric necessity, but in the possibilities of Godlike imagination, as in the possibilities of compassion and taking on the burdens and hurts of others. Eucharistic Altruism, as lived and taught by Jesus, is a quantum-leap in Godly consciousness.

Godlikeness challenges self-reflection; it is the mindfulness of the Cosmic Christ present to every generation, whose altruistic intentions challenge every person, every place and in every time. Equally and individually, we are about potential and realization. Moral imagination is the Tree of Vitality fruited in God’s Word — all humanity is the Corpus and the ever-greening Cross.

Life in the present is future-focused and directed beyond dominion deadness. Moral imagination is aware that presently live populations are the bridge of expectation and sustainability into the future. Present populations are not fated to repeat past mistakes. Eucharistic Altruism requires a moral sense of prevision that commits to provision by way of securing the symbiotic means of life (environment and ecology) for generations to come. Altruism and imagination are mutually co-essential to the fulfilled life and to eco-social survival.

In the expectation of wellbeing we are charged not just to receive but to be the “resurrection and the life.” It is the reciprocal nature of life to be both benefactor and beneficiary. Christic Altruism means being not just the beneficiary of grace but the benefactor of grace; in the reciprocal manner of beneficiary/ benefactor, symbiotic nature works, but even more so, Eucharistic grace works. Fulfillment in the grace of the Cosmic Christ means that we become grace of common uplift. Our prayers should be less about receiving than giving. It is through mindfulness that we awake to the reciprocity of giving/ receiving. Like Jesus, our mindfulness should be occupied with the giving opportunities afforded us. The prayer on our lips should be, “Lord, open me to the opportunity of giving. Open me to the word that opens others.”

Divinity vs. Empire

It is hard to conceive any two more contrasting and incompatible realities than God-likeness and empire-likeness. This is especially so for Christianity which makes claim to represent the person and teaching of Jesus, the Christ. And yet, Roman Imperialism has succeeded in co-opting Christian church by subsuming it under imperial trappings.

In his life-work and in his death Jesus stood against Temple and Empire, which collaborated in self-interest to destroy him because they feared the threat he was to them.

Twenty centuries later, how have competitive empire and divinity fared in religious/ political culture? Empire has succeeded in subsuming Christianity to its politics and ethics more than to the good news of Jesus. Institutional Christian denominations to this day, especially Roman Catholicism, are captured by imperial culture, and the Jesus Story has accommodated the schemes and scams of Empire and Temple.

Really, how different are today's church hierarchy from Temple hierarchy of Jesus' time? In Jesus' time the Scribes and Pharisees had the boldness to claim they understood the light of religion when in truth they didn't. How less self-deceived are modern hierarchy? probably, not much less.

In some ways church hierarchy is even more self-deceived today than in Jesus' time for it has the advantage of experience and years to learn and know better. Church dogma and politics overreach people in dramatically like ways. Unenlightened hierarchy still alienates women from Eucharist belonging to them on equal cosmic terms as to men. All are equally implicated in Eucharistic mission, Eucharistic Sacrament. All belong equally to the same reality, notwithstanding the exclusionary hype of male-theatre to the contrary. All humankind is sorely burdened by the culture of distrust.

“Males Only Need Apply”

Male-only priesthood cultures schizophrenia and denies the essential mutuality of human sexual characterization; natural reality, not male-only theatre, is authentic Sacrament. Males and females are equally life's beneficiaries and life's benefactors. And yet, when it comes to the ritual performance of Sacrament, the Roman Catholic Hierarchy say : “Males only need apply.” Formally and officially, females are excluded. What sense does that make? Female/ male humanity is in divine likeness. The aberration of male exclusivity and claim of competence in ritual Sacrament flies in the face of nature and divinity.

If we choose to deny the personal otherness of the female/ male person, we demean our individual personalities. By divine characterization, every person possesses female/ male characteristics — no two persons are the same — sexual difference is no moral defect. Religious identity is embattled because we are unsettled in our sexual identity. Cultured alienation deepens the schism. Cultural alienation disgraces the female person and ignores the human/ divine understanding of female/ male equivalency in the self-identity of every person.

Thomas Aquinas' End-of-Life Epiphany

<http://www.ascensionandsaintagnes.org/html/sermons/LY2006/06-02-26-lastsundayinepiphany.htm#top> What is most notable, in the end-of-life years of the Great Doctor of the Church, St Thomas Aquinas, was his silence about his writings and his refusal to write any more. This change of life was so unlike his prior life that it is obvious he came to an epiphany that eclipsed his body of writing. Perhaps he came to have serious reservations about the things he wrote (which he called “straw”.) The radical alienation of woman, for example, from her rightful and equal role in the order of nature and in Church is nothing short of implying a “culture of radical distrust.”
http://www.womenpriests.org/theology/aqui_inf.asp

The radical culture of distrust persists to this day and is at the root of the alienation of women from Church, the failing credibility of institutional Catholicism, and the theologically justified exploitation of nature. Thomas Aquinas established in his *Summa*

Theologica the rationale of males (Adam) being primary in the order of creation and females “secondary.” <http://ncronline.org/blogs/peace-pulpit/not-time-give>

The elaboration of literal belief in Adam-rib-creation of Eve is a metaphor used to state first creation of Adam and the dependent creation of Eve. In the order of spirituality males are presumed more Godlike. The “secondary” relationship of females identifies them as “inferior”, more corruptible, as illustrated by the temptation of Satan, her giving in, and Adam corrupted at her invitation. If the consequences of literal belief were not so tragic, this Story would be laughable on its face in light of modern knowledge.

Thomas Aquinas, in the end, and to his credit, seems by his epiphany to have come to a whole new understanding of the divine/human relationship, which made all his other writings seem to him to be so much “straw.” The new and over-ridingly important insight he came to was his sense of Eucharist Altruism and the instance of divinity at-one-ment in the order of nature and consciousness.

” St Thomas would want us to reflect that as often as we receive the Holy Eucharist the life we receive is the same, resurrected life of Jesus and the same life he gave back to Lazarus. This resurrected life is also new life for each of us as often as we believe in him and attempt to find it in the sick, suffering, deceased and needy. It also gives us power to have more confidence in him. It allows us to be patience and trust in Jesus as Martha and Mary did. This powerful new life can also assure us of the tremendous friendship that God extends to each of us coming in such a personal and intimate manner and ever so frequently. Lastly, this new life will cure us spiritually and bodily according to the holy will of God. Every day can be a joyous Easter Sunday with the resurrection of Jesus. It becomes our very own to experience daily if we are believers and lovers of the Eucharist: “Sing, my tongue, the Savior’s glory, of His flesh, the mystery sing!” <http://www.doctorofthecatholicchurch.com/T.html>