

## Ecology/ Economy/ Eucharist

“It is well for the evolutionary biologist (cosmologist) to ask what forces of cosmic intension and intention have brought about the self-reflective mind of rationality, fidelity and purpose. The answer is the interactive processes of ecology, economy and Eucharist. It is well for the social scientist (philosopher) to ask what is the cohesive power that vitalizes social health, whether in the nuclear family, or global; the answer is the harmony of ecology, economy and Eucharist. It is well for the religious ethicist (theologian) to ask what spirituality has led to the moral bonding of mutuality, complementarity, and subsidiarity; the answer is the same, the resonance of the same agencies, ecology, economy and Eucharist. All vitality is in the context of these whence arises the conscionable continuity, of the spiritual / material, of soul / body, of energy / matter.

“We can think of Earth as cocooned in a membrane that envelopes and vitalizes the substances of Earth’s surface and the atmosphere above. The *membrane* is alive because of the gaseous exchange that occurs between the atmosphere and Earth substances — soil and water. Water is the conscious medium knitting together the fabric of the membrane. Earth’s enveloping membrane is an interwoven unity of interdependent life systems (ecology) and the sustainable dynamic (economy) that traffics within the membrane. Consciousness engages the *sea of infinite substance*. Together, ecology (visible sign) and economy (energetic grace) produce Eucharistic consciousness. Joined ecology, economy and Eucharist are the unity of the *naturalis sacramentum ordinis*.

“By ecology is meant Earth-life’s webs of evolutionary diversification, which enable symbiotic purpose to be consciously open to new discovery and new potential. By economy is meant nature’s evolutionary parsimony, which proves and preserves liaisons of energy / substance that are sustained in purposeful outcomes. By Eucharist is meant the transformation of intentional relationship, which opts the symbiotic evolution of energy / substance — the conscionable purpose of self-fulfillment and necessary diversification.

“These three interwoven themes, ecology, economy, and Eucharist are dynamics of spiritual / physical edification affected in/by the processing of cosmic communication, consciousness and conscience. And, as themes of professional focus and natural necessity, they require the interdisciplinary reconciliation of good faith dialog, informed awareness and discerning judgment. By the intentional resonance of interdisciplinary rationality (cosmology, philosophy and theology), ecology, economy and Eucharist are coincidentally nurtured and made to *conspire* with each other in such a way as to enable the communal purpose and outcome of civility—harmonized faith, hope and love; their *trimorphic resonance* raises social consciousness and sustains symbiotic tranquility.

“Religion that acts arrogantly and dismissively toward nature spurns its own consciousness and closes doors to open virtue. Ecology is our entrance and bond to the cosmos. Because of evolved ecology we have existence, rationality, and because of ecological rationality we enjoy self-reflectivity. Eucharist is the functional subtlety of ecological economics. Nature is at the same time, profligate and parsimonious. She is profligate in accessing soul / body to the open potentials of diversified life, and she is parsimonious in holding network life (us, in DNA sequencing) accountable to the bounds of natural economics. When we trash nature, we bankrupt ourselves. When we waste materiality we destroy the coinage of consciousness and the vitality of personal economics. We need to be parsimonious about that which nature is parsimonious, but we do not need to be tight-minded about what nature is open-minded. Mind / body duality is a libertine presumption that gainsays quantum-relativity; mind

/ body identity is a functional reality about which there is no exception, for, all matter has its proper spirituality capable of substance transformation.

“By the resonance of mind / body intention, human beings may personally and collectively direct their behavior in ways that open to the future and that apply correctives to keep forward the movement of the arrow of time in the direction of communal, purposeful well-being. In continuity with deep cosmology, deep metaphysics and deep theology, Second Enlightenment consciousness deals with the moral necessity of ecology, economy and Eucharist. By “deep” is meant *far back* into cosmic history, not something esoteric, beyond the grasp of “normal” people and lacking general interest. Societal conversion, social conscience and relational wholeness are not possible except in the real world of intentional word / work, and except in the harmony of purposeful outcomes.

“It is in the context of Earth’s membrane (noosphere) that the process of human encounter, of self-reflective rationality takes place. Consciousness is passionate ascendancy that drives evolutionary transformation. The ascent of consciousness is the agonizing way by which horizontal relationships hold together and achieve destiny and fulfillment — the way of the cross.

“The *Sacrament of God-Present* and vital sustainability are one and the same, namely, the Trinitarian dynamic of ecology, economy and Eucharist. Life’s rationality, life’s spirituality and life’s sanctity are energetically one. The realms of the religious and the secular are cosmically, realistically, inseparable. Their division is a schism of human wrongdoing, the product of ignorance, arrogance and obsession. In fidelity to natural sacrament, to natural relationships, humans live with religious / civil authenticity. Civil and religious evolution is necessarily coincident. Eucharist is the transformational consciousness of evolved vitality, the self-reflective consciousness of divinity inspiring all creation but especially humankind. The celebration of Sacrament is a compelling dimension of cosmic consciousness, of passage through life.

“Habits of ignorance — laziness of mind, mindlessness — violate intelligence, reason; group adherence to blind belief in mindsets that are fixed by habits of mindlessness are sins of ignorance and arrogance — institutional sins. Institutional sin violates person and community, and their cumulative consequences grow to catastrophic proportions. In order to remain true to their public service calling, institutions need to confront and update their means and mission.

“The neglect of institutions to update and convert from their inauthenticity poisons their relationship with people, and the people are made victims of their demonic passion for self-serving. Institutional ignorance and arrogance are lions on the loose — traders in the consumerist temples of commerce — inflicting havoc on global societies. The God of cosmic conscience is more believable than the gods of consumerism. The people need to hold institutions accountable for misdirection and wrongdoing. Greed, dominion and waste are demonic coins of sacrilege. *Caveat emptor!*

[From: Sylvester L. Steffen, **RELIGION & CIVILITY**, © 2004, pp 101-103]