

The Book **GREEN Religion** — Previewed

GREEN Religion, Inside the Cultural Spectrum is book three of THE CONSCIOUS LIGHT TRILOGY — which is a practicum based on the rationale developed in “The Second Enlightenment Trilogy”.

The **Conscious LIGHT** Trilogy:

The POSSIBLE JOURNEY, Uncompromised Trust

WHAT SELF-DONATION IS: kenosis, Eucharist and Green Religion

GREEN Religion, Inside the Cultural Spectrum

The first two books of **The Conscious LIGHT Trilogy** are handbooks to be used in group study and faith-sharing. An “analysis” of faith in light of the times underlies all themes. The arrived “syntheses” reconcile postmodern consciousness with quantum science and updated theology.

Book three provides depth analyses of scientific/ theological back-grounding by which worldview and religion are updated in context of each other. A reconciliation of science and religion, of reason and faith, is intended and enabled.

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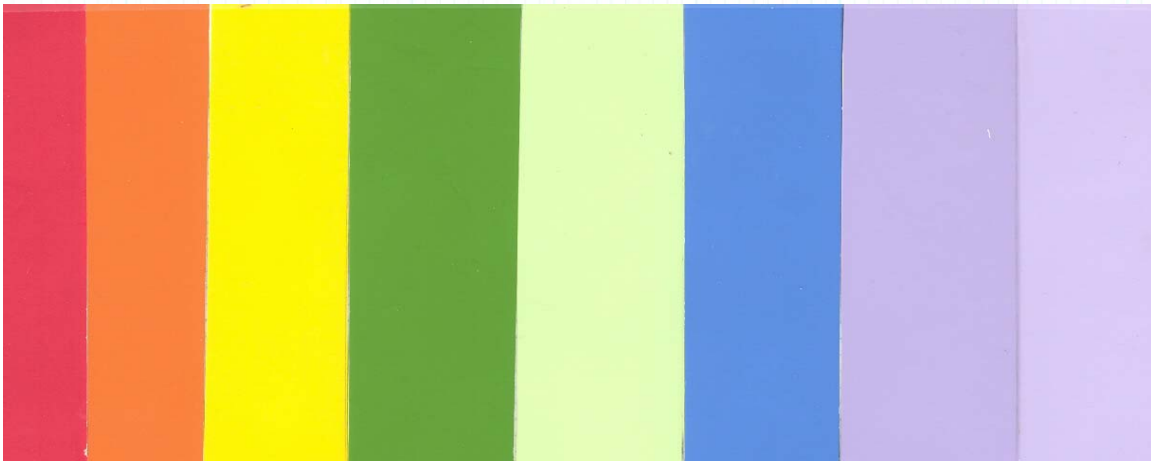
Consciousness is perpetually engaged in dialog with self, culture, nature and God. By its perpetual *interviewing*, consciousness enables perpetual self-renewing. Consciousness knows how to make something out of newness — not always true of institutions. Institutional Roman Catholicism, for example, forty years after Vatican II, is stymied in chaos by its own fixity in centrism/ staticism.

Vatican I believers and Vatican II believers are polarized against each other for being unable to accommodate their pronounced difference of ecclesiology/ theology. The chaos of intra-communal stubbornness frustrates sense and sensitivity. The parties need to know that out-of-control chaos leads to the *super-novae* event of explosion and implosion.

Self-reflective consciousness, directed by conscience, responds actively to new wisdom and enters into symbiotic collaboration. Decision and action are required if the edification of newness is to happen and descent into chaotic disintegration avoided. Church’s self-alienation from the People and disconnection from the *Naturalis Sacramentum Ordinis* (the Sacrament of Natural Order) are edging Church toward a *super-novae* event. **GREEN Religion** can help us grow out of chaotic descent.

GREEN

Religion



Inside the Cultural Spectrum

Sylvester L. Steffen

INTRODUCTION

The Genesis Creation Story has God creating the universe and all life in Seven Days. We are individually God's ongoing creation, seven days a week. It is good to reflect each day of the week how we credit God's creation, how we credit our inheritance and ourselves.

The book structure corresponds to seven-day-creation with day-to-day readings that put us in touch with all that affects us and with how we affect others. We find in natural order the intelligence and wisdom of divinity, a symbiotic order we do well to know and emulate.

This book is about fidelity to intelligence/ wisdom, about where we have strayed, about the consequences of infidelity, and what we need to do to return to fidelity and live in harmony with ourselves, nature and God.

The Story is never ending. Our journey continues the journey of all who have gone before us and we are the lead into the journey for those who come after us. Take seriously the opportunity of fidelity to intelligence/ wisdom. It leaves a lasting legacy — like no other.

How to read the book

Dear Reader:

If you are like the most of us you probably have a multi-faceted worldview based on one set of understandings that controls your spiritual (religious) life and one set that operates in your material (secular) life.

We are cultured to live in separate realms of consciousness, one spiritual, one material. When we go to church we are occupied with a set of principles different than we use in our work-a-day world, whether we are farmers, lawyers, teachers, laborers, whatever.

However, awareness of science, economics, and perhaps more than the others, of environmental/ ecological degradation are challenging the two-world consciousness by which we live.

This book hopes to bring some clarity to conflicts of worldview most of us have; conflicted culture contributes to the inner conflicts that we harbor individually and impose on each other and on nature.

Something so profoundly entrenched in our psyche as worldview doesn't easily change. A reading of this book isn't likely to bring about a sudden change. However, occupying ourselves in an ongoing way with the ideas offered here may over time have an effect of lighting unlighted corners of uncertainty. So the book's content is organized not so much to blind as with a flood light but to connect intuitions with dots of starlight.

The book is arranged in seven sections to correspond with the seven days of the week. May I suggest reading something daily from the section of the book corresponding to the day of the week? For example,

on Monday, day one of the week, read from section one, OVERVIEW, on Tuesday read from section two, etc; come Sunday, read from section seven, PERSONAL RETROSPECTIVE. For when all is said and done, each of our lives is very much the same in terms of world worries that confront us and of realities from which we arise and to which we are obliged.

I've spent more years in school than I remember and I've studied many different subject matters. I developed a learning technique I still use, even in reading a book. First I preview the book, read its table of contents, its preface, introduction, forward, then, I read the conclusion, the afterward, etc. From the outset I want to have a sense of the whole book and the author's wrap-up. Then I proceed to read the book.

While reading I put my previewed sense of the book in context with the author's development. I review and adjust my preview as I read. When I'm finished I focus on the conclusions and values that stand out, acquiring them in my consciousness and making them accessible for further reference. The importance of repeat-reviewing can hardly be exaggerated if one wants to "own" the material and be able to access new learning that serves one's own conscious pro-vision.

A much overlooked process underlying consciousness is the co-working of faith and reason, grace and nature. Faith and reason are cut of common cloth. To question which comes before the other, faith or reason is like asking which comes first, the egg or the hen. Consciousness is continuous spiritual processing, previewing, reviewing and pro-viewing.

Suggested here is a way of looking at consciousness, namely, as occupied in the processes of previewing, reviewing and pro-viewing. The three-form outcomes of these are prevision, revision and provision, which process together by way of communication, consciousness and conscience — what is the process of rationality, the edification of faith and the acquisition of wisdom.

The practical sense of this is that in real world terms **prevision** means to rightly anticipate need; **revision** means to accommodate needs by using resources at hand; and **provision** manages resource usage in ways that accommodate in an equitable manner for all those in need, and preserves FOR ALL the resource-base.

If you were to ask me how to begin this book, I would suggest: first read the **Introduction, Foreword, Retrospective**, and after that, the other sections in the order they come. In fact, I've arranged the preview to let you do just that. It may require more than one reading. In fact, you may want to discuss with others the challenges that are presented here. I hope so.

How the books inform each other

The gestation of these books has been ongoing in me for more than fifty years. Their conception originated in my sense of the hurtful separation of faith and reason as advanced by proponents of conflict between religion and science. I set out to expose what to me is a fraud that science and religion are in conflict. The books chronicle historically my "coming to the light". The labor has been a lifetime "groaning".

My published works (online at www.authorhouse.com) tell the story of my understandings as they came together. The products of my enlightenment story are the six books of the WORD/LIGHT trilogies what are, the *Second Enlightenment* trilogy and the *Conscious Light* trilogy.

The Second Enlightenment Trilogy

The first book PRIMARY SCRIPTURE, Cosmic Religion's First Lessons" presents Natural Law as its starting principle, and the evolving cosmos as first scripture and continuing scripture, the place of contact with divinity. We are hearers of the word and writers of scriptures.

The second book QUANTUM RELIGION, the Good News of Rising Consciousness" sees reason, faith and purpose as the dynamics of intelligent design in the life which we inherit. The "trinity" of reason/ faith/ purpose is a dynamic that characterizes the vital processes of symbiosis, the way of reflecting Godlikeness.

The third book RELIGION & CIVILITY, the Primacy of Conscience" is a historical retrospective on how religion and culture have co-evolved in rational and irrational ways, and how we inherit the conflicts of irreligion and incivility.

The Conscious Light Trilogy

The first book THE POSSIBLE JOURNEY, Uncompromised Trust" begins with the fresh insights of Vatican II, of evolution, and insights how faith and reason have been and continue to be breached by inauthentic culture. Distrust blights all culture. The book is designed for and intended to facilitate study and faith-sharing in the matters of the conflicted inheritance we own.

The second book WHAT SELF-DONATION IS, kenosis, Eucharist and Green Religion" is organized for group faith-sharing discussion. It is structured for Lenten faith-sharing and it connects traditional rites and rituals, Sacraments, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Mysteries of the Rosary and Stations of the Cross in ways that enlighten cosmic connections.

The third book GREEN RELIGION inside the Cultural Spectrum" goes more in depth into updated theological and scientific insights that go beyond those of the other five books. GREEN RELIGION is meant to be used in two ways, for daily reading and meditation, and as a resource for use in group study and faith-sharing.

FOREWORD

How Green is RELIGION!?

The *cultural spectrum* is cosmic energy, the vitality of common social edification, substantiated and empowered in/ by wave-lengths of the electromagnetic spectrum, namely, wave-lengths of infrared, visible light, radio, and broad-band waves, which energize communication/ consciousness/ conscience, the "processes of reason". Substance and soul, working and thinking, are qualified by the wave/ particle physics of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Self-reflective consciousness is capable of right reason and of choosing relationships that serve wellbeing. Informing right reason and

the mindful choosing of informed understandings as to worldview and wellbeing, for example, are what reason and religion are about.

It is a socially beneficial experience of culture that the sharing of faith/ knowledge serves wellbeing, personal and social, what is the authentic sense and basis of essential, universal religion and societal harmony. Faith-sharing is about expanding and extending understandings of self, family, community, Earth and Cosmos in interests of wellbeing.

RELIGION is *relationship*, informed and accountable:

R is for Relationship

E is for Ecology/ Economy/ Eucharist

L is for Love — commitment

I is for Intelligence — informed

G is for Gift, self-donation

I is for Intentional — mindful

O is for Organic/ Outcome (means/end)

N is for Nature/ Nurture, divine/ human hypostasis

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Monday: OVERVIEW: “Faith supposes Reason” — universal wisdom

Tuesday: INTERVIEW: Catechesis as Communication—faith formation

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Friday: WORLDVIEW: Earth-Cosmic Unity — divine/ human hypostasis

Saturday: REVIEW: Sabbath and Jubilee — rest and restoration

Sunday: RETROSPECTIVE: Innocence & Altruism — a child shall lead

RETROSPECTIVE

A Modern Iteration of the Crusades

One thousand years ago, Roman Catholic Europe was beginning its wars of Crusades against Islamic Middle East. The wars of Crusades dragged on for several hundreds of years, wasting Europe and the Middle East alike.

America is revisiting the Christian/ Islam tragedy with certainly far greater global wasting. There is no military solution to violence, in the Middle East or anywhere. There is no solution, resolution, until there is a “religious” recognition. **THE PROBLEM IS RELIGION.** Religion is a problem for and within Islam, for and within Christianity. Religion is a problem between Christianity and Islam. Religions are about common, moral relationships and the will of symbiotic accommodation.

ONLY A RELIGIOUS RECONCILIATION CAN BRING ABOUT A POLITICAL, MILITARY RESOLUTION. The hope for a sustainable eco-social future is for peoples to come to a universally conscious morality.

We are one humanity. The families of the world are one family, children of one God. All are from the one and same cosmos, universal in process and consciousness. We are divided only because of individual, social, self-serving, dissembling and willfulness. The religious cultures of alienation, of arrogation, are fraudulent and socially destructive, to themselves and to world peoples.

The waging of peace is the conscionable obligation of all religions, of all churches, mosques, synagogues, temples. The work of reconciliation belongs to all religions, to all people. Politicians and fighters, people on all sides need to turn to their religions and hold them accountable to stop fomenting wars of ideology — in God's Name.

A Cautionary Tale: Knights Templar & the Crusades

The Knights Templar was the pope's army, which fought the wars of the Crusades. The Crusades episode in history is with profound repercussions now to nations global and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Knights Templar was a military religious Order following the Rule of St. Benedict. The Order was founded in the Holy Land in 1119 and it was suppressed by the Council of Vienne in 1312. The Order had ecclesiastical rights and jurisdictional privileges by the commission of popes and kings. The mandate of the Knights was to facilitate the spread of the Christianity by prosecuting the Crusades, wresting the Holy Lands from Islam and securing the holy sites.

The Knights took orders directly from popes to whom alone they were accountable. The military might of the kingdoms was effectively put in the hands of the popes. Within 200 years, however, serious conflicts arose between the papacy and kings. Under French initiative, the morality and fidelity of the Knights were challenged and the Order was suppressed for reasons of alleged sexual deviancy and heresy. The Knights had become an enormous economic and political problem for the kingdoms.

What the Crusades accomplished is tragic. A bitter and lasting "accomplishment" is the schism between Eastern Christianity and the Church of Rome. It should come as no surprise that eastern Christianity distrusts Rome until now for the havoc it instigated. In the short term the Crusades succeeded in taking control of the Holy Land. But control was short lived. Islam not only recovered the Holy Lands but pushed back into Europe. Christian and Islamic relations remain toxic ever since. The Knights and the Crusades are no credit to Christianity, to civilization; to the contrary, there is need to call into question the culture of dominion theology/ politics that drove (drives) religious militancy.

The theology and politics of dominion fly in the face of common sense, the Christian Gospel and mandate. Modern consciousness of the global circumstance, in the light of history, should realize that much reconciliation is needed and must happen before Christianity can put its violent and socially frustrating sins behind it.

The history of the Crusades lays bare the bankruptcy of violence and dominion as public policy. We of the Christian West are the inheritors and progenitors of violent Roman History. The turmoil of the

Middle East and of the globe (!) has always been and is about sibling rivalry for the inheritance of the Land of Promise. American “interest” in the Middle East for the present is the “Sand of Promise—OIL”.

All people of the world are “relatives”, family, and are obliged to the common effort of letting peace break out not just in the Family of Abraham but in the global family. Life's possibilities are being destroyed by the machinery of war! By the mentality of war!

References:

Malcolm Barber, “The Trial of the Templars”, 2003, The Folio Society, London. Copyright © Cambridge University Press 1978

Steven Runciman, “A History of the Crusades”, 1994, The Folio Society, London. Copyright © Cambridge University Press 1951

Female Conscience

Contrasting violence and greed is work of feminine conscience. 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 conscience. The feminine conscience is a divine, mothering instinct, unique to the female person; something males understand only imperfectly.

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 John Paul II (perhaps inadvertently and not intentionally) acknowledged the male defect of ordination as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church and clerical lack of competence to “ordain” women.

Because institutional Catholicism is cultured in male sexism, the exclusivist male hierarchy does in fact lack competence in “ordering” women. When Pope Benedict XVI observed that women must be given room to 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 the coercion of male violence. Women can do better than contort intuition to model the unenlightened, exclusionary male.

Female conscience is sensitively different than male. Females come to it in personally original ways. As nurturer, female conscience is inclined naturally to be more “green” than male. I think no pope is likely to be so rash and irrational as to excommunicate women en masse for the conscionable work of forming, informing and reforming of faith.

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 field of need. It can be expected that communities will

more and more seek out female priests to serve—precisely because of the demonstrated incompetence of male clerics.

I REALLY EXPECT AND HOPE TO SEE IN MY LIFETIME women moving ahead on their own initiative as to the roles they need to assume within the Church and not being frightened off by the cultured wizardry of males. Only by so doing will their voices acquire an equal and necessary standing to bring healing to Church — to civilizations.

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

“A child shall lead them” Is 11-6

Only a child has the clarity of innocence to assess the big issues and only a child has the clarity of altruism in right response to big issues; only adult perseverance in innocence and altruism can resolve them.

The sophisticated of the world lose the sense of innocence and altruism and succeed in frustrating both. The person who endures in her/his lifetime in the clarity of innocence and altruism becomes for her/his generation the rejected prophet. My life has been a pursuit of grand goals and not wanting for rejection by worldly wisdom. And that's ok for I know that ultimately truth has its way. Our times continue to reject truth; the agony of truth playing out is happening now.

Religion and science have from my earliest consciousness been the joys of my life but also the frustration of my life. Even now, religion largely rejects evolution and science largely rejects religion. Luther's revolt against religious corruption and Catholic religion's counter-action against him were at a basic level about conflicts over faith and reason. The crises of our time relate directly to the schism of faith and reason, which poses a cultural dilemma and an awareness of conflict loaded with global tragedy.

Since childhood I've felt duty-bound to confront and reconcile my own conflicts with religion/ science, faith/ reason. Effort to reconcile them has been self-fulfilling and satisfying to me even if it doesn't in my lifetime succeed in a bigger way. Reconciliation, if it is to happen, will happen by the coalescing of the religious understanding of Eucharist and the understanding of Evolution, for each is universal means/ end to the other.

We are personally Eucharist to one another; we are transformed by and in the personal/ social experience of coming together. Coming together requires mindfulness, the will to engage reason's enlightenment and fidelity to faith's formation (communication), hope's in-formation (consciousness), and love's re-formation (conscience).

The Sacrament of Life

I plead here for the religious imperative of eco-morality, and I trust that my life witness is not just “talk” but also “walk”. It matters how we construct our personal worldview for by it we construct our personal life-ethic. We have deceived ourselves to think that we can manipulate and exploit nature with impunity. The consequences are heavy on us.

It is hard to think of any two subject matters more important to each other and to wellbeing than religion and education, and how they belong together. Fidelity to personal authenticity, zeal (!) for fidelity, and authenticity safeguard common wellbeing. If we remain open to them, religion and education may lead us into an uplifted sense of our place in nature. Christian life focuses on the possibilities of fullness and growth into the enriching experiences of belonging to nature, to each other, and of final peace with returning to God what God has given us in the sunrise, sun-fullness and sun-set of life.

Religion is green. Relationships in organic life show that except the seed is buried in good soil and grows un-blighted in its destined purpose, it will not bear the valued fruit that enriches and renews life. All life, the wholeness of personal experience is Eucharist. Eucharist is the greening experience of life and the reproduction of abundant new life. Greening and seed production are the fulfillment of soil, of air and sunlight. In the joined fulfillment of these, organic life depends. Isaiah says, “All flesh is grass”, and so we are.

New grain growth is the bread-of-life experience of God present in the least and greatest quantum relationship by which we grow into fullness with other, even as our self diminishes in the ascendancy of other. Being bread to one another is being Eucharist, is what the fullness of life is about.

Every ending is a new beginning. In our final years it is well that we return to beginnings and recap understandings of common origins and destinies, how God connects with and in us, how we connect, and how the old is ever renewed. We are individually grass/ grain to each other, destined to green, to ripen and yield life anew. We are bread. Life’s rhythms are desire’s lyrical dance with destiny, the song of Eucharist, the song of fullness — the “Panis Angelicus”.

Of Kinship and Kingship

Intentional consciousness has been long and slow at work in evolution, an essential aspect of which is self-reflectivity. Life tends to do what works for life’s best interest, for the individual and for the community. The power of intention (purpose) is a “virtual” power and a consciousness that is personified in the individual and in the communal. Individuality and community are mutually reflective and instructive.

Virtual power, self-awareness, is a cosmic consciousness that governs relationships, which are the bases of reality—a reality that is not static but which is ever dynamic and transforming. The relationship of cosmic kinship in the human family is not in question but the arrogant claim of kingship is in question.

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 sense of reality. The reconciliation of the virtual and the substantive-real is complicated and implicated, for the “conception” of reality and the “reality” itself are inseparably linked and not easily understood except if their implications and complexities are disassembled. Mental fabrications may deceive consciousness to think of aspects of reality as distinctions real in themselves when they are not. In the same way that matter and energy are not separable, so body and soul, the spiritual and the secular are not. Herein is the universal, cosmic basis of all relationship, of all kinship in common.

The Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, movements arising out of the conflicted imperial Church/ State, are about the schism of faith and reason and cumulative worldview fixations that radically divide people of faith and people of reason. For times untold, patriarchy co-evolved with cultures in which imperial hegemony and the theology of patriarchy reinforced each other. To this day the antagonism between faith and reason is a schizophrenic trauma that prevails in personal and public consciousness. Right reason eschews both religion’s fideism and enlightenment’s rationalism for they distort the commonsense of right order and violate the integrity of soul.

Unless and until spiritual consciousness, vested in physical reality, discovers the essential mutuality of faith/ reason, humankind will continue to radicalize a deceived sense of self. Religions are conscience-bound to re-evaluate the premises of their *theo*-logic as new insights require, for if theology is premised in absurd and violent presumptions, it is absurd and violent.

Virtual Reality and New Age Metaphysics

The philosophical worry I vent is an appropriate civil lament for our personal agony is a universal tragedy. It is right and necessary that we examine fully the lamentable breach of Faith and Reason, its causes and consequences, for we are personally and socially tangled in webs of tortured weaving. By entering the entanglement we may discover the reasons of desperation but also redemptive reasons. By understanding and admitting our tangles of deception we may discover the apology underlying the rationality of Vatican II, the fundamental insight that goes beyond the hard-fixed theology/ politics of Tridentine fideism and Enlightenment rationalism—what is consciousness of evolution.

Socially important is movement of public consciousness to a new synthesis of metaphysical (spiritual) reality, and to the remedial application of justified living that can bring healing to our blighted souls and ecology. Fixation in backward thinking can become a demeaning pathology if we fail to take steps forward, namely, to new enlightenment insights that can heal the breaches of Faith and Reason and the cultural desecrations of the Earth-cosmic continuum.

Entry into evolutionary consciousness and commitment to equal rights and personal self-worth are priority conditions for healing the rift between Faith and Reason. An informed recognition of the mutuality of Faith/ Reason might for the first time effectively open civilizations to a realization of human potential, free of cultured alienation, arrogance and passion for power and control over people and Earth 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.

Summary Judgment

Perseverance in faithful living leads to self-enlightenment and socially hopeful outcomes. Wisdom needs time and expects public commitment. Wisdom is the honest realization that enlightenment is an insight that has been passed on to us by those who have gone before us. Wisdom is what the Parable of the Ten Virgins is about. Wisdom is humility's enlightened attentiveness, what we call "soul". Humility demands the honesty of admitting above all else the need of fidelity's conscionable response to life's patient investment in us.

So, I must ask myself finally, "What compelling enlightenment have I come to?" In summary judgment of my life, the enlightenment I've come to is a question, what I suppose everyone might be well advised to ask of himself, herself: "How should, can, I (humankind) proceed to disrobe myself from the cultural fabric of self-deception?"

Down-to-Earth Cosmic Sense

The little town of Bethlehem (which means "house of bread") is forever associated with the biblical hero, Joseph of Egypt, son of Jacob and Rachel, and with Jesus the son of the carpenter, Joseph. Bread from cereal grain, the sign/ means of "Eucharist", keeps alive the messianic means and mission to serve human needs in every generation and to identify what is common in all relationship.

My father is Joseph Nicholas Steffen, an immigrant farmer. My mother is Mathilda Appolonia Schmitt-Meier Steffen, daughter of an immigrant farmer. I am the next to the last of their children. Like Joseph of Egypt, I occupy in my family the penultimate place in the sibling relationships, a family of 8 boys and two girls. By the age of 10 (1943), and profoundly impressed by the Joseph Story, I had already come to a clear sense of my priestly purpose. The religious literature that came into our home stimulated my interest.

I was greatly impressed by the life of a holy young woman in France, Theresa Martin, who has come to be known as the "Little Flower" of Jesus. She was held up to us as an example of how the least likely person is also called by God to lead the many. Already in my childhood, the question came to me if I might be called in some way to lead others. I could not know then and I cannot know now if and how I

might lead. It cannot be known in advance how anyone of us might lead, or know the reach one's life may have.

I suspect that the way to leadership begins with a dream, a seed of consciousness that implants itself so insistently that one is compelled to cherish it in mind and carefully attend to it. At this very moment, to be sure, a child is born, a child lives destined to lead. The inspiration to lead, to see the need and to step up and respond to it, is a messianic call that begins in family, in the child who will not be held back by the frustrations of sibling relationships and culture.

If one could choose the year in which to be born, one would probably avoid 1933. If one could choose a day on which to be born, one would probably avoid February 26 of that year. By this date, Adolph Hitler was in the process of officially taking political control in Germany and pushing the world toward the Second World War. Franklin D. Roosevelt was now in the second month of his first term as president of the United States. These world figures could hardly be more different or more significant in the roles they played on the world scene over the next ten years and after.

And if one could choose a family in which to be born, one would probably not choose a family of ten children on an Iowa farm at a time when all Iowa was buried under a desperately depressed economy that prevailed nationally. But, my personal angels for their own good reasons chose for me to be born in such a family under such circumstances and on that very day.

In all honesty, I assure you that my growing-up experience was wholly without trauma or depression. It is my sense even now that my childhood experience was nothing short of idyllic. And at the present time, seventy-five years later, I can say the same about my whole life experience. In the later years of my life I gained the audacity to take on myself the task of being torchbearer for the "Second" Enlightenment.

Confusion and Escape

I've thought a lot about why we become the persons we are. Obviously, the world around us, its people and cultural traditions frame our lives in fundamental ways. Then, there are our interests and the people of the times who captivate us. As we learn about people, we develop our interests and persuasions that push us in defining ways. So I look back and try to capture the seminal ideas and people that have contributed to who I am.

The special freedom I enjoyed in my childhood years, from 1935 to 1945, cultivated in me the habit of an uninhibited imagination. I was the middle of the three youngest boys, Cletus and Ralph, before and after me. In the course of those years, the three of us spent the better parts of our summers under the shade of three pine trees on the far northwest corner of our mother's garden. In that corner we built a county network of roads and fields. We cobbled machinery and structures with parts from junk piles and the farm workshop. In our play we did all the seasonal things that were done on farms and in communities of farm families. The

three of us played off each others imaginations in making everything we needed to make make-believe real.

As I look back I consider the great good fortune that was ours in our idyllic childhood. I don't recall that any one of us was more dominating or imposing than the other. And as I recall, this kind of regard for one another largely prevailed also with our peers in school. The culture and ethics we learned in our one-room country school were as true and healthy as any we might have gotten from a private religious school or a "factory" school. We were not only family at home but we were also family at school.

The culture of imagination and free expression is what we learned from family and in the one-room school. Religion? It was naturally a part of everything. We prayed regularly at home as family, before and after meals, the rosary in the evening and Mass in the mornings before school. Our church was located at the same country crossroads as our school. On Saturday mornings, in the Spring and in the Fall, my parents would chauffeur the Franciscan Sisters, who taught at St. Mary's School in Waterloo, to our country church where they taught us Catechism. For two weeks in summer, after school was over, the Sisters would teach Summer Catechism and prepare kids for Confession and First Holy Communion. It was from the Franciscan Sisters that I first learned about St Theresa, whom I admired greatly then and still do.

We "three little guys" had great camaraderie but we were also very individual. We of course did the things kids do, being a little daring in exploring limits that parents tolerated. We did not let our parents know everything we did, at least so we thought. This was particularly true with regards to smoking escapades, making corncob pipes and smoking corn silk. Whenever we got found out, Cletus was the one who most suffered the consequences. Ralph was the youngest and I had expressed my intention to become a priest, so Cletus was left hanging out there alone. I always thought that if one of us was to run away, Cletus would, for I thought he had the most reasons to, and I and Ralph were contributors to his troubles.

In the middle of our idyllic years, war came. I remember December 8, 1941, and crowding around the staticky radio trying to catch the words of President Roosevelt as he told about the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the decision of America to join the war against the Axis, Germany, Italy and Japan. Very soon thereafter our oldest brother Richard (JR, Rich) signed up with the Marine Corps and traveled by train to San Diego, California. By the time that the World War and the Korean conflict ended, five of my brothers ended up serving in the military, in the South Pacific, in the Aleutian Islands, in Germany and in Korea. As I recall it was also in 1941 that our oldest sister Marie entered the convent with the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters. With the departure of the two oldest siblings, the family dynamic very much changed.

The next great change in my life I recall was my entering the Divine Word Seminary High School. I left family in search of my lifework. I left behind the security of family and entered the uncertain culture of an all-male community, which at the time seemed to me to be a settling choice rather than an unsettling one. Indeed, my eleven-year seminary experience was both settling and unsettling for it reinforced in

me my Christian faith commitment and it opened my eyes to the misdirection of Church/ faith.

After grade school graduation (1946) I entered the seminary with the Divine Word Missionaries at Epworth, IA. I continued studies for the Catholic priesthood until August 1957. My 11-year seminary experience was importantly positive and formative, and my acquired sense of responsibility to live in service to others—what priesthood is about—has remained with me

Both of my sisters, Marie and Eleanor, joined the Dubuque Franciscan Sisters. In religious life their names are Sr. Mary Samuel, OSF, and Sr. Mary Justina, OSF. Both succumbed to multiple sclerosis in their mid-years and became physically incapacitated from doing their regular work. My brother Arnold became a Divine Word Missionary priest and has from 1957 until now been in Papua, New Guinea; among his appointments he continues the work of the Better World Movement.

More than I can say, I am indebted to the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) for their excellent curriculum of studies that included a broadly based liberal arts program, with emphasis on languages and science, culminating in a BA (Liberal Arts) degree in Philosophy (Rational Psychology). Language studies included English, Latin, German, Greek and Hebrew. The SVD deserves great credit for its commitment to provide a well-rounded education to all its students. As a practical matter, education with the SVD was well balanced in terms of exercising faith and reason. So I must credit them for the person I've become; but I cannot blame them for the person I have failed to become. My schooling in the culture and social mission of Church came from the SVD. My sensitivity for choosing heroes to emulate is to be credited to family upbringing and to the SVD.

My love for religion and science advanced together, mutually, as did my sense of bewilderment over what seemed to me to be a mutual distrust and confusion over “truths” of science (reason) and “truths” of religion (faith); each discipline claimed a priority place over the other's realm, which confused me.

In my eleventh Seminary year, as a first-year theologian, all were required to write a serious paper; mine was “Religion: A Rational Consideration.” (See: Sylvester L. Steffen, Appendix A, QUANTUM RELIGION) In this paper I tried to establish the continuity relationship of theology and cosmology, that is, identity in matters of energy/ matter, soul/ body. The correlations I drew between science and religion were modest and cautious, but significant in the evolution of my personal consciousness. This paper marks in me an already-rooted sense of the need to reconcile religion and science, for in reality each is an important aspect to common consciousness. Conflicted truth unsettles conscious holism and rattles the brain with schizophrenic voices of disagreement.

I came to the conviction that I needed to pursue science as intensely as I had pursued religion, so I decided with much reflection to discontinue pursuit of the priesthood. Life now became more complex for me for I had two parallel lives to live, the optional one, in which I continued seeking the reconciliation of science and religion, and the one that required me to earn my own living and no longer depend on an institution.

The Common Weal & Social Evolution

I have committed myself to the life mission of understanding and exposing the causes of personal/ social self-disintegration, and of finding remedies. Understanding causes and remedies begins with understanding the theological/ political rationales of unjust cultures and institutions. “First Enlightenment” is a flawed development of Western imperialism; the “Second” Enlightenment seeks to understand causes of cultural failures and to find remedies that correct the inherited misdirection of Classicism (Roman) and First Enlightenment.

Western cultures, including Roman Catholicism, are yet fatefully enthralled in classical Romanism and the unjust politicization of society into classes, the oligarchy, the middle class and the indentured class. Jesus Christ spoke out unambiguously against the unjust politicization of Church and State, which together conspired to destroy him.

The hierarchical politicization of religious/ political imperialism in Church and State is at the root of continuing injustice, violence, and human/ ecological disintegration. Only people, the good-faith members of the classes, can change the political/ social status-quo of destructive misdirection. The Catholic Church has in later times rejected slavery; which is a mere beginning of necessary social change. The next steps include the rejection of violence, wars, and systemic injustice against women. It begins with the rejection of politicized classicism and with religious/ political movement away from systemic injustice.

The theme underlying all my writings is *evolving consciousness*, the iteration processes of awakening and re-awakening, what happens with intentional communication, consciousness and conscience.

Einstein tells us that the deceleration of speed-of-light energy involves collisions and particle-formations. Present string-theory sees energy disposed in harmonic strands and loops; closed loops are what are called “gravitons”. Substance-*formation* is by way of contact, collision — communication. Aggregates of molecular substances come about by harmonic processes of *in-formation*, awareness — consciousness.

The sustainability of particulate accumulation/ consciousness is accomplished by *re-formation*, in the redundancies of re-awakening — conscience. The harmonic bonds of formation/ information/ reformation come together and amplify by the energetic processes of “divergence” resistance, “convergence” attraction and “emergence” connection — the evolution of “conscious light”. The evolved qualifications of energy are apt to their material forms, and the material forms are apt for further qualification.

The Culture Wars between Faith and Reason

The Renaissance represents a time of social evolution linking the Middle Ages and Modernity. What was going on in that time period was a battle between Faith and Reason. The Renaissance was a time of the awakening of reason, science and humanism, beyond the cultural

frustrations of imperial domination and hyped faith-culture. People of reason, like St. Thomas More, Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther were icons of change and social evolution.

Martin Luther was somewhat ambiguous for he advocated from within the Church for internal reform from corruption and theological misdirection; he did not, however, advocate for reason and humanism as did Erasmus and More. Good sense became a battered shuttlecock that flew back and forth between the advocates of Faith and Reason, Church and Enlightenment. Reduced to simplest terms, this is what the war between the Reformation (Protestants) and the Counter-Reformation (Catholics) was about.

The Council of Trent worked the final schism between Faith and Reason, what is the formal divorce of culture from social harmony. At the Council, the divorce between Fideism and Rationalism was made final. The outcome soon to follow was the Thirty Years Wars of Religion (1618-1648). Church made off with exclusive claim on Faith and Enlightenment made off with claim on Reason; and with their angry parting, social consciousness was put in conflict and suffered radical schizophrenia. The breach between Faith and Reason probably reached its extreme during the papacy of Pope Pius IX at the time of the First Vatican Council in which Pius IX insisted that he be declared infallible.

Not until Vatican II, influenced also by the science/ theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, has hope returned for the healing of the breach between Faith and Reason. Pope John Paul II advanced the cause of healing in his "Fides et Ratio" Encyclical. Pope Benedict XVI has affirmed his commitment to Faith and Reason and to their mutual importance to each other. In 1957 I committed myself to illuminating the cause of the relationship of faith and reason and the urgent need of reconciling them.

Embracing the Challenge



The organization of content in my books occurred by intuitional processing, formulated in patterns of communication, consciousness and conscience, more so than by some personally pre-planned logic. In pursuing the reconciliation of religion and science, I realized I was entering uncharted waters. Both subjects, religion and science, are too implicated with each other to allow easy organization. The development of a reconciled rationale was slow to unfold and it came to me only gradually and by processes of spontaneous insights within the poetic intuition.

When I began writing I had the general sense I could easily gather information, process it, and put it together in an understandable and convincing manner. But it was more complicated than that because religion is uniquely complicated and esoteric and because science is also uniquely complicated and esoteric. Each discipline has its own non-obvious language and formal understandings. Working through these by way of their correspondence was foreign to traditional understanding. I

knew what I was doing would likely be unappreciated by institutions of religion and science, and popular culture. But I was undeterred because I was convinced of the need.

I knew very well that the task was much bigger than the information reservoir in my head; so what I needed to do was to acquire resource knowledge that would inform me in the related areas of science and religion, faith and reason. I set about doing that by reading materials on religion and science and by writing down insights as and when they came to me — this process is what I mean by poetic instinct. I found that it was more workable to let my ideas arise spontaneously and to put them in poetry rather than in prose. What was most successful was not to force myself to write but to write as and when ideas gelled sufficiently so they could be written in self-standing forms.

Poetry is what I first published. My very first publication was a book of poems called *NEW GENESIS POEMS* (1992, G&R Publishing, Waverly, Iowa). The book was divided in three parts, communication, consciousness and conscience. Also published by the G&R Publishing Company were the *Poetree Trilogies*, *NOVOGENESIS*, *METAGENESIS* and *THEOGENESIS*, (1999); and in 2000, the “2000: Summary Prevision toward Global Revitalization”. In this “Summary Prevision” I presented the stalemate crisis in public consciousness/ conscience and the failures of social fixation.

What is Enlightenment? What is Religion?

In conjunction with and after the 30-Years Wars of Religions, adversary cultures of the time set faith and reason against each other and put them at irreconcilable odds. Global life on Earth suffers the fruits of the faith/ reason schism in the continuing mean-mindedness of Religion and Enlightenment (science). The Second Vatican Council showed the way toward overcoming cultural desperation, namely, by updating and evaluating the cultural failures of faith/ reason, seeking understanding of causes, and applying correctives by updating and reconciling conflicted consciousness in the light of the mutual necessities of faith and reason.

Centuries of neglect to update consciousness now puts global people in an overwhelmed situation. The continued neglect to update is not an option because neglect advances irremediable degradation. To bring about change and healing is going to take a lot of serious and committed effort. In short, from the perspective of spirituality (religion) humankind needs to recognize the essential and mutual suppositions of faith and reason, and to update worldview from its misinformed insights of medieval staticism to the informed insights of quantum relativity and evolution, as invited by Vatican II.

We are rationally equipped by nature with intelligence to grow out of small-world culture, beyond closed faith ideologies, and to affirm essential commonalities as well as individualities — in the way that personal affirmation, enlightenment and religion converge in communal awareness and mutual purpose. Convergence begins with the realization that belief and reason, faith and science, are inseparably essential to each other in the joined unfolding (evolution) of religion & civility.

In the pursuit of “truth”, Enlightenment and Religion can come together. Universal religion (what “*catholic*” means) is a universal call, vocation. Sense of commonweal is the universal call — the wellbeing of everyone, which in religious sense is to be a *Godlike* community, i.e., a community symbiotically intentional.

How do we attain to Godlikeness? By owning Godlike virtues, faith (fidelity), hope (confidence in things unknown), and love (altruism, self-donation, Eucharist). It is the human choice to live symbiotically, harmoniously, or in conflict and in selfish interest. Mindless self-interest introduces all manner of violence and destruction. In Christian belief, for example, God is Word (the Trustful Communicator); God is Light (All-knowing); and God is Love (totally Self-giving, Eucharistic). In the exercise of harmony, trustful communication, informed consciousness, and altruistic conscience, people and communities grow in Godlikeness, moment-by-moment, day-by-day.

In Christian insight, growth into Godlikeness doesn’t belong to institutional ideology, but is a personal quest of the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the “hypostasis” of divinity/ humanity in natural ascendancy. How do Enlightenment and Religion come together in personal and in community? by way of human becoming Godlike.

How do we recognize the common threads of religion and enlightenment? That is the challenge; we don’t divide; we come together from all sides. Symbiotic living begins with the realization that belief and reason, faith and science, and religion and civility are inseparable and essential to each other in the joined social evolution of human behavior and consciousness. We have to grow out of the small-world cultures of individual faith ideologies and affirm their/ our commonalities.

The venue of personal and collective consciousness is the place of reconciliation. Consciousness evolves informed in natural web-complexes, and informs the ongoing transformations of the web-complexes. The conscious flow and tension of information is purposeful and holistic, namely, processed continuously, coherently and inherently. Continuity processing involves iterative patterns of cosmic evolution, the means of knowledge reconciliation and symbiosis. Reconciliation accommodates consciousness by information-consilience, the three-step harmony of communication, consciousness, and conscience. Consciousness-resonance transforms soul/ substance and religious/ civil harmony. Consciousness is web-sourced insight where information converges, correlates and is processed and stored — what is “enlightenment”.

The “scripture of life” is genetically encoded in evolutionary experience, and is the memory cache of life’s successes and failures. Each living cell advances the first-text imprints of cosmic experience. Religion is irrelevant except it informs and updates morality and truthful relationships, and applies conscientiously to personal behavior.

Quantum-ascendant enlightenment attends mindfully to social wellbeing and civil sustainability. Holistic, rational consciousness joins religious and civil conduct. The separation of moral sense from civil obligation is a fatal schism infecting the human psyche and interpersonal relationships with disorder and dysfunction.

The primacy role of conscience in personal/ public behavior applies seamlessly to civil life as to religious life. The polarizing of faith against reason unsettles consciousness and serves opportunistic ideologies that frustrate religion and civility. The evidence is a matter of history. Ecology and economics are in the final analysis essential dispositions of human/ divine Eucharist (self-donation); when ecology is trashed, economics are trashed; when economics are trashed, Eucharist is desecrated; and when Eucharist is desecrated so is respect for nature and for self.

The Luminaries in My Life

Every time has its luminaries, people who have a holistic understanding of the world and of the particular needs of the time. The primary luminary for Christians is Jesus Christ. Christian sense is that Jesus is not just God-like but that he is God present on Earth. Jesus possessed a universal consciousness of how people need to relate to one another. So as to enable present and future generations to understand their place in life and on Earth, and to live mindfully in relation to the economy of nature, to the ecology of interdependence and to Eucharistic self-giving — life's imprint of desire/ destiny.

The luminaries most compelling to me are people faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and who see the special circumstances of their time and how the Gospel is understood and applied. The application of the Gospel must be specific to the times if the needs of the times are to be served.

My first luminary is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ. He was a French Jesuit priest, paleontologist who was also a soldier serving in the medical corps during World War I. He developed an understanding of church and world politics of his time and he discerned how the Gospel message, particularly its redemptive potential, was not coming through to the public. As a man of new science he was aware of the need for a new theology that corresponded to insights of science. He perhaps more than any other individual contributed more to a new consciousness in Church and in the world than any other person. Specifically, evolution and the essential continuity of the unfolding cosmos gave him a sense of the unity of cosmic consciousness and the physical expression of life. He expressed the sense that soul as the expression of cosmic consciousness was/ is one with cosmic energy/ spirituality.

The cultured dualism of matter/ energy, and the philosophical/ theological fixity of Church in medieval principles of Scholasticism were obstacles to evolutionary openness. Chardin was chagrined by Church's obstinacy against evolution. It wasn't until Vatican II that Church changed its worldview. In praxis, however, the change hasn't happened.

In real life the ambiguities of cultural habit vis-à-vis conflicts of spirit and matter prevail in the institutions of Church no less than in society in general. Teilhard de Chardin developed a warm relationship with the sculptress Lucille Swan. However, she was disturbed by the disjunction of Chardin's belief in evolution and his vowed celibacy. In fact, she saw a contradiction in his beliefs and in his life. She wrote him:

“You admit the necessity of working thought out with material in order to reach ideas abstract or God-like, but you deny the use of material (human) in order to reach the abstract or God-like. You will say you deny only a part of human love but I think you are evading the question, for the physical is not only a very important but essential part for the race.” [“The Letters of Teilhard de Chardin and Lucille Swan”, Thomas M. King & Mary Wood Gilbert, editors, © 1993, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057-1079]

My next luminary is Albert Einstein. Einstein who did for science what Chardin did for religion. He thought through the physical mechanisms by which the cosmos evolved even as it preserved its continuity. His mind-changing insights were first published in 1905 (the year I identify as the beginning of Second Enlightenment). Einstein’s insights are about the wave/ particle nature of light, of energy/ matter, the gravitational attraction of bodies and the identity of energy and matter. Woven together with the insights of Chardin, the continuity of soul/ body is reinforced by Einstein’s science.

I choose next another contemporary, Mohandas K. Gandhi, a lawyer, statesman, theologian, public servant and national leader in India. Even though he was not a Christian, he was more radically Christian in his beliefs of non-violence and Christian love than perhaps most Christians. He radicalized the teachings of Jesus at the national, governmental level. The message of Jesus is also a secular message, not merely a spiritual one, for in fact as Chardin and Einstein perceived, spirituality and secularity not to be disconnected from each other any more than energy and matter, soul and body are.

My next favorite luminary is Joseph Campbell, the world-famous interpreter of mythologies. In an incomparable way he discerns the patterns of social consciousness in religious/ cultural ritual and symbols. His insights illumine rituals, myths, and cultural interpretations of scriptures and traditions.

Cultural exclusionism roots in fixations of religious belief that puts people in unresolved conflict with each other. It is storied in scriptures and is handed down in tradition. Until religions back off from dogmatic affirmations of exclusionism and preference, violence will continue to plague humankind. Joined theological, philosophical and scientific sense reveals the common bases of cultural consciousness, without which accommodation, universal respect can never be achieved.

My final luminary is Martin Luther King who most effectively confronted the illegitimacy of racial intolerance and its utter injustice. Dr King exemplifies how the Gospel message of peace and justice needs to be interpreted in the modern context and how it needs to be implemented in societies at all levels, in churches, schools, in state and federal legislatures and in interpersonal relationships.

Church, Faith and Truth

The People of God expects Church to be true to faith and faithful to truth. Because Church is The People, the people must expect of

themselves the same they expect from Church. To do otherwise is to live pretentiously. Fidelity to truth is a challenge because truth-understanding enlarges and changes as knowledge enlarges. Church like truth is edified in consciousness, one insight at a time, in *formation*, in *information*, and in *reformation*. Faith is what faith does, what truth requires. Mindful remembrance and re-membering are works of faith, truth, Church — enabling growth into the fullness of life.

Authentic faith and religion avoid suggestions and expectations outside the laws of natural order. What is the meaning of the theological understanding that *grace supposes nature* and *faith supposes reason*? A theology that preaches and imposes expectations of divine intervention is inauthentic for it “puts God to the test”. For example, cultural infidelity to the God/ Land/ Human Covenant will have adverse consequences for humankind. Divine intervention is not going to exculpate humankind from the fateful consequences it brings on itself. The reversing of human behavior from its inauthentic ways is the way to authenticate relations.

The history of religions/ cultures is about trust/ distrust, fidelity/ infidelity, and challenges to Church and civilization. History documents the honorable and the dishonorable, conscionable and the unconscionable behavior. The lessons of history can be accessed for teaching if we are open to learn from history. In my organizing effort I’ve tried to make sense of historical complexities and draw practical lessons from them.

Reading the WORD/LIGHT Trilogies together

The two trilogies, **Second Enlightenment** and **Conscious Light**, together illuminate the way of faith. The first provides the setting of cultural misdirection and the second points to the redirection of culture on reformed premises. Reformation is directed toward intentional fidelity in environmental, ecological, and economic spheres — what are areas of universal inter-cultural necessity.

Together the trilogies update universal faith-consciousness, the trustworthy wisdom of informed rationality. Reason and faith have co-evolved together to give consciousness the certitude it needs to advance successfully, symbiotically. As religions and cultures have advanced together in the past, co-dependently and regionally specific, so, now they need to continue together, globally purposeful in the quest of universal truth and locally faithful to bio-regional diversity.

The **Second Enlightenment Trilogy** is about updating historical awareness of religious/ cultural history in the Christian West, where the Christian Faith has evolved and spread from the Middle East to Europe and throughout the world. Mindfulness, rationality, purpose, wisdom, kept and accessed in memory, are corresponding subject matters in the **Second Enlightenment Trilogy**:

“PRIMARY SCRIPTURE, Cosmic Religion’s First Lessons”, book one, addresses cosmic communication and the ongoing informing of consciousness in the order of nature. Nature is First Scripture, coded in DNA, the symbiotic text of all vitality. Natural Law and conscience derive from the dependency of grace, consciousness on nature.

The ongoing ascendancy of consciousness in rational processing sensitizes civility and moral enlightenment, which are the subject matters of “QUANTUM RELIGION: the Good News of Rising Consciousness”, book two of the trilogy. Consciousness is an awakening process of moral self-awareness, the step-by-step discovery of purposeful relationships.

“RELIGION & CIVILITY, the Primacy of Conscience”, book three, travels the journey of Renaissance society’s descent into hell and proposes the intentional response of cultural/ conscionable embrace of faith and reason. Religious/ civil sense calls for the formation of conscience and ethical fidelity in essential personal/ social matters.

The setting of the Roman Empire is the cultural environment in which the Catholic Christian Faith was politically qualified. Roman Catholic political (imperial) characterization has radically imposed itself on cultures as it spread. Polemical Christian culture is the background to today’s global predicaments.

The **Conscious Light Trilogy** is a “how to” study — *how to* authenticate faith, and share faith inter-culturally, and in a manner that preserves universal wisdom as the stabilizing basis of world civilizations. The global authentication of universal faith is an affirmation of the truth-quest that is symbiotic — peaceful and supportive of diverse cultures, not violent and disruptive.

“The Possible Journey, Uncompromised Trust”, first book of the **Conscious Light Trilogy**, details a program of adult faith formation/ sharing by which adults consider the many social/ ecological crises that have come about (as a result of failed faith maturity) and in a way that enables adults to bring their faith to bear on real world circumstances.

“What Self-Donation Is: Kenosis, Eucharist and Green Religion” the second book, is a Faith-Sharing Manual organized for study in four sessions, specifically tailored for use in shared Lenten group reflections.

“GREEN Religion, Inside the Cultural Spectrum” is the third book of the **Conscious Light Trilogy**.

If the **Second Enlightenment Trilogy** portrays the setting and condition of faith in the world, the **Conscious Light Trilogy** is about faith, its function as the foundation of reason, its cultural importance, and its authentication, communally and personally in a globally diverse universe.

Deep intuitional consciousness through evolutionary history has been sparked on and off by real life events/ experiences. Intuition flares up in self-reflectivity and illumines the conscious sense of social relationships. In point of fact, human consciousness of the divine is essentially an ongoing rationality that presents "perfection" (communal harmony) as an appropriate objective of imitation, emulation and striving for individuals and communities.

Biologically, in rudimentary animal consciousness, survival was critical, and the herd instinct of male force and dominion served a purpose in its time. But the rise of consciousness (evolution of the cortical brain) revealed to consciousness gradually that other rationalities better serve sociality than domination and violence. Not everybody gets the message yet.

Feminine intelligence, as the ground-state of conscious vitality, makes it abundantly clear that the male herd instinct imprinted in brute violence and dominion is no longer socially acceptable or workable, whether in religion or government. Now it is ecological/ environmental sustainability that is at risk of being ultimately trashed by "cultured" male arrogance, ignorance, obsession and violence, in churches and in governments.

Grace supposes nature as faith supposes reason as femininity supposes masculinity. It is equally true to say the same in reverse, nature supposes grace as reason supposes faith as masculinity supposes femininity. Matter supposes energy as energy supposes matter as spirituality supposes materiality (secularity) as secularity supposes spirituality. Physics suppose metaphysics as metaphysics suppose physics.

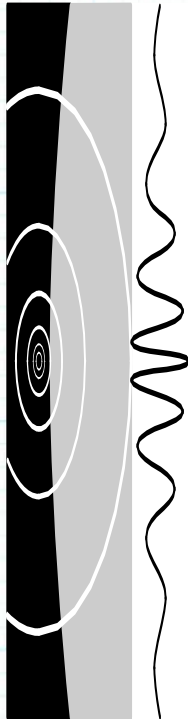
Louis Dupré observes that everything in the evolving cosmos is end/ means to everything else. It's about natural reciprocity. Violence undoes what love does, and love can redo what violence has undone, to a point. Practically and morally, violence is not negotiable.

Global civilizations need a radical change in their faith/ reason paradigm. The change needs to happen in individual souls, in religion, in POLITICS. The people have the power to make it happen. Politics is a good place for people to take action; when a critical mass of people has the conscious will, a new paradigm can/ will be put in place. Vote for a change from the status quo.

The conversion called for today isn't only in matters physical, but more importantly in matters spiritual, i.e., metaphysical. Evolution works intentionally from thought to action. I am persuaded that if Cicero were today to describe *the method of evolution*, he would put it this way (sic): *perficiendo cogitata cogitando sic perfecta* (by working through and thinking through the thought-through and worked-through thoughts).



PREVISION PROVISION



Cultural and Religious Continuity

Self-reflectivity underlying religious consciousness, attends to local and global relations. If religious consciousness fails, it fails culture.

That religions and cultures fail is evident in failed worldview that misinforms faith. Faith and culture fail when they fixate in ideologies that fail the common necessities of life.

Faith failing reason is problematic for the same reasons that *reason failing faith* is. In mutual disconnection, *rationalism* and *fideism* have come to dead ends as have old cultural/religious ideologies premised in them. Unless faith and reason together build on mutual trust, essential to relationships, they frustrate consciousness.

Joseph of Egypt had “prevision” in understanding the Pharaoh’s dream, and the Pharaoh appointed him to “provision” grain in years of plenty against years of want. Providence, authenticated in nature, commissions every one to be Eucharist to every other, to sustain web-life and to provide for common needs. Ecology, economy and Eucharist converge in symbiotic destiny to anticipate and provide for common needs — what is *organic*, “GREEN Religion”.

**THE NATURE/ NURTURE THAT GOD HAS JOINED
LET NO MAN DISASSEMBLE**