

Intentional Symbiosis and Life's Consistent Ethic

Consistently and sustainably, Christian Humanism and Intentional Symbiosis weave the holistic fabric of faith's Word and reason's Work. The thrust of contemporary culture and long term history register their marks on the human condition in different ways; one way, that of Biological Symbiosis, is almost imperceptible except to evolutionary history, but the other, Christian Humanism, is immanently recognizable in here-and-now relationships. The culture of disconnection between intentional symbiosis and Christian Humanism obscures the fact that they are part and parcel of each other. Postmodernity's fatal myopia is its failure to recognize that Christian Humanism and intentional symbiosis are co-identical and co-essential to religion, civility and Earth-life sustainability.

Jesus taught and exemplified for humankind how people need to relate to each other with mutual regard and care in the here-and-now. The history of cultural evolution on the other hand registers disregard of people for each other and nature, a too consistent failure of ethical understanding and a living disregard for Christian Humanism. It is right for religion to concentrate on moral behavior in the here-and-now, but it must also be responsive to the lessons of evolutionary history and its failures of intentional symbiosis if it would avoid repeating the ingrained bad habits of culture. The work of faith-updating is the continuing work of reason, the moral task of religion.

The short sight of culture fixated in misinformed faith habits is a disease that repeats and accumulates disastrous consequences. Fixation in misinformed tradition can be a moral failure as devastating as egoism and sexism yet advanced in dominion theology and patriarchal imperialism. Dominion and sexism register their mortal defects in the here-and-now and in the frustration of symbiotic evolution.

Dominion and sexism stand in the way of Christian Humanism in the here-and-now and against correctives needed to avoid frustrating the sustainable work of evolving biology. Vatican II set Roman Catholicism on a redirected course of social recognition, namely, that evolution changes everything and requires updating, "a matter as important as can be". (Vatican II, Constitution IV, *Gaudium et spes*, Introduction, #5) See references: <http://www.secondenlightenment.org/Called%20to%20be%20More.pdf>, <http://www.secondenlightenment.org/The%20Evolution%20of%20Symbiosis.pdf>

In this time, Christian Humanism needs to be understood in the same light as symbiotic evolution for each is formative of the other. The wisdom of Christian Humanism, the Social Gospel of Love, is authenticated by the same sustainable rationale that advances symbiotic evolution. The conscience of self-reflectivity, of authentic religion, requires that symbioses become intentional and personal even as the Christian mandate of love for one another is intentional and personal. Neglect to secure the co-identity of love and symbiosis is lethal to Christian living as it is to eco-social sustainability.

Adult Faith joins the Christian mandate and nature's symbiotic mandate. Putting these in perspective enables 20/20 moral vision. Words get lost except for work; the work of reason weaves faith's sustainable words into the fabric of a consistent ethic. Adult Faith is what the 20/20 Enlightenment vision is about (www.secondenlightenment.org), what adult education (www.evolution101.org, www.justifiedliving.gather.com) is about. We are personally the change called for in these times. History will judge us harshly if we fail intentional symbiosis/ Christian Humanism. Sylvester L. Steffen, 12 July 2009