

“Right as Grain”

ECUMENICAL

EUCHARIST

ECOLOGY / ECONOMY

The Challenge of “JERUSALEM” and “ANTIOCH”

The open conflicts between the Church of Vatican I and the Church of Vatican II are historically rooted as in the conflicts of Peter with the “missioner” Paul. Vatican I Church (Jerusalem, Rome) holds strictly to old conventions of VOLUNTARISM, “will over reason” (hierarchical), whereas, the “People Church” of Vatican II (Antioch) is open to necessary change, “will with reason”, evolution, accommodating people and holding faith accountable to reason, and reason accountable to faith. Vatican I Church elevates medieval dogma, whereas, Vatican II Church advocates updating and the emergence of The People Church, responsive to new insights of cultural necessity. (Gaudium et spes, Introduction #5).

Sensing altruism is the “Eucharistic” urgency of symbiotic (ecologic / economic) experience in deep intuition, and mindfully putting Eucharistic sense to work in one’s life, what is true Spirit, true accommodation of divine purpose. The urgencies of divergence, convergence and emergence are compulsions of authenticity, of altruism, of the Holy Spirit at work in conscience. Divergence discerns, convergence decides, and emergence does Eucharistic Ecumenism: what communication (ecology), consciousness (economy) and conscience (Eucharist) are about, what faith, hope and love are about; what communal authenticity does: mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity.

The emergence of authentic humanity is the compulsive necessity of faith holding reason accountable, reason holding faith accountable, and the transformation of both. Conscionable evolution is the doing of altruistic ecumenism — being / becoming one in Eucharist in the ascendancy of personal/ communal spirituality. Church today, Vatican I and Vatican II, like Jerusalem and Antioch struggles with the same challenge of adapting hallowed traditions to the urgencies of Eucharistic necessity.

EMERGING CONSCIOUSNESS

The EUCHARISTIC WORLDVIEW

LIFE's PURPOSE

READY! SET! GROW into Godlikeness!

I. ECOLOGY: the Ground of Faith – “House of belonging”

One Connected Family -- Faith / Hope / Love

FAITH: Sustainable Basis of Life.

Biblical: Isaiah: “All Flesh is Grass” (40:1-6)

Communication: the Way of WORD in Nature.

II. ECONOMY: the Ground of Hope – Awakening Consciousness

HOPE: The Life Blood of Ecology (connected life).

Biblical: Joseph of Egypt – Prevision / Provision

Wisdom secures abundance against want.

Consciousness: the Way of LIGHT in Nature.

III. EUCHARIST: the Ground of Love – Love alone endures/ secures.

LOVE: the Divine / Human “Understanding” (Hypostasis).

Biblical: Jesus’s example – expending Self in wellbeing of Other

Conscience: the Way of LOVE in Nature.

What Life (Godlikeness) is: begins with trustful communication; grows in informed consciousness; and fulfills in personal/ communal altruism (committed conscience).

EUCCHARISTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The EUCCHARISTIC WORLDVIEW

Life & Death Connections/ Understandings

ECOLOGY / ECONOMY / EUCCHARIST

HEROES Informing God-Consciousness

1. **Isaiah**: “All flesh is grass.” [**ECOLOGY-based FAITH**] (DNA-informed life)
 2. **Joseph of Egypt**: Previsioning / Provisioning Grain [**ECONOMY-based HOPE**]
 3. **Jesus**: Living Bread [**EUCCHARIST-based LOVE**]
 4. **St John Damascene**: “God is a Sea of Infinite Substance (Understanding)”
 5. **St Thomas Aquinas**: “Grace supposes Nature”
 6. **Teilhard de Chardin, S.I.** : Complexity-Consciousness; Pleroma
 7. **John Courtney Murray, S.I.** : “Faith supposes Reason” (Vatican II)
 8. **Monica Steffen**: “The Evolution of Symbiosis” - Divinely Maternal (painting)
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THEOLOGY supposes BIOLOGY: “humankind is female/ male in God’s image”

EUCCHARISTIC WORLDVIEW: Ecologic/Economic Altruism -- Jesus-Consciousness

Search online:

Grain Ecology; Right as Grain; Green Religion; The Evolution of Symbiosis

Grass -- Grain -- Bread

It is probably true for us all that if we look back on our lives, we will find some event or confluence of events that influenced the persons we've become. It surely is the case for me.

From my earliest memory, I intended to become a priest. Undoubtedly, I was influenced by my older brother Arnold who became a missionary priest with the Society of the Divine Word, and was missioned to Papua New Guinea, where he is to this day. We both attended High School at the Epworth, Iowa, Preparatory Seminary of the SVD; he entered in 1942, and I followed four years later.

But, a permanent life-changing event I recall occurred in the summer of 1955, when Arnie and I were both in the Seminary at Techny, Illinois. That summer our brother Vince came to Techny to visit us; some of you will recall that Vince was Chickasaw County Representative in the Iowa Legislature, and Speaker of the Iowa House when Harold E. Hughes was Iowa Governor. From 1953-58 Vince was in business with our brother Norbert, dba STEFFEN FARM SUPPLY.

Vince told us of a new venture he had taken up: at that time the Government had grain bin storage sites in the country where farmers could store corn – but there was a problem – surface grain would spoil over Winter in these bins because of the migration of moisture to the surface of the grain -- the grain needed ventilation to prevent moisture from migrating and causing grain to heat and get moldy.

One solution the Government came up with was to put perforated floors in bins so the grain could be ventilated and spoilage prevented. About this time country elevators began also to build storage for farmers to keep their grain; eventually Government bin-sites closed down. So now, there were unused perforated floors at these bin-sites. STEFFEN FARM SUPPLY bought up many of these floors, and Vince began selling farmers on the idea of building their own bins, so they could dry their corn in these bins. What a great idea, I thought.

From time to time, Arnie and I talked about this, and we reflected how this hearkened back to the Biblical Story of Joseph (of the “many-colored coat” fame) and the dream of the Egyptian Pharaoh. The Pharaoh had this dream nobody could interpret: seven fat cows came to the river to drink; later, seven skinny cows came. What was that all about? Joseph explained: the seven fat cows represented seven years of abundant grain production, and, the seven skinny cows represented seven years of no grain production. The Pharaoh was so impressed that he commissioned Joseph to build storage to keep the grain on reserve for the coming famine. (You recall how Joseph's siblings discovered him when they came to Egypt to get grain).

It occurred to Arnie and me that times can repeat; and it struck me that the Egyptian Pharaoh image would be a business logo suitable even today. So I drew a HARVESTALL business logo of a Pharaoh with pyramids in the background – which we used throughout our years in business. The rest is history: Arnie went on to be ordained to the Priesthood in the Spring of 1957, traveled to Papua New Guinea that same year; and in the Fall of 1957, I left the Seminary, came to New Hampton, Iowa, and joined STEFFEN FARM SUPPLY to pursue the HARVESTALL grain bin business.

Given my background, I was hardly a good business risk. But, it occurred to me that if we were serious about convincing farmers to dry their corn in bins, we would have to understand grain science, and be responsible for educating how to dry and safely keep corn in their bins. After all, corn seeds are living organisms and have special needs. We adopted the public identity of “The Nation’s Grain Guardian” and took very seriously the duty of educating farmers to manage their corn grain and to preserve its living integrity.

Vince and Norbert agreed that it would be good idea if I pursued grain science studies. At that very time Agricultural Engineers at Iowa State University were starting to research corn drying, so, I called Professor William V. Hukill of the Engineering Department at Ames, IA, and explained to him my interest. He called me back and proposed I take up studies with the Botany Department at ISU toward a Master’s Degree; and that for my research and thesis, I could work with the Ag. Engineering Department and he would supervise my research project, which would be studying “The Effects of Drying Method on the Germination of Corn”. I took up the offer, went to Ames in January 1958, began Botany studies and set up my research project. This all was completed by May 1960; I wrote a thesis on my research results, completed my Master of Science Degree in Botany (Plant Physiology) and was a 30 year a member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.

Vince and I enjoyed 30 years business together setting up dealers in 8 States. There was an energy crisis in the 1970s which spurred the bin business and “solar grain drying”; but in the 1980s a farm crisis triggered the collapse of the grain bin business. The need, indeed, the urgency for preserving the live food quality of grain, for avoiding fossil-fuel pollution and global warming, is greater today than ever. Gas-heat drying of corn denatures its protein; shrinks the grain, diminishes its weight, and pollutes grain with combustion contaminants. Today, more than ever, the future of humankind is at risk from the many ways we abuse nature’s ecologies. We can do better. We must do better.

Sylvester L. (Pat) Steffen,

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Search online: Grain “Chillcuring”; “Right as Grain”; and, “Eucharist and the Grain that Light made”