

E-Merging Church

October 27, 2010

Local/Global One-Church Agendum

Proposed to: The Social Concerns Committee
CHICKASAW COUNTY AREA CHURCHES

In the Fall of 2001 Father Carl Schmitt Pastor, Holy Family Parishes, and Father John Harpel, SVD, Hospital Chaplain, asked me to join with the churches' staff to develop an Adult Faith Education Program. I have kept to the task and have brought my participation to full circle with this NEW ERA DAWNING proposal.

Authentic religious education is a continuing growth process into and throughout adulthood; most instructional programs however are targeted at the child level and fail to advance beyond the child's mentality. Most of the content yet presumes the static-centrist worldview of original Christianity; thus, the relevancy of faith-consciousness to changing times is uninformative.

Dominion theology and corporate consumerism (capitalism) have in the past two millennia co-conspired to create political, ecological, economical and spiritual crises that globally bedevil life and the times today. Faith confidence is collapsing; the institutions of Church and State are collapsing; and the economic/ecologic systems of nature and societies are collapsing — all of which are intrinsically interconnected.

The DIVINICON, the Evolution Trilogies propose a global, radical effort of *aggiornamento*, of updating the bases of education, religion and civilization in order for people to grow into an adult worldview that recognizes, understands and deals with the man-caused crises of the times. The DIVINICON means to be a lexicon that puts in perspective the nature and urgency of the challenge at-hand and of remedies needed.

Reading “the signs of the times” is the GREAT WORK (Thomas Berry) confronting global humankind. The effort must happen locally, bioregionally, and involve individuals, families and communities. It is the moral responsibility of religious consciousness, of people conscience (Church) to take the initiative with all seriousness.

Let the GREAT WORK begin here, in the Chickasaw County Area Churches, I put the work in your hands. Tell me what you would like me to do to further the effort. Thank you for your interest and encouragement.

Sylvester L. Steffen

“NEW ERA DAWNING”

The GREENING of the GRASSROOTS



**A PROPOSAL:
Churches Together E-Merging**

**INTERFAITH COOPERATION
GETTING RELIGION RIGHT**

**The “GREAT WORK” of Thomas Berry
BIODIVERSITY AT RISK: What *Pro-life* Means**



NOVEMBER 1, 2010

Why Now?

For the person of faith, compassion isn't an option, it is a social obligation. Obsessive ego-culture and corporate exploitation clash with human rights and Earth/human wellbeing. Compassionate altruism is a remedial means.

The recognition of other as an inseparable part of oneself is a precondition to authentic compassion. Religious pluralism isn't just to be tolerated, it is to be embraced. To other, we are other. It's time to embrace otherness and discover potentials of intentional symbiosis, of compassionate altruism.

Out of cultural habit, different faiths behave stand-offish toward each other; missing is interfaith compassion — the communal means of healing, health and authentic living.

People yearn for reconciliation of religious differences, mitigation of cultural frictions and rejection of violence. Symbiotic pluralism sustains the common ground of accommodation, heals divisions and seeks reconciliation. Reconciliation happens, one person at a time, one family at a time, one community at a time.

The cry of nature, of people, of divinity is that ALL MAY BE ONE.

www.divinicom.com

Our place in the world order is rationalized on a displaced worldview. If we presume Earth, ourselves, to be central to all other existence, then we dare to harbor presumptions that cause us to think and act arrogantly toward all other.

Today, global life suffers mortal waste because of humankind's arrogant presumption of dominion right over Earth and all creatures. Can we desist from arrogant and destructive habits of misinformed consumerism? Or will we persist in them, terminally waste Earth-life and cause the catastrophic collapse of humankind?

The fixations evolved by and within centrist, theological absolutism no longer inform faith and reason credibly. Quite to the contrary, they serve as confrontational flashpoints of violence and havoc. The faith foundation common to life and unfolding consciousness is the *essential continuity of cosmic transformation*, which awakens human consciousness to self-caused predicaments. If the pillars of vital consciousness are trashed by a self-assertiveness that is blind to essential Earth/cosmic connections, then, the future for humankind is bleak indeed, and in mortal peril.

Is it possible for religious ideologues to mend their schisms and come to the "common ground" of unconditional love openly exemplified by Jesus? Christian hope has to believe that it is possible. The hope for it to happen can begin with the personal/communal confession of open faith. What's missing is a "universal" topical approach (curriculum) and a forum for convening people at the local level, and facilitating the new "greening" of faith-in-common.

The DIVINICON proposes the transformational consciousness of the world order—a continuity order of essential connectedness, a cosmic order of "quantum-electric" relationships—a curriculum that might help us escape from our self-elaborated traps of deception and consumption; offered is a non-polemical, topical approach for study by local Church *Committees of Social Concern* in the work of reconciling faith and reason, science and religion. www.divinicom.com

Please join with others in your community in bringing about a change of consciousness from dead-end, centrist thinking to the openness of vital expansion — a change from the *culture of death* to the *culture of life*.

Civility's "Common Denominator"

The "religious" profusion of conflicted ideologies drives "people of faith" to polarization, to violence. Because the evolution of cosmic consciousness is universal in energetic substantiation, there must be a common denominator that opens all religions to the reconciliation of differences and escape from self-perpetuated violence. What is nature's common denominator? in a word, "divinization."

The religious person can sense intuitively what is nature's (civility's) *common denominator*. Dominion culture wastes nature, violates humanity, offends God. Intuitional consciousness chafes for conversion; enlightenment proclaims it; and prophets preach it — but where are the churches?

The French Jesuit Priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who served as a medic in the World War I, describes from his experience of "transfiguration" what "divinization" is:

"The presence of the incarnate Word penetrates everything as a universal element. It shines at the common heart of things, as a center that is infinitely intimate to them and at the same time (since it coincides with universal fulfillment) infinitely distant...The vital, organizing influence of the universe, of which we are speaking, is essentially grace. We can see, however, from the point of view of creative union, that the wonderful reality of grace must be understood with a much greater intensity and width of meaning than is normally attributed to it...all the processes of the universe are steeped in final purpose, in supernatural life, even to what is most palpable in their reality. (96-97)

"At the root of this invasion and envelopment I can distinguish, I believe, the rapidly increasing importance that was being assumed in my spiritual life by the sense of 'the will of God', fidelity to the divine will, by which I mean fidelity to a directed and realized omnipresence, which can be apprehended both actively and passively in every element of the world and in all its events. Although at first I did not precisely realize the bridge by which this eminently Christian attitude connected my love and my love of things, nevertheless I have always, ever since the first years of my religious life, gladly surrendered myself to this active feeling of communion with God through the universe... (102)

"We have seen the mystical milieu gradually develop and assume a form at once divine and human...What name can we give to this mysterious entity, who is in some small way our handiwork, with whom, eminently, we can enter into communion, and who is some part of ourselves, yet who masters us, has need of

us in order to exist, and at the same time dominates us with the full force of his absolute being?

"I can feel it: he has a name and face, but he alone can reveal his face and pronounce his name. Jesus!"

...His mastering life ate into every other life, to assimilate it to himself. Thus, Lord, I understand that it was possible to live without ever emerging from you, without ever ceasing to be buried in you, the ocean of life, the life that penetrates and quickens us. Since first, Lord, you said, "Hoc est corpus meum," not only the bread of the altar but (to some degree) everything in the universe that nourishes the soul for the life of spirit and grace has become yours and has become divine—it is divinized, divinizing, and divinizable."

[Ursula King, "Pierre Teilhard de Chardin", copyright 1999, pp. 96-109, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0308.] Quoted in Primary Scripture, pp 91-94
<http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/BookDetail.aspx?BookId=SKU-000289935>

Divinization is the committed lifetime quest to understand God and to live by Godlike virtues. Divinization is work of moral imagination, the ascendant grace of mindfulness that leads to thinking as Jesus thought, doing as Jesus did. Divinization is God-purposefulness in thinking and doing, what is "Eucharistic altruism."

The paradigmatic model of purposefulness is first experienced in nature's successful processing of symbiotic wellbeing, the altruism of intentional transformation (transubstantiation) beyond the hard instincts of genetic selection and survival to the softer intuitions of love. The understanding (hypostasis) of the coming together of divinity and humanity is for the Christian, Jesus, the personification of divinity.

In the experience of transformation/ transfiguration/ transubstantiation, one comes to the fulfilled experience of "ecstatic resonance" (ID, pp. 89-95) Transfiguring is the cognitive/substantive transformation of divine/human self-reflection.

Chardin died April 10, 1955. That same year, the Irish Dominican Friar Herbert McCabe was ordained to the priesthood. McCabe also came to a sense of divinization that bonded him, Chardin and liberation theology, and heralded the "updating" of the Second Vatican Council because it "fills the gap left by our inadequate preaching of Christianity." ("Radical, OP, Herbert McCabe's Revolutionary Faith", Eugene McCarrahar, **COMMONWEAL**, October 8, 2010, pp 12-16)

McCabe saw parallels in the aspirations of Vatican II and Marxism, “Just as the Marxist looks forward to...the final withering away of the State [he wrote] so the Catholic looks forward impatiently to the withering away of organized church.” So, what commonality might lead to dissolving the hold of church and state? the sense and practice of personal, egalitarian worth and authorization in purposeful living and communal commitment to Eucharistic altruism, which recognizes also the inevitable dissolution of individual self into other.

Eucharistic altruism binds universal consciousness in the divine insight of universal spirituality by which divinization is realized as the common aspiration of cosmic soul and personal soul. The universality of Eucharistic necessity is self-dissolution in the rebirth of other; this dissolution is “a paradox not a contradiction.” The literary critic Terry Eagleton writes of McCabe’s paradoxical style, “[he] combines cognitive force with self-delighting jest displaying the capacity of language to dismantle and transform the world.”

“It is hardly accidental that he was...the first to grasp how certain anti-Cartesian understanding of the sign could be used to explore the mystery of the Sacramental. ‘Christ [in McCabe’s words] is present in the Eucharist as the meaning is present in a word’.”

To expand the sense of cosmic/ Christic consciousness it can be said that divinity is present in human consciousness as soul is present in substance. Energy in specific substance is soul-consciousness (cosmic purpose) commonly destined in process and purpose of transformation — what is the process and purpose of evolution. In the process and purpose of evolution are the inevitability of and the need for updating and the perpetuation of Eucharistic altruism. Frustrated *aggiornamento* (updating) is frustrated Eucharist; frustrated Eucharist is frustrated humanity, frustrated nature.

Church, State and Corporate Corruption

The internal corruption of Roman Catholicism was officially sanctioned under the de Medici popes, most notably by Pope Leo X who commissioned the sale of indulgences to capitalize the construction of St Peter Basilica in Rome. This official act of crass commercialism provoked the Protestant Reformation by the Augustinian Monk Martin Luther.

The corporate corrupt decision of the "Catholic" U.S. Supreme Court to unleash money indiscriminately in elective politics is crassly reminiscent of de Medici corruption of selling guarantees of spiritual reward in heaven (even if the money is used to construct a citadel to arrogance.) Money instincts are religiously, politically linked, i.e. the "religious right."

The giving over of American politics to crass mercantilism is no accident, and is equally corruptive of democracy as mercantilism continues to be for church/ religion. The further desecration of the people and nature is the certain outcome of corrupt corporatism whose god is money and whose soul is owned by it.

This 2010 election cycle starkly exposes the overreach of corrupt corporate money — even at a time when nature is being mortally wasted by corporate greed. Nature is screaming "enough is enough," and corporations don't hear. It's time for people to join with nature to resist death by suffocation from corporate greed.

Corporate capitalism has run amok and is bankrupting global life's basic economies, ecologies — and religion, bishops, are blinded by obsession with sex; this simple-minded monotony of hierarchical obsession is deadening. Church hierarchy is fearsomely misinformed at so many levels, the moral, the political, the scientific, and the practical. Hierarchy opts the imprisonment of history and mercantilism; they live in the luxury of self-arrogation at the mortal expense of people and nature.

As a people of conscience, Americans should feel mortified and violated by the corporate complicity of Religion and Law in the mercantile surrender of Church and State. President Obama is not to blame for the corporate bankrupting of America, of global life. At the moment, he is America's best hope to work out of it. It's enough to make St Paul turn over in his grave!

[“RELIGION & CIVILITY, the Primacy of Conscience”, pp 182, 183; 192-194;
<http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/BookDetail.aspx?BookId=SKU-000344097>

The Self-Undoing of Patriarchy

Religious implication in gratuitous violence is so common-place as to be overlooked, like the “Religious Paralysis Syndrome.” The history of religion in the culture of gratuitous violence has a name, its name is Patriarchal Orthodoxy; whether Christian, Judaic or Islamist, Abraham’s children are complicit in the violently conflicted traditions of patriarchal orthodoxy. The root sins of violent patriarchy are narcissism, the suppression of women and the prostitution of Nature.

The test of authentic religion is rejection of gratuitous violence in all its forms. People are massively distrustful of religions because of institutional betrayal and exploitation. The overreach of religion is a violence of higher magnitude when prosecuted by institutions that know better or should know better. The institutional culture of dominion theology in violent usage of guilt and fear is irreligious on its face.

While people have effectively been kept in check by gratuitous violence, the response of nature is quite otherwise; nature is unhesitant and merciless in her reaction to mindless exploitation and overreach. Notwithstanding its disconnection from and derogation of materiality, the outdated, orthodox static-centrist worldview of dominion theology justifies even now its culture of oppression, suppression and repression — the culture of death.

What is the solution to patriarchy's gratuitous violence and the culture of death? The consciousness of evolved symbiotic necessity is an escape nature offers; by another name, evolution’s symbiotic solution is **EUCCHARISTIC ALTRUISM**, as in Christic consciousness—the enlightenment of darkness. Evolution’s cosmic openness is an ascendant consciousness that affirms life’s diversity and disdain for orthodox sameness and cultural deadness.

EUCCHARISTIC ALTRUISM is subject to no institutional orthodoxy rather it is the compulsion of intensional vitality and self-reflective intentionality. [The owl of Minerva is a metaphor of altruistic enlightenment, of wisdom’s night-time work.

The evolution of “divinity consciousness” in the Evolutionary Worldview enlightens the reconciliation of theistic evolution and creation theology, and escape from gratuitous violence.

<http://www.secondenlightenment.org/ORTHODOX%20PATRIARCHY.pdf>

Botched Patriarchy at Ground Zero

What are at the same time terribly, terribly silly but more terribly tragic are the sibling rivalries of the sons of Abraham. They are about dominion and insistence on ideological, patriarchal “orthodoxy”. A pox on orthodoxists, Christian, Judaic and Islamic! The deceased of history are violated by fixations and pretenses of religious ideologies!

It’s the bullheadedness of male brotherhoods that keep alive violent sibling rivalries. The closed culture of violent male patriarchy in the present time is as indefensible as the static-centrist worldview upon which patriarchy justifies its claim on God. It’s time for cultures to evolve beyond the conflicted history of patriarchy.

Women of the world! God is no apologist for the “orthodox” violence of competing brotherhoods, whether Christian, Judaic or Islamist! Wars are about narcissism, dominion and machismo! You, the children of the world and nature are the victims. Enough already! It is in you that Divinity comes to enlightenment. The torch of faith is for you to carry. Sibling male competition is faithless, irrational and radically destructive! Please, lead us out of the dark night of violent male fundamentalism into the light of open Divinity.

Wouldn’t it be great if the proposed mosque at Ground Zero would become a common chapel where the non-absolutists of Islam, Judaism and Christianity would come together and begin to reverse the violent wrongs of history perpetrated by the sibling animus of the sons of Abraham? Just think how that could promote global healing instead of global destruction! Only women are in a position to make it happen; left to their small-minded machinations, the boys by themselves will only make it worse.

<http://www.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474978459272>

Why Faith & Reason Matter to Each Other

In the natural order of creation/evolution, energy and matter co-depend; they are co-identical. Another way of saying it is that the relationship between energy and matter is “reciprocal,” each is wholly dependent on the other. And so it is with faith and reason, reason qualifies faith as faith qualifies reason, and in the process of mutual qualification, faith and reason co-evolve. The harmonized outcome of faith/reason co-evolution is *the ascendancy of consciousness*, the growth of humankind in wisdom, age and grace.

The stultification of intelligence frustrates faith; and frustrated faith defeats the authenticity (growth) and mutual correlation. The frustration of faith/reason correlation is radically schizophrenic. Stereotypically, the feminine side of human consciousness correlates with faith, and the male side of consciousness correlates with reason. The left brain lobe is associated with “emotional intelligence” and the right brain lobe correlates with “rational intelligence.” When rational intelligence dominates over emotional intelligence, human sensitivity is violated; and when emotional intelligence dominates over rational intelligence, essential mutuality is frustrated — the co-evolution of faith and reason is misdirected. The capacity of faith and reason to function mutually is characteristic of the female/male brain because the female and male persons both have bi-lobar brains by which to harmonize personal consciousness.

The place of humankind in the “Natural Order of Sacrament” is unfolding, an experiential reality that co-evolves in context with the changing correlations of evolving Earth-life, i.e., the web ecologies of interdependent life inhabiting air, land and water. Human life is totally dependent on “other life.” Other life, the ecozoic web systems of Earth, are being radically wasted and mortally imperiled by cultural ignorance and arrogance. Ignorance and arrogance are failures brought on by the cultural alienation between femininity and masculinity, by the cultured disconnection of religion (moral sensitivity) from Natural Sacrament.

Faith is expressed in ritual Sacrament, but religion’s failure to co-identify with and validate Natural Sacrament is a radical failure of faith and reason to validate each other. Because of this radical failure, religions fail to sensitize personal/ collective conscience to the mutual obligations of faith and reason. Faith “*reveals the requirements of love;*” reason reveals the requirements of faith; faith and hope co-evolve in the expectations of love. Scholastic philosophy speaks of faith/reason mutuality in this way: “faith seeking intelligence—*fides quaerens intellectum*; intelligence seeking faith—*intellectus quaerens fidem.*”

The failure of religions to harmonize faith and reason, Sacrament and nature, creation and evolution, stultifies humankind in religious/cultural fixations. The deadening weight of stultification mortally imperils all life, but especially the possibilities of human uplift by way of faith, hope and love.

What's Wrong with Religion

Its sense has been alienated from Earth/cosmic connections. It's gone corporate, mercantile; it's intensely male-exclusive; it's schizophrenic; it's politically partisan; it's disconnected from reality; it overreaches.

Religion has turned its face from wisdom's way, from knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord. Religion has set its face against evolving consciousness and made itself a fixation against natural authenticity. Male-dominated religion violates its natural roots, ignores divinity connection in reality, and trashes sensitivity; it ignores mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity. Its communication is distrustful; its consciousness is selectively disordered; its conscience is arbitrary.

The intelligent design of the Sacrament of Natural Order reveals its wisdom gradually in quantum packets. Religion has arrogated itself above commonsense and prided itself above the belief that the anecdotes of wisdom originate in the experiences of nature, and that wisdom compels fidelity to nature. Wisdom is anecdotal, incremental—the outcome of moral purpose, of evolutionary consciousness.

Institutional church prostitutes nature and exploits relationship. It usurps universal faith and fragments One-Church. Institutional church has become so self-obsessed that it has all but lost its sense of essential human belonging to the "Sacrament of Natural Order". Wisdom is new wine in new wineskins. Wineskins are placental; amniotic wine is evolutionary consciousness, spirit self-refreshed in the iterations of communication, consciousness and conscience.

In The DREAM of the EARTH, Father Tom Berry says: *"Professional education should be based on an awareness that Earth is itself the primary physician, primary revelation of the divine, primary scientist, primary technologist, primary commercial venture, primary artist, primary educator, primary agent in whichever activity we find human affairs"*. Nature is "Primary Scripture", the authentic and primary teacher of religion. Nature is universal church, PRIMARY CHURCH.

Jesus retreated to a high place with Peter, James and John and revealed to them his insight of divinity, his message and mission of universal love. This

first Christian hierarchy of three glowed with excitement over the illumination of his divine mission. Jesus made sense of the prophets of Jewish history, so much so that it was as if the prophets were there on the spot with them. So,

when all was said and done, what did Peter want to do? He wanted to institutionalize the experience; he wanted to build a monument of stone on the spot, to the memory of the prophets and to the moment of transfiguration. But Jesus took strong exception to the idea.

When Jesus died, it seems that the lesson of Transfiguration was lost. The “hierarchy” returned to its monument-building instincts and began the process of institutionalizing the teaching and mission of Jesus. Not, I think, what Jesus wanted or expected. The problem with religion today is that it still fails to understand that the illumination of each moment is a stepping stone to further enlightenment, not another boulder to be cemented to other boulders to make a wall or institution to house and fixate memories. Corporate religion makes building stones out of religious insights (dogma) and mortars them together, one on top of the other, on the misguided presumption that consciousness can be fixated in its illumination of relationships, which necessarily change in context and consequence.

Purely and simply, religion is about ever changing relationships, which pertain to every aspect of the human condition and in context of nature and each other. Relational consciousness is local, which means, bioregional, communal, familial. Religion obliges universal fidelity to primary family, primary community, and primary bioregion. The bioregionally diverse webs of flora and fauna are the sustainable means of food and fiber that humans need to self-accommodate. Natural diversity is the singularly accessible resource humans have for a sustainable future. Waste of environment, species, genetic modifications, hybridizing, etc, introduce cumulative risks with unsustainable consequences.

The arrogation and appropriation of religion for self-aggrandizing purposes is a problem of corporate overreach. Every person needs to engage individual consciousness and conscience, and awaken to *primary religion* at hand, in family, community and church. The integrity of these is what “transfigures” us, when we are faithful to them. As locally faithful communities we become a global network of authentic communities.

We need to be aware that what’s wrong with religion is corporate arrogation and inauthentic overreach that infects personal consciousness and behavior. The GREAT WORK ahead for humankind is the “Pro-life” restoration and preservation of symbiotic BIODIVERSITY AT RISK.