

## **“The Heritage of Trust”**

### **The Life, Work and Times of Sylvester L. Steffen**

The “heritage of trust” is a common inheritance also called “Covenant”. Covenant is the obligation of reciprocity, that is, the harmony of intentional mutuality, complementarity and subsidiarity — what is, “self-reflective symbiosis”, fulfilled living.

#### The “Wheel of Life” and the Commonweal

Every journey travels on wheels. The cosmic power that energizes the Wheel of Life is light. The Wheel of Life advances by individual input. I speak here in retrospective of my turn at the “Wheel”. When personal wellbeing is authentically exercised, so is common wellbeing. By the light of common wellbeing our individual way is illuminated, but also, the greater wellbeing is illumined by the personal light we bring to the Wheel.

The shouldering of one’s turn at the wheel begins early. As a child I was early aware of Isaiah’s insight that “a child shall lead them” (Isaiah 11:6). Jesus reaffirmed this wisdom insight in his words to his disciples, that the greatest should be least, and that they could not be part of his kingdom except they became as children. And so, the Christian turn at the Wheel begins in the Bethlehem insight, the place of Jesus’ birth, and the light, life, work and times of Jesus Christ.

#### 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 in 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 community. Each, person and community, is reflective of the other and each instructs the other.

Virtual power, consciousness, is a universal awareness that governs relationships, the bases of reality—a reality that is not static but which is dynamic and transformational. In cosmic relationship, all life enjoys kinship. The relation of cosmic “kinship” in human family is beyond question but the political 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 imagined (virtual) 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 their implications and complexities are disassembled.

Imagined divisions, mental constructions of reality, may deceive consciousness to believe that imagined aspects are things real in themselves. In the same way that matter and energy are not separable, so also body and soul, the spiritual and the secular are not separable. Herein is the universal, cosmic basis of all relationship, of all kinship; not a basis for arrogant claim of kingship.

The Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, movements arising out of the conflicted imperial Church/State, are about the schism of faith and reason and worldview fixations that radically divide people of faith and people of reason. For times untold, patriarchy co-evolved with cultures which politicized in imperial hegemony the theology

of dominion. Until this day the radicalized animus between faith and reason is a schizophrenic consciousness that prevails in personal and public consciousness. Right reason eschews both Religion's fideism and Enlightenment's rationalism, for they distort honesty, commonsense, and they violate the integrity of soul.

Unless and until "metaphysical consciousness" (spirituality) vested in physical reality recognizes the essential mutuality of faith/ reason, humankind will continue to self-radicalize in its deceived sense of self in reality. All religions are challenged to review the premises of their "theo" logic, for if the premises of theology are misinformed in their assumptions, so are their conclusions.

### Virtual Reality and "New Age" Metaphysics

The philosophical worry I vent is an appropriate civil lament for our personal agony is socially 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 its weaving. By challenging the entanglement we may discover the reasons of social desperation but also reasons for optimism. By penetrating the tangle of self-deception we may uncover the sense of Vatican II and its insight beyond the desperation of imperial fideism and Enlightenment rationalism.

As important, if not more important, is movement of public consciousness to a new synthesis of metaphysical reality, and the remedial application of justified living that brings healing to blighted nature. Dwelling in backward-focused thinking can lead us to a demeaning pathology if we neglect to take the next step, namely, to discover and draw conclusions from the mistakes of the past, and to correct the breaches of faith and reason that bring on cultural desecrations of the Earth-cosmic continuum.

The healing of the rift between faith and reason is the *sine-qua-non* condition of virtual and real ascent into New Age consciousness and commitment to equal human rights and growth in personal self-worth. An informed recognition of the mutuality of faith/reason might for the first time effectively open civilizations (churches) to the realization of human potential, free of cultured alienation, egotistic 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. This is Christian Faith. This is cosmic wisdom.

### Summary Judgment

Perseverance in faithful living leads to self-enlightenment and socially hopeful outcomes. Wisdom requires time in acquiring. 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 the enlightened attentiveness of humility, what we call "soul". Humility demands the honesty of admitting above all else, that is, the conscionable response of fidelity to life's 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 well ask of himself, herself: "How should, can I proceed to disrobe myself from the tangles of cultural self-deception?"

### The Sacrament of Life

I plead here for the religious imperative of eco-morality, and I trust that my life witnesses not just “talk” but also the “walk”. It matters how we construct our personal worldview for by it we construct our life-ethic. We have deceived ourselves to think that we can manipulate and exploit nature with impunity. The consequences lay heavily upon 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 and zeal (!) for fidelity and authenticity safeguard common wellbeing. If we are open to learn, 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 finding peace with what God has given us in the sun-rise, sun-fullness and sun-set of life.

Religion is green; religion is consciousness of organic relationship; except the seed is buried in good soil and grows un-blighted in its destined purpose, it will not bear the fruit that enriches and renews life. All life, the wholeness of personal experience is “Eucharist”. Eucharist is the greening experience of life and the production 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 personal self diminishes in the ascendancy of other. Being bread to one another is what Eucharist is about, 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 our beginning 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 food to life anew. We are bread. The rhythms of life are desire’s lyrical dance with destiny, the song of Eucharist, the song of fullness — the “Panis Angelicus”.

### 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 made of cereal grain, the sign and means of “Eucharist”, keeps alive the messianic means and mission to serve needs in every generation and to identify what is common in all relationship.

Like Joseph of Egypt, I occupy in my family the penultimate sibling relationship, 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 priestly intention. 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 in our religion class 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. Probably it cannot be known in advance by anyone how one might be called to lead or to know the leadership outcomes of one's life.

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 attend it carefully. 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 frustrating influence of cultural meanness.

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 in Germany was on the verge of officially taking political control 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 two world figures could hardly be more different in the roles they played on the world scene over years to come.*] 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 labored 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.

In all honesty, I assure you that my growing-up experience was wholly without trauma and depression. It is my sense even now that my childhood was nothing if not idyllic. And at the present time, some 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 upon myself the task of being torchbearer for the Second Enlightenment.

### What is intelligence?

One way to understand intelligence is to see its many faces. About faces: every face has two sides. On each side there is an ear, an eye, a nostril, and half a mouth. Two-sidedness is a design of sexuality and is *prima facie* evidence of bi-sexual biology. Except for the joined two-sidedness of the face and body, face is a front, merely a mask, an illusion. Every person is female/ male characterized, physically (materially) and psychologically (spiritually). As everyone is in person female/ male, so are the many faces of intelligence; for which reason there is no justification in fact for males to self-arrogate dominion over females, whether in religion or politics.

What is "face"? The face is the communication profile of the head. The head is the container of the brain, the processor of all communication. The features of the face are mechanisms of communication, ears, eyes, nostrils, and mouth — emitters and receptors of wave messaging. The brain processes the emitted and received messages. In concert, facial features express the emotions and reasons of messaging.

The brain also controls the manipulative and locomotive devices of the body, arms and hands, legs and feet (fins and tail, wings and legs). The face feeds the body, by which the whole system is powered in its processes. The face is expressive precisely because of its functions. The face is expressive of rationality and emotion, both of which are themselves message-complexes. The face reflectively expresses its reaction to the

communicated impressions it receives, which signal back to the party communicating. Whether in woman or man, no other human profile is more impressive/ expressive than the face — what reflects the creative potential of emotional/ rational intelligence.

Female intelligence is stereotyped as “emotional”, and male intelligence is stereotyped as “rational”. The reality is that the dispositions of intelligence, female and male, are characterized and processed in the cortical brain. As seems evident from history (in Roman Catholic culture, for example) such male/ female stereotypes can be radicalized to extremes that mislead, alienate and harm.

So then, how might the emotional/ rational faces of intelligence be seen and understood? One approach is to make a list of the many faces of intelligence and explore them for the way they effect/ affect relationships; for example: the intelligence of history; of story; of work; of play; of trickery; of doubt; of belief; of persuasion; of deception; of logic; of seduction; of encouragement; of goodness; of fair play; of honesty; of song; of poetry; of debate; of humility; of pretense; of calmness; of faith; of hope; of love; of desperation; of elation; of openness; of closedness — and the list goes on. But you get the idea.

Personally, I don't see that any one of expression of these kinds of intelligence or emotion is more characteristic of one sex or the other. All intelligence has rational and emotional components. So what is the sense of sexually stereotyping intelligence? Stereotyping is a habit of culture that is used for pretentious and political purposes, namely, for self-advantage and the putdown of another. Mostly it is a male artifice by which men persist in the instinct of domination over females (for sexual advantage) and over other males.

In his syndicated column (THE WITNESS, Official Newspaper of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, February 25, 2007, pg 4) Rev Ron Rolheiser, OMI, reflects on “moral intelligence”. He speaks of five categories of intelligence: *emotional, rational, practical, aesthetic* and *moral*. He refers to intelligence as

“a depth or wisdom or character...a sensitivity to the deeper contours within life...things which hold life together at its roots and which must be respected so that life doesn't go sour, unravel, disintegrate, and turn against us. Moral intelligence intuits the imperatives innate within the DNA of life itself... It lays bare the hard-wiring inside the mystery of life and love...like other forms of intelligence, it is perhaps mainly a natural endowment, a temperament, a grace given by God... I suspect in most cases it is also the product of...a certain kind of suffering and humiliation. What do I mean by that? If we...ask ourselves: What has made us deep...has helped us to understand the deeper things in life ...we will have to admit that what made us deep were not our successes or achievements [but] our inferiorities...some physical inadequacy...an abuse inflicted upon us...our failure to achieve what we'd like to do in life, a pain about our sexual orientation, an addiction we can't master, and in many, many other small and big wounds and bruises that helped shape our souls.”

Except for the intelligent design of female/ male mutuality, we do not experience the fullness of life's purposes. At this juncture in the cosmic journey of humankind, as we struggle to reform global life patterns and move away from ecological/ environmental

wasting, we need to reform first our consciences to an adult faith mode which centers on the personal identity of nature and self, of body and soul.

A conscience that is habituated in the exploitation and waste of nature, naturally exploits self and other. The spirit/ matter schism that has been cultured between the self and nature must first be bridged and healed before humans can achieve the healing of self and nature.

### Educating for Life

As an involved observer I've come to believe that institutional education like institutional food is commercial, bland and unhealthy. Kids deserve better than canned education and junk food. The school environment has become limiting, intimidating and downright dangerous. And in recent years the politicizing of education has not worked for the better. An ancient chariot bumper sticker (it's a joke) in Latin says "Non pro schola, sed pro vita discimus." The priority of this wisdom has been set on its head in America; under the present Administration "we study not for life but for school."

Understand I am not an education professional. I have indeed spent a lot of time in classrooms and I've been much involved in the education of my six daughters, and now with my grandchildren. So I am not a disengaged observer. But of great value has been the education I've gotten from my wife who has advanced education degrees and has taught almost uninterruptedly over the past 55 years. So the conclusions I've come to are not uneducated.

Education should be an enlivening experience, not a frustrating one. When learning and experience find accommodation, life is enlivened; every life is an individual reality that unfolds originally in personal experience, and it shouldn't be made to conform to a universal silly-putty mold. There are stages to life that are common but also original. Emotional health is a matter as urgent as physical health. Childhood and early youth is a time to acquire physical health as well as to develop emotional intelligence; upon these, rational balance depends. The hyped emphasis on rationalism in early childhood and the lack of purposeful physical exercise interfere with healthy emotional development and rob children of their childhood.

As to lifetime habits of learning, what happens in the first 10-12 years of a child's life are permanently determinative. The lasting lessons of emotional intelligence are mostly learned at home. The artificial environment of schools doesn't have the equivalent stabilizing effect (normally) that the home environment does—parents of course have to be able and want to provide for their children's emotional/ learning needs. Educational institutions must understand that their place is supplemental to parental teaching and they should encourage parents to be the primary educators. As much as possible the first ten years of learning should take place at home.

Children will be more ready to benefit from formal teaching/ learning if they are emotionally stable and have developed ready and matured habits of learning. The high costs of formal education will be better accounted for when children are ready to deal with the formal environment.

First learning should focus on three objectives: iterative stimulation, that is, repetition exercises (memorization), connection, and self-motivation. Things appropriate for memorization and making value connections include singing, learning to play a musical instrument, play acting, hands-on craft skills, drawing, calligraphy, painting—

works that give a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem. Social skills involving service to others, doing things for each other on a daily basis at home, chores, reading together things with lifetime value-lessons, such as poems, proverbs, mythologies, stories of indigenous cultures, especially stories of the indigenous Americas and talking about lessons, are important to sensitivity and valuation beyond ego-focus.

When the child acquires facility in these learning objectives and grows to own them in the first ten years of life, it is likely the child will excel personally in life and be enabled to experience self-realization more fully. Repetition (memorization) establishes habits of discipline and permanent enjoyment in things committed to mind; connection stimulates imagination to find meaning in all learning and the fun and challenge of connecting things learned; self-motivation helps one acquire zeal for social relationships, eagerness for learning, being of service to others, facing up to challenges and becoming a learner and teacher for life.

The intelligent life isn't something that just happens or that depends on genetic chance. Intelligence is a learned skill that comes from exercising the unique natural tools everyone is born with. As a society we are depriving our children of their childhood, that is, of the time they need to acquire foundations of emotional intelligence.

The engrained culture of patriarchal presumptions is a traumatizing obstacle. The price society pays for this defect is the gross dysfunction and the degrading consequences of pushing children into harsh rationality before they are emotionally stable. A child is no more a mini rational adult than the male seed is a full but miniature male human being (an old presumption of Thomistic Scholasticism). The potential of a specific human being begins only when a sperm joins an egg. And a child grows into a rationally intelligent person only when intelligence matures in the solid grounding of emotional health. The truth of this reality needs to be recognized and society needs to prioritize values and strategies so that our children acquire the emotional foundations they need to cope with the difficult circumstances of unpredictable change that will come their way too soon.

In short, education and religion both need to understand the faith basis of emotional intelligence, which is the sustainable basis of rational intelligence and civil/religious relationship.

### The Culture Wars between Faith and Reason

The Renaissance was a time of social evolution that connects the Middle Ages with Modernity. What was going on during that time was a strained courtship between Faith and Reason. The unfolding enlightenment of the Renaissance was an awakening of reason in the pursuits of consciousness, science and humanism, beyond the cultural frustrations of imperial domination and hyped faith. 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 Church for internal reform from its corruption and theological misdirection; he did not, however, advocate for reason and humanism as did Erasmus and More. Good sense was a battered shuttlecock that flew back and forth between the advocates of Faith and Reason, and Church and Enlightenment. In over-simplified terms, this is what the war between the Reformation (Protestants) and the Counter-Reformation (Roman Catholics) was about.

The Council of Trent occasioned 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 came to suffer radical schizophrenia. The breach between Faith and Reason probably reached its extreme during the papacy of Pope Pius IX and at the First Vatican Council in which Pius IX insisted that he be declared infallible.

Not until Vatican II, influenced among other by the science and 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.

### 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 seminal ideas and to credit people who have made me 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 buildings from accumulated stuff in the farm workshop. In our play we did all the seasonal things that were done on farms and in the community of farm families. The three of us played off each others imaginations in making everything we needed to make make-believe real life.

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. 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 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 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 Catechism. For two weeks, after school was over in Spring, 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 as a child.

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 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 Ralph and I, more correctly, I and Ralph, were often enough to blame for 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. The family dynamic very much changed with the departure of the two oldest siblings.

The next great change in my life 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 and it also opened my eyes to the historical misdirection of faith, of Church.

After graduating from grade school (1946) I entered the preparatory 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 a life of service—what priesthood is about—has remained with me.

Both my two 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 1957-2007 been in Papua, New Guinea, where he worked most recently with 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 MA (Liberal Arts) major 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 both 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 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 priority in their idiosyncratic “deconstruction” of the realms of reality, which confused me.

In my eleventh Seminary year, as a first-year theology student, all students were required to write a serious paper; mine was “Religion: A Rational Consideration.” (See: Sylvester L. Steffen, Appendix A, QUANTUM RELIGION). In it I tried to establish the continuity relationship of theological and cosmological matters in the evolution of energy and matter, soul and 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 of common consciousness. Conflicted truth unsettles conscious holism and rattles the brain with voices of disagreement.

I came to the conviction that I needed to pursue science as professionally as I had pursued religion, so I decided with much reflection to discontinue my pursuit of the institutional 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 for my livelihood.

#### “Our Liberties We Prize, Our Rights We Shall Maintain”

The above caption is the official slogan of the State of Iowa. It bares the soul of Iowa citizens and it flies on the State’s flag for the edification of all. By my Iowa experience, I like to think that as civilization goes, Iowa is exemplary — rich in people, land and resources, situated between the two great waterways of the United States, the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

Self-reliance and social responsibility are foundations of civil conscience, premier commitments of people and State. Citizen habits of tranquil consciousness are a legacy of environmental favor. Located in the American Heartland, away from the tension-loaded polarities of the east and west coasts, Iowans have a mind and place of natural and social amalgamation and accommodation. While Iowa has its tensions between agriculture and industry we pride ourselves in the accommodation of social and business values. Our common commitment is to civility, which we honor with the spiritual virtue and political sense it models for people of all civilization.

The great question of history is what kind of public environment champions best the causes of civility. Against the backdrop of social evolution, Iowa offers some insights that may well serve global government. We need to ask and answer, “What is civility and what conditions best enable it?” Civility may be understood as composed of three main elements: the recognition of personal, individual rights; the recognition of public interest necessities; and personal accommodation to public interest necessities. Civility is the spiritual/ material interface of mutuality focused on pursuits of self-realization and self-accommodation, consistent with wellbeing. The common sense of mutual regard for self and other composes the religious soul of civility and its moral base for success. The social tranquility of successful civilization is relationally (religiously) seen as a reflection of/ in Trinitarian Communion.

The very origin of the liberties and rights of the individual person resides in life’s natural webs and in common interdependency. Rightly expressed individuality sustains web-life interdependency, and is, by so doing, sustained by web-providence. Communal

well-being and personal self-fulfillment are relational motivations that root cosmically in the natural order. Perceived conflicts naturally arise between interests of self and other, and failure to ameliorate perceived frictions between personal liberties and communal well-being leads to social disruptions.

Civility is a consciousness that recognizes the potential of conflict between claims of personal right and public necessity and commits to resolve differences. Civility is the tranquil mind that finds accommodation for self and other, and is the personal/ social art of negotiating personal/ social rationality. Civility is a process of peaceful living wherein individuals and community maintain a mind and a reality of accommodation to each and all citizens in the usage and care of common resources, and to securing ecologic necessities that enable societies for generations to come.

Iowa has justly been sung for its rural integrity, its ideal family environment, its schools, its small towns and its grid of farm-to-market roads that plot the land and people in ways favorable for communication. Country schools were situated every two square miles. Class time was scheduled to accommodate nature's cycles and seasonal chores. Country churches were conveniently located. The farm way of life was religiously conducive for every aspect of life was structured around cultivation of the land, harvest of produce, animal care, and a religious commitment to natural integrity. Families were largely independent in their ability to provide needed meat, milk, eggs, vegetables and fruits. Men, women and children worked together and played together. Fruits and vegetables were canned and cellared for winter consumption. Industry for the most part served agriculture in partnership. Crop and animal cultures were largely diversified. Animal manure was not wasted but was valued and used for the enrichment of the fields. The rotation of diversified crops and the pasturing of animals enabled the control of weeds and insects in benign ways, and avoided the burnout of soil. But all is not idyllic in Iowa. Corporate feudalism has overtaken agriculture.

In the last half of the twentieth century the corporate capitalization of farms and farmers has become official governmental policy and land grant universities functioned to radically modify agricultural from its moral/ religious tradition to subservience under corporate industry. The industrialization policy created need for fuel-powered machinery and for inputs of manufactured chemicals. Rural Iowa morphed to industrial Iowa and rural populations shifted from farms to manufacturing municipalities; small town Iowa suffered economic depression. New farm machinery, fertilizers and pesticides made it possible for one or two farmers to cultivate ten times more land than could be cultivated under non-industrial circumstances. This shift was touted as an unmitigated blessing and a social necessity. Produce of the land flowed into the bins of transnational corporations, which under pretexts of feeding the world's hungry, unsettled the indigenous potential of agricultural development in Third World nations, causing them to become economically dependent upon the U.S. economy. This cultural unsettling encouraged the rise of despots who impoverish the people and who become obscenely enriched by their collaboration with transnational corporations.

Third World nations have become unmanageably impoverished and so have many farmers who were forced into bankruptcy. Notwithstanding greatly increased production and higher costs of inputs, the price of farm commodities remained at or below the pre-industrialization levels. Corporate farming serves the convenience of industry to the short term and long term disadvantage of local and global interests.

From 1959 to 1989 I traveled the Midwest and called on farmers to sell them grain storage bins. When I began selling, the largest bin diameter available was 24'. In the later years, farmers were buying grain bins up to 75' diameter, and very few 24' bins were sold. The bins I sold were not merely storage bins, but they were equipped with ventilation fans and controls that let farmers store and dry fresh harvested corn. My work allowed me to witness firsthand the economic tragedies of farm families caused by the industrialization of agriculture. The pace of change acted as a steamroller that decimated the farm population. In 1950 the national farm population was 5.5 million and by 2001 it was down to 2.16 million.

Corporate agriculture operates by the philosophy of corporate business — maximum exploitation for least cost. Natural ecologies cannot forever survive the greed of unmitigated consumerist exploitation. Food producing ecologies took eons in their formation, and if they are exploited in ways that expend their biotic capital, future generations will have hell to pay. Production outputs in excess of biotic potential cannot interminably be demanded of the land; natural inputs must offset outputs if the biotic potential of land is to be preserved. Biotic preservation is achieved by diversification and crop rotation. The relentless application of harsh chemicals intervenes organic vitality and the health of soil, which leads to the compromise of human health. Petro-chemical, energy-intensive agriculture, corporately-dominated, has a dead-end future.

Contrary to nature and to good sense corporate agriculture commodifies land-use primarily for corporate profit, which lacks sensitivity for natural diversification and crop rotation. In recent years the immorality of corporate obsession for profit has hit the pocket books of the American public with a meanness that has shaken the faith of the public in corporatism, as well it should! Economic sanity is a moral and practical issue that compels both religion and civility to search for better ways of business and agriculture to interact.

A conversion from wrongdoing and a return to respect for the land and natural economies are needed. The stressed circumstance of agricultural ecologies/ economies makes it clear that cultural sensitivity in land-use and the production of food and fiber call for hands-on care of the land, which requires more people to tend it sensitively and less usage of reckless technologies. Because the commodification of land, now in vogue, is blind to its environmental and ecological waste, and to the threats it poses to all life, it is not a sustainable paradigm for civil/ religious society.

Iowans trust the genetics and proven providence of the Mater Terra but eschew the mendacity of genetic tampering and hard rock drugging. Iowans experience health and wealth in the embrace of the land, and with good reason they distrust alien purveyors of genetic intervention and violent stimulations that overreach nature, upset her proven reliability, insult reason and faith, and aggravate proclivities of disease and disorder.

Who is an Iowan? We are a religious people; we are a civil people, a people of the Land. We came to Iowa *strangers and guests* but we are claimed by her, one and all without discrimination; we are her children. The Land is our Mater Terra; the Land's soul is our soul; willingly we give the best of ourselves to her. In the Land we find ourselves, for from the Land we come. The Land cultivates us. Our word becomes one with hers. The Land's word is our work. Our fellowship is strong because the Land's love is strong; her bond is her word. In fidelity to land-bondedness our love manifests honest religion, honest civility. The Land humbles us; The Land uplifts us. Spring sunlight warms the

Land, swells the seed and bathes all life in floral scent of lilac, apple, clover and rose. The buzzing bees busily abound amidst the floral extravagance and serve the swell of their fruitful excess. The sheer wealth and health of the Land's largesse puts smiles on children's faces, love in their hearts and the glow of the sun on cheeks.

The Land's liberties are our liberties. We embrace them. The Land's justice is our justice; we stand by it. The Land's rights are our rights; we shall maintain them. The Land's honor is our honor; we shall celebrate it. Our justice, our rights, our liberties, and our honor we prize. The love in our hearts is fervent in our resolve to maintain justice, rights, liberties and honor. We shall continue ever to be one people, of The Land, by The Land, and for The Land, indivisible, under God, with liberty and justice for all; and by God's grace we shall not perish from the face of the Earth.

### Seamless, Holistic Living

Faith, science and business define my public life. My childhood experience was religion-based. Faith attraction put me early in the Seminary, from 1946 until 1957; seven of the eleven years were spent in vowed religious life. After leaving the Seminary, the science of grain became my priority scientific interest and the business of my life.

The serious linking of religion, science, and business, consciously began early in the 1950s. My brother Arnold and I were both seminarians at Techny, Illinois, preparing for the missionary priesthood with the Society of the Divine Word. Two other brothers, Norbert and Vincent, were in business together at New Hampton, Iowa, doing business as STEFFEN FARM SUPPLY. Vince's work included the selling of grain storage bins to farmers in the area. Early in the fifties he began installing perforated floors in the bins and equipping them with ventilation fans to remove moisture and prevent grain from heating and spoiling.

Sometime in the Winter/ Spring of 1952, Arnold and I talked about the grain bin business and the innovation of drying grain in bins. We reflected how reminiscent was this development to the biblically storied life and times of Joseph of Egypt, who had the responsibility of preserving grain *in times of plenty against the years of want*. The linkage in history of messianic lessons to the modern situation was compelling for me. I was very much occupied with the reflection. Joseph the "grain guardian" image seemed to me to be a compelling business trademark. So I made a logo sketch of Joseph, the Pharaoh's grain keeper (provider of grain to others) with background pyramids and the caption "EGYPT".

When I left the seminary in 1957, I was invited to work with Norbert and Vince in New Hampton. My interest was in the grain storage business. My brothers agreed that it would be useful to understand grain science more deeply. I was told about grain research at Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, by Agricultural Engineer William V. "Bill" Hukill and his associates. So, I contacted him and told him of my interest; he put me in touch with the Botany Department at ISU. This occasioned my thirty-year membership in the American Society of Agricultural Engineers.

Shortly after, I matriculated in the Botany Department as a special student of Plant Physiology, prior to being approved as a regular graduate student. Within two years I completed studies, finished a research project and wrote a thesis. I graduated with a Master of Science degree, May 1960. My MS thesis "The Effects of Drying Method on the Germination of Corn" is in library at ISU. During that time I also developed the final

version of the HARVESTALL logo and literature to promote the business of on-farm grain storage.

I was fortunate to be able to pursue science in a way that fit well in both lives. My pursuit of a Master of Science degree in Botany (Plant Physiology) gave me entry into physical science and quantum-electric investigations. Fortuitously, the knowledge I acquired enabled me to apply basic science in a way that directly benefited farmers in the harvest, curing and preservation of their corn grain on-the-farm, and to apply learning to an understanding of the order of natural sacrament/science in the evolving universe.

After completing studies I went into business with my brother Vincent. His business was called Harvestall Industries, Inc. Together we sold grain storage systems of our own invention to farmers; the systems employed a process of “chillcuring” that avoided heating the grain and the forced and premature extraction of moisture from it. The “chillcuring” process reduced operating costs for farmers, even as grain value was enhanced. Our business separated from the Steffen Farm Supply business and relocated at a downtown office. In the early nineteen-sixties Vince was elected State Representative of Chickasaw County and became the Speaker of the Iowa House during the time of Governor Harold E. Hughes.



Harvestall business was unique in the industry in that it alone was sensitive to preserve seed integrity by avoiding exposure of the grain to heat; this was done by the use of ventilation fans to keep the grain cool, unlike other systems that used gas furnaces to heat air and forcibly accelerate the removal of moisture from the grain. As we developed the business and science of grain care I procured a number of pioneer process patents and Vince developed product patents. Over the years, our grain storage system and process of grain-care acquired a unique market identity, HARVESTALL Grain CHILLCURING.

The originality of the Harvestall business gave us a distinct marketing advantage. Because of the special economics of keeping/curing/drying of the grain, and of securing seed integrity, our business was well received and gained the high approval of farmers who discovered its benefits. The petroleum industry had a vested interest in the “hot air” drying of grain and continued to fund research at Land Grant Universities, including Iowa State University. Notwithstanding the soundness of our science, universities showed us no favor; instead they inclined in the directions of corporate business interests, of energy-intensive agriculture and of manufacturers of gas-heated grain dryers.

During the 1970s there was an energy/economy crisis in the U.S. As an incentive to save energy, the government encouraged farmers to use energy-conserving products. One incentive allowed an energy tax credit for the purchase of “active solar” products. Harvestall’s Chillcuring System fit the government’s original definition of “active solar” and the Harvestall Marketing Company used the credit incentive in its selling strategy.

In the early 1980s the IRS began to disallow tax credits on Harvestall systems, and it pursued recovery of credits earlier taken by farmers. Some unhappy people testily quipped “*The Government giveth. The Government taketh. Praised be the Government!*” The threat of farmer lawsuits became a real and serious matter. Because of the threat of lawsuits, the Marketing Company and its dealers were understandably unsettled. Farmers directed their displeasure with the IRS at Harvestall business. Another hurtful matter followed with the “coincidental” decision of the Secretary of Agriculture and the US

Department of Agriculture (c.1983) to end the storage facility loan program which until then had made money available to farmers on favorable terms to purchase grain storage and drying equipment. Faced with this added disadvantage, the Marketing Company canceled its marketing agreement and effectively ended Harvestall business.

While our original science stood out in the market to our advantage, it also made us a target. The “Grain Guardian” trademark was copied by a competitor bin company and my patents were put at issue in federal courts in Minnesota and Indiana, and in class-action lawsuits in Iowa. For the reasons above and for health reasons my business activity effectively ended by 1985, but I continued on into the 1990s to defend myself and my patents against lawsuits. When all was said and done, the business of Harvestall ended even though the validity of my patents was sustained. The farmers withdrew their class-action lawsuits because it was clear that the Harvestall Chillcuring process fit the IRS definition of “active solar” as it was represented.

Vince and I worked closely together until his death, July 10, 1994. By 1982 I had developed medical problems that restricted my work and allowed me more time to study and write toward my lifetime avocation of reconciling science and religion.

HARVESTALL science has never been more *right* for farmers, for grain, and for global ecological economics than it is now. Environmental and ecological economics are issues of social and moral urgency. The resource bases of agriculture have been radically degraded over the years as have other segments of the economy, in large part because of institutional misdirection (governmental, educational, and corporate) toward energy-intensive farming —“vertical integration”. Authentic farmers work with nature, “with the grain”, and produce renewable food products while preserving the economic bases of agriculture — what belong in the public interest but are increasingly appropriated by corporate money and used to “pharm” farmers. The crises of environmental degradation and aggravated social injustices can only make the “worm” turn all the more vigorously. Intentional return to sense and sustainability is the clear moral and economic call.

### The Luminaries in My Life

Every time has its luminaries, people who have a holistic sense of the world and of the particular needs of the time. The primary luminary of Christianity 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, the ecology of interdependence and Eucharistic self-giving need to be understood as part and parcel of the desire and destiny of life.

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 to be understood and applied. The application of the Gospel must to 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 the First World War. 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 had a sense that soul is cosmic consciousness, one with cosmic energy/ spirituality.

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

The next luminary I offer is Albert Einstein. Einstein can be understood as doing for science what Chardin did for religion. He thought through the mechanisms and physics of the cosmos by which it evolved and preserved 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/energy and matter, the gravitational attraction of bodies and the equivalence 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 for one another than perhaps most Christians are. He radicalized the teachings of Jesus at the national, governmental level. The message of Jesus is also a secular message, not just a spiritual one, for in fact, as Chardin and Einstein perceived, spirituality and secularity are not separated from each other in reality any more than energy and matter, soul and body are.

My next favored 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, mythologies, 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 their 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 and 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.

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 expressed her disapproval of the disjunction of Chardin's avowed belief in evolution and



his vowed commitment to celibacy. In fact, she saw a contradiction in his stated 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]

### The Common Weal & Social Evolution

I have committed myself to the life mission of understanding and exposing the causes of personal/ social disintegration, and of finding remedies. The understanding of causes and remedies begins in understanding theological/ political rationales of unjust cultures and institutions. First Enlightenment is a flawed outcome of Western Classicalism; the “Second” Enlightenment seeks to understand causes of cultural failures and find remedies that correct the inherited misadventures of Classicalism and First Enlightenment.

Western cultures, including Roman Catholic, are yet enthralled in Roman classicalism and the 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 imperial politicization of religious/ political hierarchy in Church and State is at the root of continuing injustice, violence, and human/ ecological disintegration. Only the 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 but a beginning of necessary social change. The next step includes the rejection of violence, wars, and systemic injustice against women. It begins with the rejection of politicized classicalism and with religious/ political movement away from systemic injustice.

The theme underlying all my writings is *evolving consciousness*, the iterative process of intentional awakening, enlightening and re-awakening, what happens by way of communication/consciousness/conscience — the harmony of *trimorphic resonance*.

Einstein tells us that the deceleration of speed-of-light energy results in collisions and particle-formation. 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”. Accumulations of formed substances come about by harmonic processes of *in-formation*, awareness — “consciousness”. The sustainability of particulate accumulation/consciousness is accomplished by *re-formation*, redundancies of re-awakening — “conscience”. The harmonic liaisons of formation/ information/ reformation are woven together and amplify by the energetic processes of “divergence” (resistance), “convergence” (attraction) and “emergence” (connection), the evolution of conscious substances. The evolved qualifications of substantiated energy are apt to their material forms, and the material forms are apt for further energetic qualification.

### Embracing the Challenge

The content organization of my books was by intuitional processing (consistent with patterns of internal communication, consciousness and conscience), more so than by any anticipated logic. In pursuing the reconciliation of religion and science, I was entering uncharted waters, at least for me. Both subject matters (religion and science) are so implicated and complicated as to disallow easy organization; the development of a rational outline was slow in unfolding and it came to me only gradually and by process of auto-poetic intuition and spontaneous insights.

When I began writing I had the general sense I could perhaps 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 too is uniquely complicated and esoteric. Each discipline has its own non-obvious language and formal understandings. Working through these and finding correspondence was foreign to traditional understanding. I knew this effort would likely be unappreciated by institutions of religion and science, and popular culture. But I was undeterred because I was convinced of the need to reconcile and persevere.

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 knowledge that would inform me in variously related areas other than science and religion, faith and reason. I set about doing that by reading materials on religion, history, philosophy and science (physical and biological) and by writing down insights as and when they came to me — this process is what I mean by “auto-poesis”. I found that it was more workable to let my ideas arise spontaneously in the course of reading and to put them in poetry rather than in prose. What seemed most successful was not to force myself to write but to write as and when ideas gelled sufficiently to 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 sections, “Communication”, “Consciousness” and “Conscience”. Also published by G&R were the POETREE Trilogies, NOVOGENESIS, METAGENESIS and THEOGENESIS, (1999) and also in 1999, the “2000 A SUMMARY PREVISION Toward Global Revitalization”.

I sensed philosophical/ theological connections to the predicaments of the time. I conceived the Second Enlightenment Trilogy in the framework of cosmic reasoning (trimorphism), by which social consciousness and conscience are interwoven in personal communication and the working relationships. In working the process of awareness I became more aware

History documents honorable and dishonorable, conscionable and unconscionable behavior. The lessons of history can be accessed for teaching if minds are open to learn. In my organizing efforts I’ve tried to make sense of historical complexities and draw practical lessons from them.

## Autobiographical Timeline



**1933**, February 26: born the ninth of ten children to Mathilda A. Meier and Joseph Nicholas Steffen, in the early morning hours, at home, attended by Dr R. A. “Bucky” Buckmaster, M.D., and his 13-year-old sister Marie, the future Sr. Mary Samuel, OSF



**1938-1946**: He completed elementary school at Barclay, No. 3, Black Hawk County, IA; attended daily Mass with parents at St. Francis Parish located near the elementary school.

**1946-1950**: He attended High School at the Divine Word Missionary Preparatory Seminary, in studies for the Catholic priesthood at Epworth, IA, and at East Troy, WI, where he graduated in June 1950

**1950-1952**: In preparation for religious life he completed a two-year Novitiate at Techny, IL, and made his first religious vows under Novice Master Fr. Felix Glorius, SVD

**1952-1954**: He completed the Divine Word Seminary Juniorate at Epworth, IA. Won a First Class Relic of St. Theresa of The Child Jesus for scoring highest in a contest to know and correctly spell the names of all the Juniorate Seminarians; the award was presented by the Prefect of Students, Fr Emil LeSage, SVD.

**1954-1956**: He completed the two-year Philosophy curriculum (texts and classes in Latin) and was awarded the Bachelor of Arts Degree, Major in Rational Psychology. Textbooks by Gerald Esser, SVD

**1956-1957**: He completed First-Year Theology; was assigned and completed a life-changing paper: “Religion, A Rational Consideration”, February-March 1957. [See: Appendix A, QUANTUM RELIGION, pp. 255-270] His Theology Professor (Prefect of Students) was the late Fr. John Musinsky, SVD, First American Superior General of The Society of The Divine Word (SVD). From this time, he became committed to reconcile what was to him the disturbed mind between science and religion. He attended a Summer Class in Embryology at DePaul University, Chicago, under Professor Semrad. In August 1957 he returned to public life.

**1958-1960**: Under a joint Research Grant, (Botany and Agricultural Engineering) at Iowa State University, he obtained a Master of Science Degree in Plant Physiology; his unpublished thesis, “The Effects of Drying Methods on the Germination of Corn”, May 1960, is in the Iowa State University Library, Ames, IA.



**1959-1989**: Member of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) 1959, June 20: He married Felicitas Angeles Garcia, daughter of Dr. Gaudencio Garcia, J.D., (Professor of Law, wartime Judge and Commissioner of Elections, Manila, Philippines) and Maria Paz Angeles.

**1960-1969:** Six daughters were born to the couple: Monica Ruth (b. 4/5/60, d. 6/9/01); Veronica Rose; Rebecca Marie; Theresa Mae; Maria Pilar; and Leticia Lee

**1957-1984:** He was in the employment of Harvestall Industries, Inc., a business of his brother Vincent B. Steffen (now deceased); he was employed in grain research and grain equipment marketing. He obtained multiple patents in original science (grain “chillcuring”) involving the curing/ drying (preserving dormancy) of fresh-harvested corn grain in storage bins on the farm. In 1982 he became physically handicapped by osteoarthritis. Due to the withdrawal of governmental funding to farmers for the purchase of on-farm-storage (c. 1981), the grain bin business was severely curtailed. His patents were at issue in Harvestall business lawsuits, which he personally and successfully defended.

**1982:** He resumes study for reconciling religion and science, specifically in analyzing and synthesizing implications of evolution on theology still premised in the static presumptions of Aristotelian cosmology and culture. He continues to write new paradigm materials for reconciling religion, moral maturity and symbiotic behavior.

## **Writings of SYLVESTER L. STEFFEN**

### **I. Poems and Commentary on Social Evolution**

**1992:** New Genesis Poems

**1998:** The POETREE Trilogies

**1999:** 2000—Summary Prevision toward Global Revitalization

### **II. Theology of Faith/ Reason: The Second Enlightenment Trilogy**

**2001:** Primary Scripture, Cosmic Religion’s First Lessons

**2004:** Quantum Religion, the Good News of Rising Consciousness

**2005:** Religion & Civility, the Primacy of Conscience

### **III. Family/ Faith Catechesis**

**2006:** The Possible Journey, Uncompromised Trust

**2007:** What Self Donation is: Kenosis, Eucharist & Green Religion

**2008:** GREEN RELIGION, Inside the Cultural Spectrum

### **IV. Universal Coming Together**

**2008:** The Global THINKING Community