

Waiting for Earth Humanism

Humans
might talk disagreements
into
agreements
if we remembered
damage
to Earth
and living things
caused by
disagreements:
destruction of populations
and environments,
debilitating failures
of economies,
neighborhood war, civil war
great wars,
like the Global War
of 1939 to 1945.
Grasping that whole thing
in mind
must often lead
to asking
Why?

Rudolf Bultmann
a scriptural theorist and social philosopher
in 1952
wondered why
Humanism and Christianity
failed us.

He lived in Germany
through the war.
He was academic buddies
with the National Socialist
Martin Heidegger
but reportedly
tried to resist
within the religious community
the National Socialists
implementing their
Twenty-five Point Program,
torturing the truth
dictating the General Will
demolishing
representative government
assassinating and exterminating undesirables
welding
all of the institutions
of society
into a gigantic war machine
attacking and taking over
other countries
driving events which
pulverized and incinerated cities,
killing millions,
managing huge mechanized
clubs
pounding forests

fields
rivers
Life.

Humanism?

With the steady rise
of wealth
extracted from
peasants and artisans
and
the trafficking in goods
and the financing
of post-post-Roman
Europe
you got
educated
poets, preachers, scholars and artists
looking critically at society
with standards
found in literature
of the old Hellenistic world
and standards discovered
with careful observation
and reasoning.

Perceiving
the potential
of Human power
they despaired of its
wasteful and harmful use
by rulers of state
lords of land
officials of church.
In conversation with one another
and the intellect of the ancients
they offered
studia humanitatis
an education,
as a portal to a good practical mind.
They made music
which played through the centuries:
Reformation
Enlightenment
the polyrhythmic outpouring of utopian designs
the crescendo of science and technology
the cacophony of more representative government
but never becoming
an organization
with political power.

Christianity?

Always
an organization,
beginning with
Kingdom of Heaven communities
in widows' houses
living the message of Jesus,
mutual aid
healing
providing refuge for the poor and the strange,
administering the act of joining in the water,
they lived the discipline

of devotion to the one Deity,
caring for Earth sisters and brothers
toward a better world.
Kingdom of Heaven organizations
multiplied around the Mediterranean
and grew wealthy
employing
scribes and bards
to spread the message of the church,
and bishops
to oversee the wealth
and the practice.

Jerusalem and Caesarea
Damascus and Antioch
Alexandria
Cypris and Hippo
Corinth and Smyrna
Rome, Lyon and Seville
the organization
evolved and separated
in doctrine and practice,
disagreeing over
Mosaic law
the divinity of Jesus
virgin mother
the resurrection
sabbath and sacraments
rehabilitation of those having
converted during the persecutions.

After Constantine,
emperors stopped persecuting
and began funding and aiding legally
the Nicaean consolidation of
the catholic church, east and west.
Bishop run corporations
acquired property
states, statelets and plantations,
always taxing the people.
Bishops and priests served as imperial officers.
The bishop of Rome
with his papal states and bureaucracy
acquired and applied geopolitical power
making alliances and throwing armies
at threatening kings,
authorizing crusades against
heretics and infidels
including the pagan Slavs
of Prussia.

From seventeenth century
Brandenburg-Prussian kings
and their landed aristocrat allies
built the Germany
which became the National Socialist
instrument of destruction
with a rationality
if initially centered on defensive growth
increasingly centered on
superiority
like the church
with its claim to superior spirituality
and the blood superiority

of all the dynastic monarchies of Europe
of the world
of history
and the enforced superiority
of political and cultural organizations
of the world
of history.

Superiority?

As old as civilization
superiority
is a social construct
emanating from and creating
a mind construct:
the ideology of selfishness,
the mind construct
underlying sexual and political hierarchy,
racism, social violence
and war.

Humans do not function
without mind construct:
stored pictures and concepts of the environment
provide bearings and
identity of things.
Ideology of selfishness
identifies
property and not property
rank
enemy and threat.

Value complexes
support assessment
of situations.
Ideology of selfishness
values
status, possession
power.

Technical complexes
inform habitual and skilled action.
Ideology of selfishness
includes mythologies and strategies to avoid fellowship
deny community
accumulate
eliminate.

The syntheses
of these constructs
in action
support judgment,
the act of freedom.
Ideology of selfishness
gives license to regulate
kill
take
dominate
creating societies
with ranks of superiority
marching through Human history
uniforms and weapons
changing
size of armies, cities, plantations

increasing
palace coups and dynastic civil war
repeating
taxation increasing
revolt of the over-taxed
repeating
corruption of public office
constant,
a man-made monster
seed sowing ideology of selfishness
in all people
in all organizations.

A modern expression
of the ancient original sin of superiority,
a Siren song to “masses” afraid and resentful,
National Socialist
mythology and propaganda
captured the elemental structure
of ideology of selfishness:
guided by its heroic savior
the mighty race of Germans deserved
to own Europe
and the underdeveloped lands of lesser people
freed of the blood polluting disease
of Jews and Bolsheviks
homosexuals, Gypsies and liberals,
to rule
and enjoy the beauty of a purified world
and its wealth,
to apply the arts of war
against all non-Aryan enemies,
to regenerate Germany
from the betrayal and humiliation
of 1918.

But
it was not just another
predatory authoritarian organization.
It carried with it a new, highly advanced
science and technology,
a compliant and efficient state bureaucracy,
a finely tuned and resilient military,
and an orderly population
anxious to serve.
Like Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians,
Persians, Hellenes and Romans,
Dutch, British and French
they took people’s land, property and treasure,
but this time
systematically murdering
and starving the people away.

Both Christianity and Humanism
arose out of a people’s desire
for a better world.
Prophets and poets
pointed the finger of misery
at the leaders
of the nation,
the public servants
who served themselves.
Prophets called for a return
to Divine rule.

Poets called for
the rule of reason.

Christianity
orthodoxed the Kingdom of Heaven
into the church
or somewhere sometime else
and taught
Faith
for individual salvation.
Humanism
became an historical
whipping boy
for the soot
of industrial society,
the rapaciousness
of ferocious finance
and instrumental reason
repressing Human passion
and freedom.

“Reason”
is a word for a complex process
of Human imagination,
an instrument
for judgment and art.
Historically, where do we put it?
In service to survival and
development of communities?
In service to religion?
Or, in service to politics,
the relations of social power?
Rudolf Bultmann
understood Humanism
using reason for mastery of nature
by discovering the laws of nature,
the world beyond the visible world,
deriving knowledge as the instrument
of free persons
and communities of free persons
designing their destiny.
Only when this knowledge
serves men who disregard the law
does it become destructive.

Rudolf Bultmann
advocated a Christianity
shorn of ancient mythology
which invites Humanism
to join in resistance to lawlessness
and nihilism
sharing morality derived from natural law,
uniting a community of persons
for “eudaimonia,”
well-being and justice.
He saw the message
of Christianity
as a looking beyond
the visible world,
an opening up
to the light,
a gift
the revelation
of the Divine.

Universal Respect
is the antidote
to the poison
of the ideology of selfishness,
its support of the attitude of
pridefulness,
of the illusion of
superiority.

Death
destroys the illusion of
superiority.

All Life is interconnected.
All Life depends
on the natural systems
of Earth.
At any point in time
all things have equal value
as necessary parts in the whole
of Earth systems.
Equality undermines pride.

Now
after millennia of violence
Human activity,
the destructiveness of organizations of superiority,
threatens the integrity
of Earth systems.
Where comes
a miracle
of Universal Respect?

A Great Awakening
and a
Great Awanting
by a Great Coalition.
A moral revolution.

After an assumption
of the interconnectedness
and interdependence of all things,
the value of Whole Earth,
the source of Life,
is the first given
in an ethics of Universal Respect,
followed by Life,
followed by Self,
since “ethics”
only has meaning
as a quality of Self,
followed by
Community.

Self
exists in Community,
an organization of selves,
persons,
generating a culture:
rules, rituals, institutions, technology, art,
a history.

Selves,
historic persons

controlled by the ideology of selfishness
built cultures of violence
educating persons in violence
confining Respect
to those designated
by rank,
with descending measures
of superiority,
pride,
and property.

Toward
minimally violent cultures,
an ethic of Universal Respect
unfolds
from its core values:
an attitude of Respect
rules of conduct
methods of conflict resolution
communal law
institutional design.

While Earth systems adjust,
Justice
is a Human concept
of all things of Whole Earth
“being” according to their physics and chemistry
receiving proper inputs for
thriving
flourishing.
Justification is Human reasoning
that supports thriving
in little acts and big acts
in Whole Earth.

The logic
of Universal Respect
implies a practice
of seeing the Beauty
in things
and the potential
in people.
Like the Ancestors,
observe
listen
study quietly.
Quietly
celebrate the magnificent Body,
every radiant cell
every fiber
every current of fluid
every rhythmic beat
bone
breath
the windows.

Avoid,
or minimize justifiable,
harm.

Manage Self
carefully
taking only what is needed
and giving as much as possible

observing
justified communal law.

Resist anger.
Find the problem in a conflict.
Search for alternative solutions,
negotiate
compromise
cooperate.
Work for crafting and support
of public
mediation services.

Guided by post-1945
conventions of Human Rights
work for communal law,
stripped of historical prejudices of custom,
promoting livelihood
in civil statutes
and rehabilitation
in criminal statutes,
all respectful
of group diversity.
(Mass incarceration
is a clear indication
that a whole lot of somethin's ain't right.)

Work for fair taxation
which reduces concentration of wealth
and builds public services,
including employment and utilities,
which support Human Life.
Demand
dismantling mega-corporations
and the unlimited concentration of power
resulting from two hundred years
of taking.
Restore (or establish)
a dynamic balance of vested property rights
and Public Rights,
the Common Good,
the General Welfare (preamble of the Constitution.)

The judiciary and legislatures of the United States
used the Public Rights Standard
and the "police power"
to allow corporations to develop,
to justify
segregation,
violence against immigrants,
violence against "threatening"
religious and political ideas and groups,
violence against homosexuals and sex workers,
consensual sex and "unnatural" sex acts,
prohibition of liquor
and gambling
and recreational drugs,
banning books
censoring media
attack by armored police on the "disorderly poor."
We can use it to develop
the General Welfare
and the Public Space.

Earth
is
the Public Space,
home of all its
inhabitants.

Public
res publica
the public thing.
Republic.
The United States Constitution
guaranteed
“...to every state in this union
a Republican form of government...”
(Article IV)
Been a lot of disagreement
about what was meant.
Curious that,
The Constitution
is what was meant.

Once
government and economy
society
served kings and aristocrats
primarily.

The Americans
refined Republic
to serve the whole people and their individual property,
expanding liberty beyond elites,
with institutions defined and balanced
to prevent power imbalances and factional disorder,
where the welfare of the whole
is discovered
in debate by representatives of good will
elected by the people,
the boss,
understanding the great diversity
of need and desire.
Union
justice
domestic tranquility
common defense
general welfare
and the blessings of liberty
now and for posterity.
Amendments were added
to improve the function of institutions
and respond to emerging needs
and changing understandings,
to expand the definition of “the people.”
By design
all instruments and acts
were meant to serve
the whole people.

At various points in history,
Republic
emerged in the
conversation of “humanists”
(including varieties of Christians)
about Good Society
and Good Life

for Human Beings:
 a People Humanism.
 An ethic of Universal Respect
 will guide conversation
 about the Good Earth
 and Good Life for all things:
 an Earth Humanism.

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