

BLACK AFRICANS: HOW SEPARABLE IS IT FROM THE "FREEDOM" FACTOR?

This Thinksheet is an exercise in thought-clarification. In personal & public life, complex problems should be, insofar as is possible, broken down into bite-size chunks, the factors or aspects or dimensions "loosed" (so the Greek "ana-lyze") from each other for separate examination (as, eg, in working on a car engine) looking toward a "so-lution" (yes, same root). The fixit mindset--the will to "re-solve" (yep, again) a problem--hits upon (1) separables, (2) inseparables, and (3) semi-separables (two items being only partly disengageable from each other). The arts of logic & rhetoric wrestle each other, each using the fixit mindset but to its own end--logic, to understand; rhetoric, to persuade. My converging convictions, on the theme of this Thinksheet, are (1) that the fertility & freedom factors are separable to the extent that it is useful & therefore mentally as well as morally required that we make the separation; and (2) that some leaders--many in religion, virtually all in the media--confuse the factors & refuse efforts to separate them. Instead of the patient fix of honorable logical-rhetorical process, we are regaled with the quick fix of "freedom" as the solution to black Africans' (& the world's!) problems. Here we're up against fraud as well as confusion, though worshipers of the god-idol "Freedom" are little conscious of the confusion and not at all conscious of the fraud. (Worshiping is easier & less painful than thinking, but God calls us to both. Yet what Robt. Ferm said to me about clergy is true of all leaders: 15% think, 15% think they think, 70% live by slogans--in his Ashville, NC, home earlier this mo., Mar/87. Special ass't. to Billy Graham for 35 years; leading, in evangelism small seminars, all 'round the world, 45,000 clergy.)....Roger Bacon (d.1626) is a hero in the history of clear human thought. Speaking of what can go wrong in consciousness because of its complex convergence of intellect, will, & feeling, he says (THE NEW ORGANUM, Aphorism XLIX) "We more readily believe what we'd rather were true. So, impatient of research, we skip the sweat of hard thinking, difficult problems. We prefer romantic hope to the narrowing effect of intellectual sobriety. To the investigation of the deep things of nature, we prefer superstition. Arrogance & pride blind us to what experience has to teach us. Not wanting to pay the price of unpopular opinions & conclusions, we defer to popular sentiment. 'Numberless in short are the ways, and sometimes imperceptible, in which the affections color and infest the understanding.'" (I've modernized the wording but kept strictly to the meaning; only the sentence in single quotes is a direct quotation.)

1. The natural & human sciences help us to useful separations of the fertility & freedom factors. Eg, sybiosis--the balanced living of humans with the rest of the ecosystem local & larger--is the homeo-static ideal, & actions toward it are inherently ethical, good (& actions against it are inherently immoral, evil, sinful). A flurry of questions are derivable from this principle. Here are a few: On a particular turf, what's the ideal size of the human population (1) of a particular lifestyle or (2) of a particular mix of lifestyles? (On Cape Cod right now, this question is one behind our debates & decisions on "affordable housing": given the present pop with its mix of lifestyles, we're approaching the tippoint into permanent pollution of our aquifer, our only watersupply. The pop could be increased if we reduced the affluent living of most of the present pop (affluence correlating with pollution). The socialism required so to reduce the freedom (laissez faire) of "the middle class" on our island would increase the freedom of "the lower middle class" to move in & live here--fine-tuning the social engineering in the interest of sybiosis. But this monkeying, in addition to blowing the principles of democratic capitalism, would reduce the jobs while increasing the job-hunters. Which would move us deeper into socialism: "the right to" jobs and housing. So we're dealing with two fragilities: freedom & the eco-system. Now throw in the fertility factor--which, as you see, I've

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separated out in the illustration so far. Fairness to the old residents would indicate that their fertility rate (children per family) not be exceeded by that of the newcomers moving into the "affordable (read, government-subsidy) housing." But since the nonaffluent (Palestinians in Israel, blacks in S.Africa, etc.) have more children than do the affluent, the latter--given one-person-one-vote--would soon be outvoted by the nonaffluent, whose standard of living could not be permitted to rise to the level the affluent had been forced to abandon in order to accomodate the in-migration of the nonaffluent. I use Cape Cod as illustration both because I know it well and because it's a rather self-contained microcosm of the complexity of ecosociopolitical decision-making on the whole planet. The fundamental debate I can put by a second question: are all the factors variables, or is there a constant? As you have seen, I hold symbiosis to be the necessary constant & therefore ethical touchstone: what's bad for the biosphere is, sooner or later, bad for humanity. And the time to give priority to symbiosis over humanity is now, here on Cape Cod and every other here.)

2. The fertility factor is separable from "freedom" also statistically. No matter the statistical methodology or the reporting body, global demographic projections are not just gloomy but apocalyptic. Because black Africa right now is anguished with the collision of the "freedom" & fertility factors, I'm using that part of the world to show their separation. Note:

(1) The more human life, the less life-support. As pop inclines, environmental quality declines. Since black Africa is to double by the year 2000, ecological depletion-pollution will steadily increase, working exponentially with pop increase to increase misery in every form. We should accept this fact, and harden ourselves against sentimentality ("why doesn't somebody do something?") & useless-unjust scapegoating (eg, "If only Europe had kept its hands off Africa...."). Populations used to be self-limiting by disease & war & famine, but we've brought all three under enough control to assure that pop increase get out of control. Logic dictates that we should control all four or none; but we have left uncontrolled the one most guarded by tabus, which (among black Africans & Eur-Americans) are stronger than reason.

(2) The more human life, the less "freedom." No matter the forms & personages of government in black Africa, there will be less freedom than there is now. (Now I'm talking about actual ecopolitical freedom: by "freedom" I mean the panacea-salvific dream, including ecopolitical powers.) The closest thing to a "megafix" (to coin a word for a single course of action that would provide a fresh start toward symbiosis) would be radical pop control toward ZPG (zero pop growth, as achieved in Japan) or even NPG (negative pop growth, as China's striving for); but that's nowhere in sight in black Africa...In S.Africa, no white candidate in the upcoming elections favors one-person-one-vote, the black:white ratio now being 5:1, projected for 2040 as 17:1. Weighted voting would make sense; but, because it would seem to offend against "dignity," no blacks are pressing for it. The collapse of apartheid, whatever form the collapse takes, will lay bare the deeper causes of black misery, which at the moment blacks are (unproductively, unrealistically) blaming on the whites. In real terms, the collapse will produce more a decrease of white freedom than an increase of black freedom.

(3) The more human life, the less political stability. We have been blaming African governments, esp. that of S.Africa. We may have to take more seriously the increasingly heard term, "ungovernable." We may become open to a new understanding that "the earth is the Lord's" and the governing is God's, as Jesus insisted. Anyway, down with the quickfix preachers in & regarding black Africa!