

The Bioregional Vision

Gene Marshall

The term “bioregional” points to human beings living in committed relationships with local regions of the natural planet. A person or a group enters into the bioregional family of society-builders when that person or group subscribes wholeheartedly to these simple statements:

Earth is my home: I am an Earthling.

A continent of Earth is my home.

A region of Earth is my home.

This fresh sense of home is simple, but it has implications:

The United States, Canada, or Mexico or some other nation is not my home; it is just my nation.

My state or province is not my home; it is just my state or province.

My zip-code district is not my home; it is just my zip-code district.

Western civilization is not my home. No civilization is my home; it is just my civilization.

If you are a tribal person, your tribe is not your home; it is just your tribe.

Tribal people have been bioregionalists compared to civilized people, but they are not bioregionalists because they are tribal. They are bioregionalists because they have honored all the living and inanimate beings in a specific region of the planet.

When we apply the bioregional sense of home to envisioning the future of human society, we do not see tribes or civilizations. We see a planetary confederation of semiautonomous Earth-regions.

When we apply the bioregional sense of home to envisioning the future of political and economic systems, we do not see a global economy ruled by wealth and unrefereed by local regions of people. We see popular consensus-building beginning in each local region and extending into an Earth-sensitive governance of the entire economic playing field for all players across the whole planet.

When we apply the bioregional sense of home to envisioning the future of human cultures, we do not see planet-wide uniformities conceived by product advertisers. We see local families of plants, animals, and humans forming unique expressions of aliveness in each region of the planet.

Such a vision is basically simple, but it has far-reaching implications. It means shutting down in our own minds the dream of building a better civilization or the dream of returning to a new sort of tribal life. It means dreaming a new dream. This new dream is not something grandly idealistic; it is a realistic direction for avoiding untenable ecological disaster. While we may learn many lessons from a thousand centuries of tribal society and sixty centuries of civilization, we **must now create something new**. We must see both civilizational hierarchy and tribal intimacy as obsolete patterns of living that are no longer appropriate for the real situation in which we dwell. We must dream a new dream. **“Bioregionalism” is a name for that new dream.**