

Part Five:

**Envisioning an
Appropriate Culture**

Chapter 22

Key Components of Cultural Transformation

A deep cultural, political, and economic gulf has developed in the planet-wide human community. We see this gulf keenly dramatized in the culture and politics of the United States. This gulf reveals itself in every political campaign, every election, every decision made in the halls of government, every talk-radio show, every TV call-in show, every religious community. The two sides of this cultural conflict are as diametrically opposed to one another as the two sides that waged the horrific US Civil War of the nineteenth century. And this is true not only within the United States but also takes dramatic forms on the planet-wide stage.

Over the last two centuries, consciousness of nature and human nature has increased considerably for a significant portion of the human species. As these “cultural creatives” begin creating new cultural motifs that express that consciousness, a backlash has been incited in the defenders of the older cultural forms. We see this backlash most dramatically among conservative Muslims in the volatile Middle East. And we also see it among conservative Christians and Jews in the United States and in Israel. Further, let us note that it was a member of the conservative Hindu backlash that assassinated Gandhi. We see other elements of this backlash among those who resist racial justice and feminine equality. Many antiquated political and economic ideologies also characterize the thought and moralities of this cultural backlash. And we see this backlash in persons who voted against their own economic interests in order to support for president of the United States cultural conservatives like Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush.

Both the increased consciousness of many and the backlash against it witness to the presence of a huge cultural transition that is already in progress. Here are eight of the key “cultural shifts,” that are taking place, and I believe need to take place, in the near term:

1. The Shift from Individualistic Overemphasis to Communal/Personal Balance
(from being Apart to being A Part)
2. The Shift from Material Success to Voluntary Simplicity
(from Endless Accumulation to Defining “Enough”)
3. The Shift from Racism and Culturism to Honoring Human Diversity
(from “I am my Group” to “I am my Planet”)
4. The Shift from Patriarchal Gender Patterns to Feminine/Masculine Balance
(from Assumed Male Prerogatives to Interactive Creativity Released and Valued)
5. The Shift from Doctrinaire Religion to Open Interreligious Dialogue
(from “My Religion is Right” to “Spirit Experience is the Authority”)
6. The Shift from Humans as Ghosts in Earth-suits to Humans as Full Members of Nature
(from being Isolated Entities to being the Cosmos in its Self-awareness)
7. The Shift from Traditional Norms to Ethical Authenticity
(from Honoring the Past to Honoring the Present and Future)
8. The Shift from Authoritarian Pedagogy to Guided Creativity
(from Job Training to Inclusive Discovery)

There are other shifts, but these eight, carefully observed, paint a clear picture of the immense shift in cultural forms that we are experiencing and need to complete in order for our humanity to flourish amidst the challenges that confront us. In the next eight chapters, I will examine each of them in turn, exploring the objective actuality of these shifts, their Spirit challenge, and the needed consensus that humanity might make concerning them.