

Chapter Four

Building a New (Old) Culture Within the Shell of the Old (Decaying)

In 1968, while a freshman at Grinnell College in Iowa, I came into contact for the first time with what was being described as the “counter culture,” those communities of young people who were alienated from the dominant capitalist culture and who were struggling to live their lives in a way which they saw as more authentic, more honest, more humane.

The Vietnam War was the primary reason why large numbers of young people lost faith in the U.S. way of life, but the causes went deeper. Many of those joining the counter-culture had grown up in white middle- or upper-class communities and had experienced little in those communities which gave them hope for a more just and humane future. The exposure of deep-seated racism via seen-on-TV struggles of African Americans for basic civil and human rights, as well as the overarching, looming threat of nuclear annihilation, were also significant factors in this turn away from the American status quo.

I had mixed reactions to what I experienced with the counter culture. I appreciated the genuine attempts to treat one another and other people with love and respect. I liked the opposition to war and militarism and the generally pacifist life-style. I agreed with the efforts to develop more equal relationships, including sexually, between women and men and had no problem, other than the legal risk, with smoking marijuana.

But I did have problems with the much more extensive drug use, beyond smoking a joint or two at parties, that became increasingly part of the counter culture as the war went on. During this time, government repression of the civil rights and peace movement escalated, Richard Nixon was reelected and the hope for change of the 60’s turned into the nightmare of dashed hopes in the early 70’s. And we discovered that, in the words of a song from the Broadway musical, “Hair,” people can “be so heartless, [can] be so cruel. How can people have no feelings, how can they ignore their friends, easy to be proud, easy to say no, especially people who care about strangers, who care about evil and social injustice? Do you only care about the bleeding crowd? How about a needing friend?”

Out of these disappointing experiences—also occurring within the explicitly political peace, racial justice and student movements of the 60’s--emerged the phrase, “the personal is political.” It is not enough to be concerned about the problems of the world. If a person trying to change the world treats other individuals he or she comes into contact with on a day-to-day basis with disrespect or worse, it is a very big contradiction and, over time, this contradiction will undercut the efforts for social change.

Rosa Luxemburg, writing three-quarters of a century earlier about the male-dominated European socialist movement, saw things the same way: “A man hurrying to perform a great deed who steps on even a worm out of unfeeling carelessness commits a crime.”

Fortunately, over the last 35 or so years, those imperfect seeds of cultural change have matured and taken root such that, today, there are literally tens of millions of people in the United States who are consciously living lives that, as best as possible given the conditions we are living under, are more respectful, less racist, less sexist, more nonviolent and humane. There is without question a new culture developing in the midst of the old, decaying culture that is still dominant but in a much more tenuous way.

What is Culture?

What exactly do I mean when I refer to culture?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “culture,” in the way I am writing about it, like this: “A particular form or type of intellectual development. Also, the civilization, customs, artistic achievements, etc. of a people.”

David Korten, in *The Great Turning*, defines culture as “the system of customary beliefs, values, perceptions, and social relations that encodes the **shared** learning of a particular human group essential to its orderly social function.” (1)

Paul Hawken, in his book “*Blessed Unrest*,” writes of culture as something which “provides the slow template of change within which family, community and religion prosper. Culture stabilizes identity, and in a fast-changing world of displacement and rootlessness, becomes an ever more important anchor.” (2)

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian socialist leader during the first quarter of the 20th century, defined cultural activity as “the organization, the disciplining of one’s inner self; it is the appropriation of one’s personality; it is the conquest of a superior consciousness whereby it becomes possible to understand one’s own historical value, function in life, rights and duties.” (3)

And in Daniel Quinn’s fascinating book, *Ishmael: An Adventure of the Mind and Spirit*, it is described as “the sum total of everything that makes a people a people. . . It comes into being when a species attains a certain order of intelligence, the members of one generation begin to pass along information and techniques to the next. The next generation takes this accumulation, adds its own discoveries and refinements, and passes the total on to the next. . . It’s the sum total of what’s passed along, of course, not just information and techniques. It’s beliefs, assumptions, theories, customs, legends, songs, stories, dances, jokes, superstitions, prejudices, tastes, attitudes. Everything.” (4))

Yes, it is “everything,” pretty much so, when you really think about it. That’s why it is so important that we consciously integrate the practices and insights of the emerging new culture, a cooperative culture, into the movement to enact a justice-based, clean energy revolution. We won’t make that revolution unless we do.

“Ishmael” can help us to understand the deep historical roots of our decaying and destructive corporate culture so that we can increase the likelihood that we will not get sidetracked or deflected from our urgent and continuing tasks.

Learning From a Gorilla

Ishmael is a book published in 1992. It is a novel about a gorilla named Ishmael who teaches a man who is searching for meaning in his life about the world as he, the gorilla, has come to understand it, in the hope that the man will then use that knowledge to help save the world.

The man, whose name is never given, agrees with Ishmael that human beings are “captives of a civilizational system that more or less compels you to go on destroying the world in order to live.” (5) Ishmael traces the beginnings of this situation back to the birth of agriculture and settled societies 10,000 years ago and introduces the idea that this new historical development growing out of the hunter-and-gatherer societies—what Ishmael calls the “Leavers”—led to a new cultural group, the “Takers.”

The Takers differed from the Leavers in a number of ways, but the essence of the difference was that the Takers, in a desire to be less dependent on Nature and more in control of their future, developed agriculture, cities and a new culture whose basic premise was that the world was made for humankind. Unlike hunter-gatherers, the Leavers, whose culture and ways of living were and are more respectful of other life forms and other peoples, the Takers, over the centuries, developed a very different kind of culture.

According to the Takers, humanity’s destiny was to conquer and rule the world, to act as if he/she were God. We did this in part because we wanted the security that was seen as coming from the production of food that could be counted upon to be there, as well as everything else that followed from it: division of labor, technology, trade and commerce, etc. As population grew, increasingly destructive wars were waged over control of land and resources, which led to the increasing displacement and destruction of the Leavers, as well as other life forms.

Ishmael explains that the Takers deviated from the basic “law of life” that had governed the interaction of the creatures of the earth, including humans, for three million years: “You may compete to the full extent of your capabilities, but you may not hunt down your competitors or destroy their food or deny them access to food. In other words, you may compete but you may not wage war.” (6)

Did this new culture generate happiness and peace? In the main, no. The history of the world over the past many millennia is a history of war after war, of fighting for power and resources. “The story the Takers have been enacting here for the past ten thousand years is not only disastrous for mankind and for the world, it’s fundamentally unhealthy and unsatisfying. It’s a megalomaniac’s fantasy, and enacting it has given the Takers a culture riddled with greed, cruelty, mental illness, crime, and drug addiction.” (7)

For the Takers, there is little diversity in the ways that human societies can be organized, ways that people can live. There is only the Taker way, and those who oppose this are either marginalized, relegated to a position where they can have no significant impact on Taker society, or they are destroyed.

According to Taker mythology, all of this happened because the Leaver lifestyle “was stupid, empty and worthless.” It was insecure. You couldn’t plan for the future because you were dependent upon what Nature provided you. You weren’t in control.

But, Ishmael points out, this wasn’t true. “Far from scrabbling endlessly and desperately for food, hunter-gatherers are among the best-fed people on earth, and they manage this with only two or three hours a day of what you would call work. In his book on stone age economics, Marshall Sahlins described them as ‘the original affluent society.’” (8)

This truth is reinforced by an article in the December, 2009 issue of National Geographic, “The Hazda,” about a tribe of about a thousand people in northern Tanzania. The Hazda continue to live a hunter/gatherer lifestyle similar to that of their ancestors going back thousands of years. Michael Finkel, author of the article, reports what he has found based on research and time he has spent with them:

“The Hazda do not engage in warfare. They’ve never lived densely enough to be seriously threatened by an infectious outbreak. They have no known history of famine; rather, there is evidence of people coming from a farming group coming to live with them during a time of crop failure. The Hazda diet remains even today more stable and varied than that of most of the world’s citizens. They enjoy an extraordinary amount of leisure time. Anthropologists have estimated that they ‘work’—actively pursue food—four to six hours a day. And over all these thousands of years, they’ve left hardly more than a footprint on the land.” (9)

The man in Ishmael comes to realize that humankind needs to develop a positive vision for changing direction and going another way, so that in the far-off future “whoever is around then says, ‘Man? O yes, man! What a wonderful creature he was! It was within his grasp to destroy the entire world and to trample all our futures into the dust—but he saw the light before it was too late and pulled back. He pulled back and gave the rest of us our chance. He showed us all how it had to be done if the world was to go on being a garden forever. Man was the role model for us all!’” (10)

Ishmael sums it up as the book concludes: “As long as the people of your culture are convinced that the world belongs to them and that their divinely-appointed destiny is to conquer and rule it, then they are of course going to go on acting the way they’ve been acting for the past ten thousand years. They’re going to go on treating the world as if it were a piece of human property and they’re going to go on conquering it as if it were an adversary. You must change people’s minds. It’s about letting the rest of the community live—and agriculturalists [Takers] can do that as well as the hunter-gatherers.” (11)

I agree with the basic message of “Ishmael,” even as I question aspects of its good guy/Leavers, bad guy/Takers approach. Missing from it is an appreciation that it was not a bad thing for humans to want to provide a more secure future for themselves through development of a food surplus and other positive attributes of settled societies. The closest the book comes to recognizing this is a couple of paragraphs in the middle of it positively referencing the culture on the island of Crete in about 2000 B.C.

A vivid description of Crete is found in the acclaimed book by Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*. In it she describes a “Goddess society” thousands of years ago, roughly 2000 B.C., in Crete based upon agriculture, a society making “slow and steady technological progress, in pottery making, weaving, metallurgy, engraving, architecture and other crafts, as well as increasing trade and the gradual evolution of the lively and joyful artistic style so characteristic of Crete. . . In Crete a spirit of harmony between women and men as joyful and equal participants in life appeared to pervade.” (12)

Unfortunately, as was true with similar cultures elsewhere, Crete was eventually overwhelmed by the spread of male-controlled, warlike cultures which became very dominant in first the “Old World” and then, starting 500 years ago, in the “New World” too.

What are the bottom-line aspects of the “dominator culture” that we must overcome and replace as we move forward toward the possibility of a very different kind of future than the one we are threatened with right now?

Rejecting the Dominator Culture

It is important, in assessing the essential negative cultural patterns which must be overcome, to try to both see the interconnections between them and understand why they emerged and have been so powerful.

It is not difficult to list the negatives:

- power-hungry and militaristic behavior up to violent action and war to impose a person/group/nation’s desires;
- power-hungry, aggressive, intimidating, mean and/or demeaning behavior by men towards women or by heterosexual men towards homosexual men or women
- the abuse, oppression and exploitation of other human beings for the personal benefit and enrichment of already-well-off (almost always), powerful others, whether by slavery, feudalism, wage-labor or in the home
- the enslavement or national/cultural oppression of an entire people/nation/culture by the powerful of another nation/culture
- the unnecessary and uncaring abuse and destruction of woods, forests, animals, entire ecosystems for the enrichment or “enjoyment” of humans who are already-well-off and have no economic need for such action

What is common among all of these is insensitivity to and disregard for other life forms, human or otherwise.

There are at least four primary reasons that have been given historically for why humankind evolved to have such characteristics.

One is the basic thesis of “Ishmael,” that we went wrong when we moved away from an appreciation for our limited role within the natural world and, instead, saw ourselves as capable of harnessing nature to our exclusive advantage, leading to the development of towns, cities, trade and other cultural patterns that further disconnected us from nature.

A second would be the feminist analysis of a violent shift begun many thousands of years ago, from cultures where men and women worked cooperatively to lead and manage their societies to the reality today where, overwhelmingly, we experience power being concentrated in the hands of men.

A third would be the Christian belief that humanity is inherently sinful and can only be redeemed if individual human beings make a conscious effort to live humble and loving lives similar to the one lived by Jesus of Nazareth. Other religions, while not built upon the life of Jesus, preach similar values.

The fourth and most recent, a basic tenet of Karl Marx, is that the key issue is scarcity, that as long as human societies were constantly struggling to provide sufficient resources for their survival and a decent quality of life, there was little possibility of evolving culturally to a higher level, to a society based on the principle of “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need.”

It seems to me that there is truth in all of these, and that it is not accurate to ascribe our dire condition in today’s world to just one of them. It is likely that it was the shift from hunter-gatherers-based social formations to settled-societies that was the precursor leading to our eventual “fall from grace,” to use Christian terminology. What is essential, however, is not so much to debate which of these (or other) reasons is the most significant historically but, instead, to be about the work of consciously integrating new-culture building into the growing climate and justice movements, which themselves must become stronger, broader and deeper.

But to be effective in building these stronger movements, we need to appreciate more specifically the ways in which the dominant/dominator culture has infected those of us who say that we are about creating a different, a justice-based, a more humane and fair society. As I know from very difficult personal experience, it is not enough to say that you are about something different; you need to make conscious efforts to walk the talk.

What are some of the ways that we who say we believe in freedom betray our own principles?

Not Walking the Talk

One personal example is from early in the first decade of the 21st century. I was at a coalition meeting in Philadelphia, Pa. in connection with a projected protest action against government officials. I put forward the idea that, in addition to acts of protest, we should organize something like a celebration or festival of resistance. It seemed to me, and to the group whose proposal I was putting forward, that this would be complementary to the anti-government protest, a way to put forward a more positive, affirmative vision.

I was taken aback at the reaction of some of those present at the meeting. “What is there to celebrate?,” several said. Others spoke as if such a position was insensitive and racist, disrespecting of those around the world and in this country who struggle for survival. For others, it was as if the use of music, poetry, spoken word, theater, art or other forms of creative political expression was somehow not truly serious.

I thought a lot about this afterwards, trying to understand why some of my sister and brother progressive activists would see things this way. And the more I thought about it, the more I came to believe that this view of culture is rooted in a short-sighted and ultimately self-defeating view of the prospects and possibilities for social change.

This approach emphasizes “fighting the power” to the exclusion of just about anything else. It seriously misses out on the importance of positive personal relationships and a culture of support to keep us as healthy and balanced as possible over the long haul of our struggle for justice. It fails to appreciate that it is, indeed, forms of cultural expression that have been absolutely essential for oppressed people to sustain themselves, to keep hope alive, to enjoy and appreciate others, during periods of time when the odds for change seem very long. And it completely misses the importance, as Irish revolutionary James Connolly put it, of forms of cultural expression if what we want is not “a dogma of a few” but, instead, “the faith [and direct action] of the multitude.” (13)

It is an approach that puts “correct politics” above human interaction and positive relationship-building. It is akin to the capitalist ethos which puts things above people, but in this case the “things” are numbers of bodies at demonstrations and “politically correct” speeches.

Then there are all of the many backwards ideologies—the racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, others—that keep people who share common interests separated and which adds additional discrimination and oppression to those not in the dominator group. From my experience the issue of race is one of the most difficult to overcome.

Environmental and climate organizations have struggled for years with the issue of their “whiteness,” their difficulty in bridging the racial divide. This is true of the vast majority of progressive groups, also. But it’s not as if there are no multi-racial groups. For the youth climate

movement, in particular, because of conscious work to develop an anti-oppression consciousness within it, there is a better mix of races and cultures than tends to be true among non-youth climate groups and progressive groups generally.

I had a recent experience with the possibilities and difficulties of organizing multi-racial efforts. I played a major role in the organization of a multi-racial coalition for an action in Washington, D.C. on October 24th, an international day of climate action. Because we consciously initiated this effort in a way which highlighted the co-leadership from the beginning of a well-known but predominantly white climate group alongside of a mainly people of color group, and because we worked throughout the process of organizing toward the action in a way which made that co-leadership visible and real, we did have a positive event. But although it was multi-racial, it was not so to the degree that we wanted it to be, a reflection in part of strong rain and winds on the day of the action and, as a result, attendees who were mainly already-committed climate activists in the D.C. area, most of whom are white.

Then there's the problem of a top-down, corporate style of building organizations, as distinct from a much more participatory and democratic process. It's a central aspect of the problem, and of the potential solution.

Building Qualitatively Better Organizations

Over the course of my 41 years of activism for positive social change, I've been part of an awful lot of organizations. I've been with groups that have grown, that have encountered problems and fallen apart, that have pretty much muddled along or which have experienced relatively steady growth over a period of years.

Organizations are totally essential if we are to prevent catastrophic climate change and bring into being a world in which justice and love are not just words but day-to-day touchstones for how human societies function. Fundamental change doesn't happen unless people join together with others into an organized movement which is clear on that long-term objective, and that movement, at its root, is made up of many, many groups of individual human beings working together in local communities or workplaces.

If those groups and the movement are to succeed, it is imperative that they be built in a way which is participatory and democratic, a way which builds community and discourages competitive individualism.

It has not been easy to build these kinds of organizations historically, although I do see a number of signs that this is changing. The power-seeking, me-first ideology that undergirds capitalism often translates into problems as far as the way that progressive-oriented groups function, despite the best of intentions. Many such organizations tend to have a schizophrenic character.

On the one hand, they can be strong and hard-working in their efforts on behalf of their members or the particular issues they are organizing around. Individual members and leaders of the group

can make tremendous sacrifices, going above and beyond the call of duty, in an effort to bring about change.

And yet, when it comes to the internal relationships among those within the group, the methods of operation can be very similar to the system which is the source of the problems and crises they are struggling to change in the first place.

Despite lip service to democracy, real power within such organizations resides in the hands of one individual or a small group. There is no genuine effort to involve others in the process of decision-making, to train others to learn how to lead or to give others opportunities for on-the-job training in leadership skills. Information and inputs which are necessary in order to make informed decisions are not shared with the membership, or even the broader leadership, by the powerful inner core, leading to a concentration of power and, eventually, alienation on the part of that membership even if they agree with the stated purposes of the organization.

The internal dynamics of the organization are much more competitive than cooperative. Individuals use their intelligence, their facility with words, their charisma, their access to funding sources, their greater experience not to help the group as a whole grow but to advance their personal agendas or careers. People who disagree with the views or decisions of those in positions of power, who honestly try to state their point of view on a relevant matter, are subject to put-downs, humiliation, being ignored or, in the worst case, personal abuse.

These destructive forms of leadership are often, though not always, to be found coming from men, particularly white men, and even more particularly white non-working-class men. Those who have been raised to believe that they are “better” than those “under” them, or who have been raised in circumstances of greater privilege, are naturally going to believe that they should give leadership, and they are also logically going to go about it in the same kinds of ways that they have experienced as a child of privilege.

This style of operating must be actively challenged. It is a fundamental obstacle to the changes needed.

Leadership that is about building community, building authentic, honest and strengthening relationships that help people live better lives and do better work, will be distinguished by certain ways of functioning.

It will encourage discussion on a broad scale, including the articulation and circulation of differing positions.

It will discourage the monopolization of discussion by articulate, long-winded individuals. This is not a small issue. If time is not consciously provided for all those who wish to speak, as much as possible, and limited for those who tend to go on and on, those not used to speaking will feel intimidated and discouraged from active involvement.

Charlotte Davis, an activist in a 1980's anti-nuclear group in California, the Abalone Alliance, described the power of this kind of process:

“For me, the most important thing was that in almost every meeting I was in, we went around in a circle and everyone said what they had to say. As we went around and people said what they really thought and felt, it became clear to me that every person in the world thinks well, if you give them enough time and space. If one person came up with an objection that made sense, we all listened to it. We were not forced to vote. That's how I think ideas should develop. That kind of feeling of all of us working together on a problem was real important to me. And bullies were exposed immediately, because they couldn't bear to sit and listen.” (14)

The employment of “breakout sessions” helps to make it easier for those afraid or not used to speaking up in a room full of lots of people to find their voice. Breakout sessions are smaller meetings that discuss topics related to the agenda of the overall meeting. Utilizing them is a way of including those who can easily feel excluded. Usually the best format if a meeting is too large for everything to be done together is for a mix of breakout sessions and all-group discussions, with report-backs from the breakouts to everyone else.

Whenever possible, a consensus-seeking method of discussion should be used. This discourages “show-boating” by individuals trying to get across their individual point and encourages a more cooperative process of listening and healthy interaction.

Finally, collective evaluation is an essential part of a genuinely democratic process. In this way those who are making mistakes or errors can have them corrected, and a process is established in which everyone comes to understand that no one individual is above the group.

There is great power in this kind of political process among people. It is democracy for the 21st century.

Ultimately, all of these “dominator culture” practices are rooted in a worldview which upholds the accumulation of power and wealth as the best indicators of a person's success within society. When this ideology, consciously or unconsciously, is at work within leaders of organizations and movements which say they are about something different, the likely result, sooner or later, is the demoralization and deactivation of once-committed members of the group.

What is needed, what is absolutely essential, is a process of constantly developing new leaders who understand the necessity of personal and cultural change going hand in hand with political, social and economic change. Fortunately, as a result of the cultural transformations that have taken place over the last 60 or so years, this process is already underway throughout the world.

Cultural Transformation Underway

The development of capitalism in Europe and the worldwide colonial system emerging out of it has been responsible for tremendous human misery and continuing environmental destruction.

Yet the fact is that the wealth, industry, technology and scientific knowledge that have emerged have led to a number of positive changes all over the world. They have led to literacy and education on a mass scale. Women have been brought out of the home and into the job market, a major impetus for the women's movement which has emerged and grown over the past 40 years. Increased social and geographic mobility, opportunities for relatively low-cost travel, as well as extensive mass communications via radio, telephone, TV and the internet expose people to other ideas and cultures which, in turn, have the effect of broadening individual consciousness.

David Korten, in *The Great Turning*, has expressed it this way: "Globally, a rapid increase in international travel, exchange, and communication has exposed millions of people to sometimes unsettling but usually enriching encounters with cultures not their own. That experience has opened many to viewing their own culture and the larger world in a new light. The experience of cultural awakening has become a contagious, liberating process of global scale that involves hundreds of millions of people and transcends the barriers of race, class, and religion." (15)

With all of these changes comes an interest in and an ability to think about issues other than where the next meal is going to come from. In a society like ours in the USA, for example, large portions of the working population are concerned about education, personal change and/or spiritual development.

All of these realities open up a potential, a necessity really, for positive cultural transformation on a large scale that a social movement serious about fundamental change cannot overlook.

The Soil for Positive Cultural Changes

The cultural transformation taking place because of the economic and scientific development of society is not emerging out of nowhere. The human struggle for a just and fair society always reemerges when conditions ripen. When conditions are not yet ripe, the ideas and ideals are kept alive within sub-cultures that refuse to completely submit to the negative values of the dominant culture.

They are kept alive among Jewish and Christian religious people who take heart, for example, from the words of the Hebrew prophets in the Old Testament and from the words and actions of Jesus of Nazareth. In the words of Riane Eisler in *The Chalice and the Blade*, "Jesus has long been recognized as one of the greatest spiritual figures of all time. By any criterion of excellence, the figure portrayed in the Bible displays an exceptionally high level of sensitivity and intelligence as well as the courage to stand up to established authority and, even at the risk of his life, speak out against cruelty, oppression and greed." (16)

They are kept alive as movements against oppressive conditions emerge among farmers, workers, young people, held-down nations or cultures, gays and lesbians or others who, usually after long years of quietude, rise up against oppressive conditions and, even if but for a short time, experience the feelings of freedom and empowerment that come from a righteous struggle

for a just cause. These experiences and feelings, and victories that are sometimes won, are passed down to their children and future generations and have helped to keep alive the hope of a new and different society.

They are kept alive within the cultures of working-class people of all nationalities. Traditional working-class culture is centered around people, not things, although the rampant consumerism and ubiquity of corporate advertising in modern society has certainly had major corrupting impacts. And there is no question but that, as with other classes, there are more than a small percentage of working-class people who are affected by the negative ideologies of the system, some severely. But listen to country music (and other music): what you'll most often find are songs that hold up love between two people (almost always a man and a woman), a close and loving family, sincere friendships and relationships with the natural world as ultimately the most important things in life. This is distinct from the dominant culture of capitalism which holds up the accumulation of more and more things, products and objects as the goal in life.

And they are kept alive among women whose "feminine" ways of interacting and interrelating with one another have nourished for millenia a different way of human interaction than the male, macho, competitive and sometimes-violent ways of far too many men, certainly men in power. As a result, in Eisler's words, "Never before has the world seen such a mushrooming of governmental and nongovernmental organizations with memberships in the millions. . . all dedicated to improving the status of women. Never before has there been a United Nations Decade for Women. [1975-1985] Never before have there been global conferences attracting thousands of women from every corner of the world to address the problems stemming from male supremacy. Never before in all of recorded history have women from every nation on this earth come together to work for a future of sexual equality, development, and peace—the three goals of the First United Nations Decade for Women." (17)

There are other examples of the positive political and cultural changes at work throughout the world.

Other Examples

Korten writes about "a spreading awakening of Cultural and Spiritual Consciousness." He reports on the values research of Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson to the effect that "a growing segment of the U.S. adult population is embracing a new culture that values social inclusion, environmental stewardship and spiritual practice. They call the holders of the new culture 'Cultural Creatives' and estimate that in the late 1990s there were 50 million in the United States, roughly 26% of adult Americans—compared with less than 5% in the early 1960s. They further estimate there are another 80 to 90 million Cultural Creatives in the European Union." (18)

In Paul Hawken's book, *Blessed Unrest*, he estimates, based on research, that, worldwide, there are over one million, and as many as two million "organizations working toward ecological

sustainability and social justice,” (19) with Indigenous organizations playing an integral and respected role within this loose, diverse but very real network.

One of the indications of its breadth and scope is the coordinated actions undertaken by many of its component parts on February 15th, 2003 against the U.S.- and British-led plans for an invasion of Iraq. Estimates are that as many as 15-20 million people demonstrated all over the world on that day. Never before had anything like this happened.

The decision to undertake this international day of action was taken at a conference in late 2002 of the World Social Forum, another significant example of the world-wide changes taking place. Beginning in 2001 with a gathering of 20,000 people in Porto Alegre, Brazil, it has grown ever since through the organization of annual or bi-annual international gatherings and regional gatherings. As many as 150,000 people have attended these events.

The question is, what are the elements of an overall strategy that grows out of all of these positive developments and which give us a chance of preventing climate catastrophe in the relative short-term while, simultaneously, laying the basis for and advancing towards more substantial and fundamental changes longer-term?

FOOTNOTES

- 1) David Korten, *The Great Turning*, p. 59
- 2) Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest*, p. 134
- 3) Antonio Gramsci, “Socialism and Culture,” January 29, 1916, in *History, Philosophy and Culture*, pp. 20-21, quoted in *The Two Revolutions*, by Carl Boggs, p. 45)
- 4) Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael*, pps. 198-199
- 5) *Ibid*, p. 25
- 6) *Ibid*, p. 129
- 7) *Ibid*, p. 147
- 8) *Ibid*, p. 220
- 9) Michael Finkel, “The Hazda,” *National Geographic*, December, 2009, p. 104
- 10) Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael*, p. 242
- 11) *Ibid*, pps. 249-250
- 12) Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*, pps. 30-31
- 13) James Connelly, *Revolutionary Song*, written in 1907, found on the internet
- 14) Charlotte Davis, in “The Politics of Prefigurative Community,” in *Reshaping the Left*, Verso, p. 81
- 15) David Korten, *The Great Turning*, p. 61
- 16) Riane Eisler, *The Chalice and the Blade*, p. 124
- 17) *Ibid*, p. 154
- 18) David Korten, *The Great Turning*, p. 62
- 19) Paul Hawken, *Blessed Unrest*, p. 2