

Movement reconciles cultural differences

The different cultures of humanity have each developed specific traits of the human personality while neglecting others. Although these cultures are extremely diverse, they can be grouped into two main patterns.



Krishna Madan

The first pattern is composed of the cultures of North America and northern Europe. The second is composed of the cultures of southern Europe and the Third World. The nature of each pattern is conditioned largely by the level of economic development of the society that produces it.

In southern Europe and the Third World (with the possible exception of East Asia), people are emotional, expressive and hospitable. These traits are dominant because those cultures have only recently emerged from a feudal-type economy that stresses one's emotional and financial commitment to others, especially within the family.

These positive traits, however, also are accompanied by negative ones. Strong family ties sometimes lead to feuding between families. Moreover, the traditional communalism of such cultures often leads to strong pressures to conform.

In North America and northern Europe, the pattern is quite the opposite. People keep their opinions and emotions to themselves and do practically whatever they want despite what others think. These traits exist be-

cause capitalism is highly developed in those cultures and it necessitates a society in which people care little about others and their opinions.

This is positive to the extent that capitalism has made the free development of the individual possible. It is negative to the extent that people in these developed capitalist cultures care little for each other.

In both patterns of culture, changes are taking place which are reducing the differences between the patterns and are creating more balanced and emotionally healthy individuals.

In northern Europe, these changes can be seen in the growth of the Green Movement which, influenced by Eastern philosophy, stresses the need for a less materialistic, more caring society. This movement goes beyond the capitalist's negative concept of individualism (i.e. ignoring or exploiting others), and challenges the individual to actually become a worthy individual in her relationships to others.

Similarly, in the Third World, there also is a movement which seeks to preserve the best of the local pattern while introducing elements from the northern European culture. This synthesis finds its expression in Third World Marxism.

This movement transforms the traditional caring and sharing of Third World communities into a generalized social pattern by combining it with northern European rationalism (in this case, the Marxist analysis of society and social change). It makes the free development of individuals

belonging to oppressed groups much more possible.

Both Third World Marxism and northern European "Greenness" are the trends of the future. These patterns gradually are reconciling the differences between the various areas of

our planet.

Third World people generally have welcomed the Green Movement of the north. It is sad, however, that many in the north have responded to the corresponding change in the Third World with economic boycott, sabotage, bombing and invasion.

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