



Making Sense Of Our Current Culture

By

Mark McGee

How do we make sense of our current culture? We will use Merriam-Webster Dictionary's definition of culture in our response:

... the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also : the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time ...

Naturalism

Our culture makes perfect sense from a naturalistic perspective. Doing whatever we want and believing whatever we believe makes sense if God does not exist.

... action, inclination, or thought based only on natural desires and instincts; a theory denying that an event or object has a supernatural significance .. specifically : the doctrine that scientific laws are adequate to account for all phenomena ... MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

Naturalism means everyone determines their own truth. A naturalist can depend on their own natural desires and instincts. They look to science for answers to life's questions, not to any supernatural force.

Some of the cultural changes we're seeing is surprising to many people; things like cancel culture, cultural diversity, cultural relativism, cultural appropriation, cultural division, cultural marxism, etc. As strange as these may seem to some people in some countries, none of these are new. Look through historical records and you'll find plenty of cancel culture, cultural diversity, cultural relativism, cultural appropriation, cultural division, even cultural marxism. You'll also see cultural norms, cultural values, cultural environment, and cultural opportunities throughout history.

Earth's Culture

Much of the culture of the countries on earth depends on who has the power at any given time and place. The cultural ebb and flow of civilizations can be seen through the way governments come into power, use their power to rule, uprisings against those governments, governmental quelling of the uprisings, the overthrow or decline of governments, and the birth of new governments. Those of us who are older have seen governments come and go around the world, and with the coming and going of governments cultures often change. They expand, contract and often become something new.

Reminds me of Judges 17:6: "In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes." It depends on who is in charge. If a powerful king rules, the cultural norms are according to the king's command. If a king is not powerful enough or there is no king (government rule), people will do whatever seems right in their own eyes.

Culture comes from what people believe about themselves and others and how they act upon their beliefs. Some people may have no problems with people from a different culture and things go well between or among them. Some people do have problems with people from a different cultural and things often do not go well when cultures clash. People from dominant cultures who don't want any cultural changes often try to control people from other cultures. That often doesn't go well and can lead to deep cultural divisions, which can lead to both oppression and rebellion.

Those cultural divides bring with them a litany of problems, many of them including violence against people. Many of the wars in history were based on cultural divisions, along with the drive to gain power and control others. You may have heard the old saying *to the victor belong the spoils*. It was true in the past, is true now and will continue to be true.

As we look back at recent history and even ancient history, we can find many examples of when things didn't go well among people of different cultures. Based on both history and what we know about people, there doesn't seem to be much hope for everyone *just getting along* for very long. Things eventually go bad. Why?

Back to the *naturalist*. Naturalists trust their natural desires and instincts. If naturalism is true, then nothing is true. You have your truth and I have mine. But, you say, we can trust science! Really? Science (knowledge) has and will continue to change. That's the way of scientific investigation. What was true at a past time and place is not necessarily true now and may change again in the future.

We live in a post-truth world. Facts are no longer necessary to determining how we live, what we believe or how we feel about other people. We've heard the mantra for years that *there is no objective truth*. Truth is now subjective, which means things are in subject to each person's determination. You may see a fact of life one way and another person sees

that same fact of life another way. Who is to say who is right or wrong? Culturally, the answer to that question is often based on who is in charge of the culture at the moment.

It would appear from the worldview of naturalism that doing whatever we want and believing whatever we believe makes perfect sense. That is, if there is no supernatural.

Supernaturalism

Our culture also makes perfect sense from a supernaturalistic perspective: the culture on earth is not obedient to the Culture in Heaven.

Supernatural: 'of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible observable universe especially : of or relating to God or a god, demigod, spirit, or devil' ...

MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

Supernaturalism: 'belief in a supernatural power and order of existence' ... MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY

Christians are **supernaturalists**. We have a supernatural worldview. Our worldview is based on the existence of One Supernatural God in Three Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) who created the universe supernaturally: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The Christian worldview is also based on Jesus Christ (the Son of God) creating the heavens and the earth: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3) ... “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Colossians 1:16).

Returning to what we wrote earlier: ‘Much of the culture of a country depends on who has the power.’ Jesus Christ addressed that with His followers this way: “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven” (Matthew 6:9-10).

Why did Jesus teach His followers to say that prayer?

1. Jesus knew that’s what people needed .. earthly obedience to the Culture of Heaven.. it’s the only way to find fulfillment in life ..
2. Jesus knew that’s what was going to happen in the future .. Heaven’s Culture is coming to earth soon ..

Heaven's Culture

That leads us to the question, what is Heaven's Culture? Since God is the Sole Ruler of Heaven, the Culture of Heaven is based on God's Character. What is His Character? Glad you asked.

God's Character is revealed clearly in His Word (the Bible). God's Word is what God says about Himself and His creation. We know from God's Word that God is:

- Eternal ..
- Self-Existing ..
- Self-Sufficient ..
- All-Powerful ..
- All-Knowing ..
- Present Everywhere at the Same Time ..
- Unchanging ..
- Holy ..
- Beautiful ..
- Glorious..

- Perfect in All He Does ..
- True in All He Says ..
- All-Wise ..
- Good ..
- Kind ..
- Loving ..
- Righteous ..
- Just ..
- Caring ..
- Compassionate ..
- Faithful ..
- Gracious ..
- Merciful ..
- Giving ..
- Forgiving ..

That's the Culture of Heaven and it's the culture Jesus told His followers to ask their Heavenly Father to bring to earth. Sound good? I agree. Sounds great!

Changing Culture

We hear many voices on earth today talking about changing culture. They want to change culture to what they like, what feels good to them, what looks right in their eyes. Sound familiar? It should because it's exactly what happened on earth thousands of years ago. God created a perfect world with a perfect culture. Earth's culture was based on God's Character and what He said was true. God created humans and put them in charge of earth's culture (Genesis 1 & 2). Sounds similar to what Jesus told His followers to pray for: "Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven."

God also gave the first humans a choice. That choice was to obey Him or disobey Him. Obedience meant that Heaven's Culture would continue on earth. Disobedience meant that Heaven's Culture would not continue on earth and people would die. That was the cue for the enemy of God and His creation to enter the stage.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

GENESIS 3:1-7

The first human beings chose to change the culture and it's been a mess since. The consequences of their choice was that God removed them from the Culture of Heaven on earth to a new culture of doing whatever was right in their eyes. People are still doing that today.

The only way we will ever see culture change to something that will benefit all people living on earth is when the Culture of Heaven returns to earth, just like Jesus taught us to pray. Until that time comes, God has given each of us a choice. We can choose to obey His Word or disobey His Word. It's the same choice God gave our oldest ancestors (Adam and Eve). All of us will one day face God's judgment. What can wash away our sins? Nothing but the Blood of Jesus.

Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. REVELATION 1:5-6

He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

REVELATION 22:20

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All
rights reserved.

GraceLife © 1990-2021