

Paradigm Shifts Happening Now



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Dear friends,

It is Christmas Eve 2010, as I sit here at my desk. Many family gatherings are happening at this time. Gifts are commonly exchanged. My blood family are many miles away (we get together on Thanksgiving) so I often spend my Christmas Eve writing a gift for my family, friends and the world. Here is this year's gift article:

The new world paradigm is taking clearer shape.

Food Paradigm Shift

The local food movement is growing tremendously, both in size and public acceptance. This is witnessed by the huge rise in farmers markets, CSAs, community gardens, home gardens, organic gardening and farming, permaculture, farm to school programs, Slow Food, raw food, etc. But the old world paradigm is not taking this lying down. Government is creating more regulatory hurdles for small farmers and small food businesses, through laws such as the Senate 510 Food Safety (sic!) bill. I can only imagine the uproar if they really try to stop small-scale farming or gardening.

Health Paradigm Shift

The natural health movement includes a wide array of practices such as: preventative medicine, herbs, naturopathy, homeopathy, massage, acupuncture, traditional Chinese Medicine (traditional medicine of all cultures), Reiki, energy healing and spiritual healing of all kinds, rolfing, aromatherapy, Traeger, polarity therapy, hydrotherapy and hundreds of other examples. The total US workforce in these related fields is now many millions of people. Still smaller than the conventional health care system, but gradually catching up and almost all of it has developed in the last 30 years.

I do not foresee the natural health movement replacing the conventional system. Rather I see some sort of blending. A wider range of wholistic medicine will be available at the hospital. Medicine will become more wholistic in general and be more patient oriented. In other words patients will get better care. Everyone will have good health care and they can choose which health methods they prefer and be educated about the choices.

More and more people in the US want to see reforms to the current health care system. These could include things like:

- Replace the health insurance industry with locally-run cooperative plans. I am sure it would make health care more affordable if we cut out the middleman.
- Stop unnecessary surgeries when able to be solved using non-invasive methods.
- Replace pharmaceutical drugs which have bad side effects with herbal and natural supplements which are effective and without bad side effects. We are likely to see more medicines which are combinations of herbs and pharmaceuticals.
- Allow people to freely decide where they wish to spend their health care dollars, (conventional and/or wholistic) whether from the government or some sort of insurance.
- Encourage doctors, nurses and health care workers to learn more about wholistic medicine so that all medicine becomes more wholistic in approach. Herbalists, massage therapists, etc are part of hospital staff.
- Employ more people in health care so that patients can get better care in hospitals and a wider diversity of choice outside of hospitals.
- Let's have more of our health care dollars actually go to nurses, doctors and natural health care providers and less go to profits for big business.

Economic Paradigm Shift

It is not easy to see the new paradigms in economic systems since the current military/industrial/financial complex controls almost everything to do with money these days. It is a well-known fact that society's wealth is rapidly being transferred to the top couple % of wealthy people. As money moves up so do unemployment, home foreclosures, bankruptcies, poverty, homelessness, misery and despair. More and more people are pissed at Wall Street. The financial crisis has not been solved and will more then likely increase in severity.

For this reason I have been researching what happens after fiat currencies collapse and what are the best local economic systems we can implement at this time. Such as local economic trading systems and mutual credit exchange clearinghouses. You can read more about these new economic systems in my article: "*Building the New Economies: Some Thoughts and Resources*". You can read, or download, a PDF on my website. Scroll down to the 5/25/2010 date.

One of the permaculture principles is to build webs of mutually-beneficial, symbiotic relationships. This applies to economic systems and social systems as well as ecosystems. If each region has a healthy local economy based on sustainable natural resources then they could weave larger webs of symbiotic relationships at larger levels. Exports and imports will still go on, but much reduced. All areas would be equal trading partners (fair trade). The old paradigm of globalization promotes every area exporting a few things they produce well and importing almost everything they use. The new paradigm is to produce everything you can locally and only import the things you can't produce locally. This includes food, energy, building materials, technology, etc.

Governance Paradigm Shift

The new paradigm in governance is also hard to see at the moment, but it is certainly becoming a gleam in more people's eyes. The current government situation in the US is certainly a sad one. Hardly anyone likes it. It is obvious to almost everyone that Congress and politicians in general have sold out to the corporate/financial establishment and do their bidding. The top levels of our federal regulatory agencies are a revolving door for corporate executives of multi-national corporations. The heads of most federal agencies make rules and regulations that make life hard for citizens and small businesses. At the same time they wink at, or allow corporations to get away with murder.

This is true but to a lesser extent at the state government level and some big city politicians are in bed with local big business. In small towns and local politics there is generally less graft and more public control.

Our current form of representative democracy is largely captured by the Republican and Democrat parties. They have different public personas but in practice they are both controlled by big business. Neither can be trusted so a new major third party (or coalition) needs to come together to offer a real people's alternative. If a 3rd party based on serving the people came along, it would sweep the nation's elections. However they would inherit one hell of a mess and lobbyists would soon be tempting them with piles of cash.

The real solution lies in replacing representative democracy with forms of "participatory democracy". Such as the town hall meetings which used to be so popular around the country and which are now being revived in places like New England. People get together and make the policies. There are many old and new forms of participatory democracy. I have been researching governance systems and will eventually post an article on this with a resource list and links. In the meantime I recommend the work of the Co-Intelligence Institute.

I was just introduced to the work of Tom Atlee and his Co-Intelligence Institute. Eureka!! It is one of the missing pieces of the puzzle. How people can govern themselves. This website is the best take I have seen on the governance issue and has links to many other sources of information. Here is a quote from Tom Atlee:

"I suggest that our society urgently needs a more inclusive framing of collective intelligence as the capacity for learning and problem-solving by whole organizations, communities, societies, etc. This includes not only information gathering and forecasting but collective sense-making, deliberation, decision-making, scenario exploration, vision-creation, and much more. In each case, collective intelligence uses diversity and dissonance to make the intelligence of the whole community or society greater than the sum of its parts." [see link at end of article]

<http://www.thataway.org/?p=318>

This link takes you to a report from Tom Atlee on a Conference on Innovation in Community Engagement in Perth, Australia in 2005. It includes reviews of many types of citizens' democracy including:

- 21ST CENTURY TOWN MEETING
- DELIBERATIVE POLLING
- WORLD CAFE
- MIND MAPPING
- CITIZENS JURY
- WISDOM COUNCIL
- DYNAMIC FACILITATION
- CONSENSUS CONFERENCES
- PLANNING CELLS
- CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES
- CITIZEN DELIBERATIVE COUNCIL

Spiritual Paradigm Shift

In a sense we could say that the paradigm shift in spirituality is also like the new food system. They are both becoming more localized. More people are leaving the big (you could say globalized) religions. Nowadays there are more small groups or splinter religions. Some people are forming eclectic, spiritual beliefs unique to themselves. The Divine is not reached through clergy intermediaries; rather, the Divine is accessed directly within. In many ways, materialism and science became the new religion during the industrial era. More people considered themselves atheists. In my viewpoint all religions have similar roots and a true practitioner of any religion is going to be a good neighbor. Alas, many people who profess religion do not practice what they preach. There are good people in all religions and some not so good. There are also reformist trends in the big religions, such as "Liberation Theology" and "Creation Spirituality".

The growth of the many kinds of Earth-based spirituality is another sign of the spiritual paradigm shift. This is a huge catch-all phrase which includes Christians who believe in earth stewardship, indigenous spiritual pathways, shamanism, pagans of all stripes, the Russian Anastasia movement, and people who just plain love the Earth. Seeing the Divine in the Earth and its creatures. It should not be characterized as worship of the Earth, but rather as enlightened stewardship, respect, intelligent interaction, cooperation and co-creation with. Put the earth-based spirituality people in charge and they would make the planet a Garden of Paradise.

Well, that is a lot of paradigm shifts to touch on in one evening and there are many more to consider. Huge amounts of books have been written, and are being written, on these paradigm shifts.

My personal role: The parts of the paradigm shift I am personally most involved in are local food production, natural health-care and Earth-based spirituality. If you look around my website you will see that I am a farmer and a permaculturist who teaches on

many facets of food production and earth healing. In the healthcare field I have been organizing natural healing and herbal medicine gatherings for decades and I professionally grow and wildcraft medicinal plants. On the spiritual paradigm front, I am one of those eclectic, spiritual people who believe there are truths in all religions and who also sees the Divine in nature. I am the founder of the Fairy & Human Relations Congress, which is the leading event in the Western world which brings together people interested in communication and cooperation with the intelligences in nature. [see link at end of article]

These paradigm shifts in the U.S. have their counterparts worldwide

I believe we are all involved in a global paradigm shift at this point in time. Whether embracing it, ambivalent to it, or being carried along kicking and screaming the whole way.

Waves are coming in, waves are coming in, no one can hold back the dawn.

May we all follow our inner hearts and our best conscience.

May we all find inner peace and outward service.

May we all find happiness.

Michael Pilarski, Christmas Eve, 2010

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