

 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**
**IS IT OLD CULTURE vs.
NEW CULTURE?**
OR
**IS IT OLD CULTURE vs.
NO CULTURE?**



By Stephen L. Bakke  January 28, 2015

Here's what provoked me:

E.J. Dionne wrote a column in which he borrows from sociologist James Davison Hunter to frame what has been popularly referred to as "Culture Wars." This is the struggle between those whose deepest commitments were to God vs. those humans who believed their own value systems evolved through what Dionne and other describe as "steady enlightenment." Dionne concluded that for most issues the war is receding e.g. changing public opinion about gay marriage. But he missed the boat on a couple issues.

Here's my response:

Is it Old Culture vs. New Culture? Or is it Old Culture vs. NO Culture?

E.J. Dionne (1-26) discussed what has been popularly referred to as "Culture Wars": the struggle between people whose deepest commitments were to God vs. those humans who believed their own value systems evolved through what Dionne and others describe as "steady enlightenment." Dionne concludes that for most issues the war is receding and a new culture is emerging – e.g. changing public opinion about gay marriage and other progressive policy advances.

Regarding the issue of immigration, he suggests the old question, "Who are we?" was really about how we define ourselves morally. He favors a new question that deals with how we define ourselves ethnically, racially and linguistically. What a change that is!

I ask: What is culture? Does some sort of culture exist in almost any societal environment? No, I respect the concept too much to suggest that. Doesn't a culture require some level of philosophical consistency and moral and ethical absolutes? Do the goals and actions of many progressive elements in our society contradict Dionne's notion that we are moving from an old culture to a new one? Rather, do those progressive goals and actions actually suggest that we are moving from the "old" culture to a condition of "NO" culture?