

“The Great Work – Our Way into the Future” by Thomas Berry

Overview

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Available on-line at: www.EmergingEcology.org/TGWStudy

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Themes	The Planetary Context		The Sociological Transformation			The Species-Level Change
	Our Contemporary Task	The Historical Background	A New Way of Knowing	How to Decide	End of an Era	
Chapters	<p>Introduction</p> <p>1. The Great Work</p> <p>2. The Meadow Across the Creek</p>	<p>3. The Earth Story</p> <p>4. The North American Continent</p> <p>5. The Wild and The Sacred</p>	<p>6. The Viable Human</p> <p>7. The University</p> <p>8. Ecological Geography</p>	<p>9. Ethics and Ecology</p> <p>10. The New Political Alignment</p>	<p>11. The Corporation Story</p> <p>12. The Extractive Economy</p> <p>13. The Petroleum Interval</p>	<p>14. Reinventing the Human</p> <p>15. The Dynamics of the Future</p> <p>16. The Fourfold Wisdom</p> <p>17. Moments of Grace</p>
Major Points	<p>The book is about: the human presence on planet Earth in the opening years of the 21st Century.</p> <p>The Great Work now is to carry out the transition from a period of devastation of the Earth to a period when humans are present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner.</p> <p>The Great Work of a people is the work of all the people.</p> <p>Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles is good; whatever opposes it is not good.</p>	<p>Our great work has to do with a new understanding of planet Earth.</p> <p>Three commitments are basic: to observational science, to a developmental universe, to an inner self-organizing capacity.</p> <p>The historical and cultural accomplishments of the indigenous peoples of this continent are only now beginning to be appreciated and accepted into a general narrative of the human venture.</p> <p>To understand the human role in the functioning of the Earth we need to appreciate spontaneities that we associate with the wild.</p>	<p>We need to move from our human-centered to an earth-centered notion of reality and value.</p> <p>This comprehensive context of our thinking is important in any consideration of human affairs.</p> <p>The universe would become the primary university.</p> <p>The basic course in any college or university would be the story of the universe. This story can fulfill its role only if the universe is understood as having a psychic-spiritual as well as a physical-material aspect from the beginning.</p>	<p>The older tension in human affairs between conservative and liberal based on social orientation is being replaced with the tension between developers and ecologists based on orientation toward the natural world.</p> <p>So influential is the commercial-industrial order that our dominant professions and institutions are functioning in this context.</p> <p>The more ultimate question has to do with the soul of the future. .. The next generations need an inspiring vision of wonder.</p>	<p>The corporations have taken possession of human consciousness in order to evoke the deepest of psychic compulsions toward limitless consumption.</p> <p>An organic economy is an ever-renewing economy. An extractive economy is a terminal economy.</p> <p>The greatest of human discoveries in the future will be the discovery of human intimacy with all other modes of being on the planet.</p> <p>The story of the 21st Century will be the story of the terminal phase of petroleum.</p>	<p>The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human – at the species level, with critical reflection, within the community of life-systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience.</p> <p>The evolutionary vision provides the most profound mystique of the universe.</p> <p>Guidance can come from: indigenous people, women, the classical traditions and science.</p> <p>The present is a historical and religious moment of grace.</p>
Excerpts on Pages	ix, x, xi, 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 15, 16, 20	21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 40, 47, 48, 54	56, 58, 70, 72, 77, 80, 82, 85, 86, 99	100, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 113, 114, 116	117, 119, 121, 122, 127, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140, 149, 150, 157	159 - 162, 164 – 166, 168, 169, 174, 175, 176, 193, 195, 196, 201



Emerging Ecology’s Programs Promoting Thomas Berry’s Work

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<p>“The Great Work” Study Guide</p> <p>Excerpted readings and a 6-session Leaders’ Guide</p> <p>Available at: www.EmergingEcology.org/TGWStudy.</p>	<p>The Universe Story Walk</p> <p>A guided walk through the 14-billion-year Story of the Universe.</p> <p>Additional details at: www.EmergingEcology.org/UWalk.</p>	<p>“Our Great Work: Toward a New Earth Resolve”</p> <p>A 4-session participatory seminar focusing on the practical implications of living in an emerging universe.</p> <p>Contact Emerging Ecology to set up a seminar.</p>
<p>In order to enable groups to discuss and comprehend the magnitude of changes required as Planet Earth enters the 21st Century a 6-session study guide to Thomas Berry’s book <i>The Great Work – Our Way into the Future</i> is now available free on-line.</p> <p>The Study Guide focuses on six primary themes of <i>The Great Work</i>. Groups study one theme per session.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Our Contemporary Task</u> – undertaking a Great Work, 2. <u>The Historical Background</u> – participating in an emergent Universe, 3. <u>A New Way of Knowing</u> – rethinking the context for future actions, 4. <u>How To Decide</u> – building a sustainable future, 5. <u>End of an Era</u> – getting beyond The Petroleum Interval, and 6. <u>The Species-Level Change</u> – embodying the changes that will lay the foundation for future generations. <p>For each session, excerpted readings from <i>The Great Work</i> are available for the participants – each session prints on an 11x17 paper.</p>	 <p><i>Thomas Berry dedicated the Universe Story Walk at Stovers’ Sèjour in 1999.</i></p> <p>Greensboro’s first Permanent Universe Story Walk guides voyagers on a ½-mile gentle walk through the 5-acre upland woods on the property of Elaine and Nelson Stover, 5911 Western Trail – north of Bryan Blvd. near the Piedmont Triad International Airport. Stepping into the walk symbolizes the Primal Flaring Forth, the cataclysmic event some 14 billion years ago that sent matter scattering through time and space. At intervals of 100 feet stand numbered markers – each interval represents 1 billion years of the Universe’s growth and development. The story continues through the birth of the hydrogen stars, and their eventual collapse. One foot from the end of the journey, Lucy – the first human – emerges and the rest is history. Voyagers step into the Ecozoic Era and arrive at a place suitable to reflect on their journey through time, space, and consciousness.</p>	<p>Session One – Telling the Great Story – begins with an image-filled narrative of the Universe’s 14-billion-year history. This presentation allows participants to contemplate how the Universe can become the primary referent in personal and social decision-making.</p> <p>Session Two – Understanding the Great Transition – focuses on the transitions of human civilization from the dawn of consciousness to the present times. “The Earth Charter” study serves as a springboard to consider the magnitude of the changes required in all aspects of the human community.</p> <p>Session Three – Experiencing the Great Motivation – provides a time for participants to share their own eco-stories, followed by an opportunity to engage in a depth dialogue about what will motivate and sustain them in a lifetime of care.</p> <p>Session Four – Becoming the Great Movement – examines the contemporary efforts that are making a substantive difference among those who care for the Earth. Participants decide practical plans for effectively enhancing the movement that is forming the Ecozoic Era.</p>