

Thomas Berry

A Biography

**Mary Evelyn Tucker,
John Grim,
and Andrew Angyal**

Thomas Berry (1914–2009) was one of the twentieth century's most prescient and profound thinkers. As a cultural historian, he sought a broader perspective on humanity's relationship to Earth in order to respond to the ecological and social challenges of our times. The first biography of Berry, this book illuminates his remarkable vision and its continuing relevance for achieving transformative social change and environmental renewal.

Berry began his studies in Western history and religions and expanded to include Asian and indigenous religions, which he taught at Fordham University, Barnard College, and Columbia University. Drawing on his explorations of history, he came to see the evolutionary process as a story that could help restore the continuity of humans with the natural world. Berry urged humans to recognize their place on a planet with complex ecosystems in a vast evolving universe. He sought to replace the modern alienation from nature with a sense of intimacy and responsibility. Berry called for new forms of ecological education, law, and spirituality and the creation of resilient agricultural systems, bioregions, and ecocities. At a time of growing environmental crisis, this biography shows the ongoing significance of Berry's conception of human interdependence with Earth within the unfolding journey of the universe.

MARY EVELYN TUCKER and **JOHN GRIM** teach at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Yale Divinity School where they direct the Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. They worked closely with Thomas Berry for over thirty years as his students, editors, and literary executors and are the managing trustees of the Thomas Berry Foundation.

ANDREW ANGYAL is professor emeritus of English and environmental studies at Elon University.

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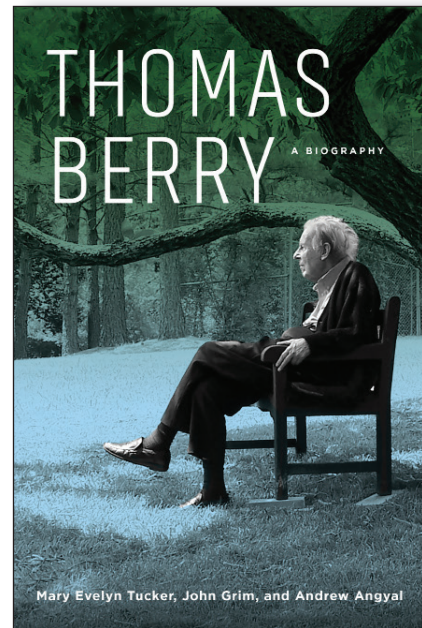
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"A tour de force biography: Thomas Berry was one of the most important thinkers on humanity and our trajectory on this wondrous living planet—and indeed in the journey of the universe. This is a book written with love and clarity and belongs on everyone's required reading list. Read it and you will understand one of the most inspiring persons of our time—and it will change how you think about the future."

—Thomas E. Lovejoy, George Mason University

"This is a book one has waited impatiently for: some of our finest environmental historians of religion telling the epic intellectual and human story of Thomas Berry. Most biographies illuminate the past, but this one helps chart the course for our future."

—Bill McKibben, author of *Falter: Has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?*

"As Thomas Berry was a brilliant, erudite, joyous person who changed the world, so this biography is a brilliant, erudite, joyous book that will change your life."

—Kathleen Dean Moore, author of *Great Tide Rising: Towards Clarity and Moral Courage in a Time of Planetary Change*

"To read this magnificent biography is to encounter the evolution of greatness, for Thomas Berry was truly one of the remarkable people of the twentieth century. . . . I found this book to be a joy and an inspiration."

—James Gustave Speth, cofounder of National Resources Defense Council and World Resources Institute, former administrator of United Nations Development Programme

"In my first meeting with Thomas Berry, I sensed a depth of wisdom that was comprehensive and unique. This initial intuition only deepened as we worked together over decades. There is no better pathway into his vision than this profound biography."

—Brian Thomas Swimme, coauthor, with Thomas Berry, of *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era—A Celebration of the Unfolding of the Cosmos*

"A truly magisterial work and magnificent book."

—*Times Higher Education*

Praise for *Thomas Berry: A Biography*

A tour de force biography: Thomas Berry was one of the most important thinkers on humanity and our trajectory on this wondrous living planet—and indeed in the journey of the universe. This is a book written with love and clarity and belongs on everyone's required reading list. Read it and you will not only understand one of the most inspiring persons of our time, but also it will change how you think about the future.

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To a bewildered world, Thomas Berry offers a moral compass. To a fragmented world, he offers the convergence of scientific and spiritual worldviews in a new story of the evolutionary unity of humans and the cosmos. For a despairing world, he offers meaning and hope. As Thomas Berry was a brilliant, erudite, joyous person who changed the world, so this biography is a brilliant, erudite, joyous book that will change your life.

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To read this magnificent biography is to encounter the evolution of greatness, for Thomas Berry was truly one of the remarkable people of the twentieth century. Throughout, Berry's decency and humanity, as well as his courage, are vividly displayed. I found this book to be a joy and an inspiration.

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