

Thomas Berry at Schumacher College

Summary

Thomas Berry outlines the need for the humans as a species to re-imagine and re-invent themselves in light of the contemporary devastating impact which we are having on the health and vibrancy of the living systems of planet Earth. Thomas discusses how science has both contributed to this exploitive process but also opened doors of understanding to an awareness of the integral nature of the Earth-human connection. Finally, he outlines approaches which may assist in our human culture embracing an Ecozoic, or more holistic, Earth-human future.

Questions/Points for Discussion

1. Thomas claims that the living systems of Earth have not experienced the current level of assault since the great extinction event which eliminated the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. On a scale of 1 (not concerned) to 10 (very concerned) assess your personal sense of foreboding for a viable future for humans on planet Earth. List three factors which worry you and three which give you hope for the future.
2. Thomas says that the Western scientific approach led to an alienation of humans from the natural systems of Earth. How and why do you think this came about?
3. "Each living and non-living being has the right to be and exist in the Earth community". Discuss the legal, private property, and other implications of this proposition.
4. What does Thomas mean when he says "The Earth is a communion of subjects not a collection of objects"? Why does he feel that embracing this awareness is the key to achieving an Ecozoic future?
5. Thomas states that we humans have arrived at this exact time in order to fulfill our role as celebrants of our cosmological connection to Earth and the Universe. Discuss what he means by this and his statement "Humans connecting to the cosmological order is the liturgy of the Earth".