

## **"Transitioning to an Ecozoic Future"**

### **Thomas Berry at Faith Community Church**

#### **Summary**

Thomas Berry describes the crisis moment planet Earth is undergoing right now due to the "use" and exploitation mode of the modern industrial extractive economy and its effect on Earth's living systems. To meet this crisis Thomas provides the framework of an eight point approach which might allow us to transition successfully from the terminal phase of the current Cenozoic era to a new Ecozoic era in which all Earth sub-systems relate to each other in a nurturing way:

- (1) the Universe - not the human - is the only self-referent point- the human is not the centre - the human is a sub-system of a sacred community of existence
- (2) the Universe has a physic-spiritual dimension from the beginning - the capacity for spirituality, intelligence, poetry, music is inherent in the Universe
- (3) the Universe is revelatory - despite some scientists saying it is mechanistic and random
- (4) science has given us a new Creation story
- (5) there is a Unity to the Universe
- (6) the universe unfolds itself in a sequence of irreversible transformations
- (7) the Universe is celebration and is for celebration - the sun shines, the birds sing, the rivers flow, the trees grow, the clouds drift, this IS the purpose/objective of the Universe
- (8) a new meta-religious approach is needed in order to generate the psychic spiritual energy to move into an Ecozoic future

#### **Questions/Points for Discussion**

1. Discuss Thomas' suggestion that each living being on the North American continent must have shuddered when the first masts of the European ships appeared offshore in the 15th century and how this has led to five centuries of "use" and exploitation. Discuss the good, bad and ugly of the European colonization and development of the Americas.
2. Thomas quotes Saint Thomas Aquinas as saying there are two scriptures: nature and the Bible. Discuss what might be meant by this.
3. Discuss Thomas' notion that the destruction of the natural world is not merely a physical or aesthetic loss but a "soul loss". Thomas says it takes a Universe to make a child, inspire a child and to fulfill a child. What does he mean?
4. Discuss Thomas' description of the supernova explosion which seeded the elements which made possible the creation of Earth, life, humans and self-awareness as a "sacrificial moment". Do you agree with Thomas when he says that crisis moments are creative moments, personally and cosmologically?
5. Ponder each of Thomas' 8 points outline above. Do you agree with Thomas' assertion that a new meta-religious approach and energy is required to address Earth's crisis moment or do you feel that existing religious, political, economic, legal, and educational systems are adequate for the task?