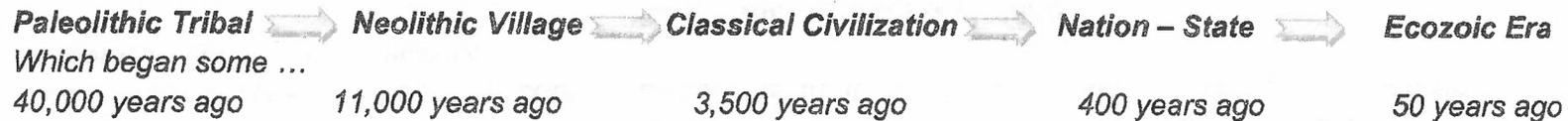


The stories we live by – Thomas Berry

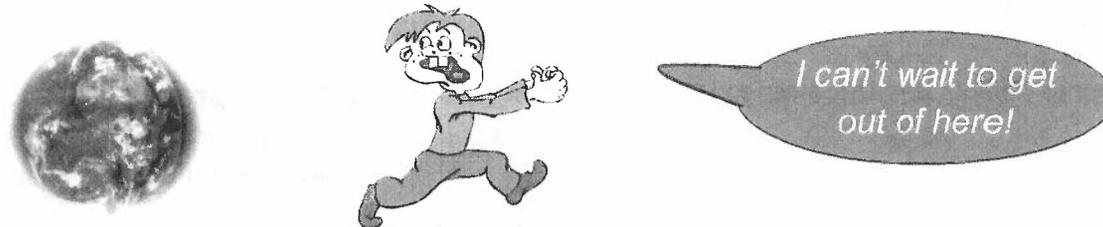
It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories.

The Human Story: Across Time



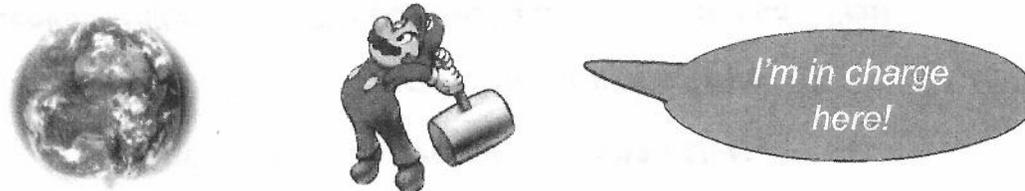
The Redemption Story developed during the Classical Civilization Age

- Results in the disorienting of our spiritual values with the insistence on the flawed nature of the existing order of things and the need for escape from the earth rather than on a greater intimacy with the earth.



The Industrial Scientific Story developed during the Nation-State Age

- Claims the human condition could be overcome by our entrepreneurial skills reducing every earthly being from its status as a sacred reality to that of being a "natural resource."



The stories we live by – Thomas Berry

The Human Story: Ages across Time

Paleolithic Tribal ⇨ ***Neolithic Village*** ⇨ ***Classical Civilization*** ⇨ ***Nation – State*** ⇨ ***Ecozoic Era***

Which began some ...

40,000 years ago

11,000 years ago

3,500 years ago

400 years ago

50 years ago

The Universe Story developing in our present time – the Ecozoic Era

- no community can exist without a unifying story
- views nature not as a “resource” but as the “source” of life
- the human is less a being on the earth or in the universe than a dimension of the earth and indeed of the universe itself
- the three principles of the universe
 - differentiation – the ongoing emergence of new expressions of the universe
 - increased subjectivity – the increasing complexity of the universe
 - communion of each reality – the comprehensive unity of the universe

We no longer hear the voice of the rivers, the mountains, or the sea. The trees and meadows are no longer intimate modes of spirit presence. The world about us has become an “it” rather than a “thou ... The present is not a time for desperation but for hopeful activity.

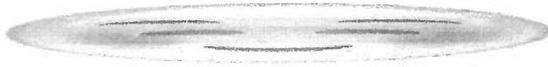
For Further Reading & Viewing

- Berry, Thomas, *The Great Work*. Broadway, 2000
- Berry, Thomas, *The Dream of the Earth*, Sierra Club Books, 1988
- Berry, Thomas & Swimme, Brian, *The Universe Story*. Harper, 1992
- Swimme, Brian & Tucker, Mary Evelyn, *Journey of the Universe*, Yale University Press, 2011. Also in DVD format

In Search of Wholeness –

the first movement – Separation & Domination

Original Wholeness



The Split



*Elevation & Domination of one
over the other*

The Way of Fear



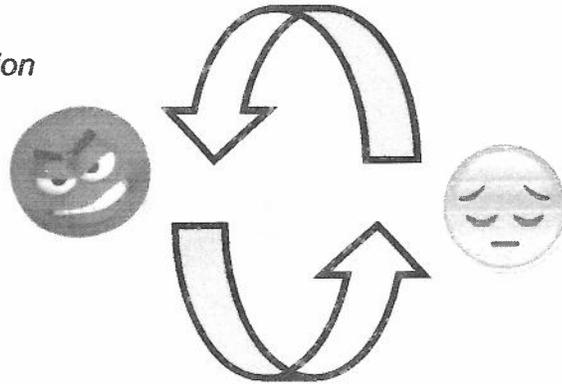
Competition & Comparison

Scarcity over Abundance

Human over Nature

the second movement – Compassion & Communion

*Realization that there is no
"other"
The Way of Compassion*



*The revelation/discovery that
separation was an illusion*



*Black Elk's story –
reuniting indigenous &
modern human natures
healing ethnocentrism*

*Beatrice's story –
reuniting the feminine &
masculine
healing gender centrism*



*Etty's story –
reuniting the false self &
the true self
healing individual
centrism*

*Thomas' story –
reuniting the human &
natural worlds
healing
anthropocentrism*

Through our diversity we become more, both individually and collectively.

*To arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time – TS Eliot*

What is mine to do?

Our challenge is to create a new language, even a new sense of what it is to be human. ...

How might I share with others what I have learned today?

The most difficult transition to make is from an anthropocentric to a biocentric ...

What can I do to increase my awareness and connection to nature?

The Great Work now, as we move into a new millennium, is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth ...

What can I do to help heal some specific harm the environment?

...everything has a right to be recognized and revered. Trees have tree rights, ...

What can I do to help other plant and animal species in my community?

For children to live only in contact with concrete and steel and wires and wheels and machines and computers and plastics, ...

How might I share this message with the children in my family and community?

When we awaken to a revelation that the industrial world, as now functioning, can exist for only a brief historical period, ...

What specific ways might I live a more simple life?

The historical mission of our times is to reinvent the human ... by means of story and shared dream experience.

How might I write a story of my life that is part of the Universe Story?

As we enter the twenty-first century, we are experiencing a moment of grace. Such moments are privileged moments. ...

How might contemplation and meditation practices help my awareness and action of the "Great Work" to be done?

Thomas Berry Quotes for Lectio

- Our challenge is to create a new language, even a new sense of what it is to be human. It is to transcend not only national limitations, but even our species isolation, to enter into the larger community of living species. This brings about a completely new sense of reality and value. (*The Dream of the Earth* 42)
- The most difficult transition to make is from an anthropocentric to a biocentric norm of progress. If there is to be any true progress, then the entire life community must progress. Any progress of the human at the expense of the larger life community must ultimately lead to a diminishment of human life itself. (165)
- The Great Work now, as we move into a new millennium, is to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficial manner. (*The Great Work* 3)
- ...everything has a right to be recognized and revered. Trees have tree rights, insects have insect rights, rivers have river rights, and mountains have mountain rights. (5)
- For children to live only in contact with concrete and steel and wires and wheels and machines and computers and plastics, to seldom experience any primordial reality or even to see the stars at night, is soul deprivation that diminishes the deepest of their human experiences. (82)
- When we awaken to a revelation that the industrial world, as now functioning, can exist for only a brief historical period, we might begin to consider just how we can establish a more sustainable setting for our physical survival and personal fulfillment. (93)
- 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. (159)
- As we enter the twenty-first century, we are experiencing a moment of grace. Such moments are privileged moments. The great transformations of the universe occur at such times. The future is defined in some enduring pattern of its functioning. (196)