

**OUR WAY INTO THE FUTURE:
GUIDES FROM *THE GREAT WORK* BY THOMAS BERRY***

Viability

We need to develop a viable mode of human presence on Earth

Key Question: Is it viable?

- 1. Earth-centeredness.** We must recognize that “the community of all living species, including the human, is the greater reality and the greater value [than that of the human community alone].” (p. 58)
- 2. Self-limitation.** Acceptance of the challenging aspects of the natural world is a primary condition for our creative existence within the community of life systems. (p. 67)
- 3. Organic Economy.** An extractive economy is by its nature a terminal economy. An organic economy is coherent with the ever-renewing processes of Earth. (p. 138)

Intimacy/Community

We need to be present to the community of life of which we are a part

Key Question: Does it favor intimacy/community?

- 4. Communion of Subjects.** “These qualities that we identify with the human . . . we observe throughout the natural world. . . . Every being has its own spontaneities that arise from [within, and] express the inner value of each being.” (pp. 81-82)
- 5. Integral Relations.** Ecology must become the queen of the sciences, and not only of the sciences but also of the humanities, economics and the studies of the professions. Ecology is a functional cosmology. (p. 84)
- 6. Four Wisdoms.** “[Four wisdoms are] available to guide us into the future: the wisdom of indigenous people, the wisdom of women, the wisdom of the classical traditions, and the wisdom of science.” (p. 176)
- 7. Reform of Culture and Institutions.** These understandings require comprehensive cultural and institutional reform. For example, we need new languages that express true senses “of reality, of value, and of progress.” (p.63)

Celebration

In our special mode of self-conscious awareness, we need to celebrate the universe

Key Question: Does it celebrate the universe?

- 8. Re-invent the Human.** “A new revelatory experience is needed, an experience [in which] human consciousness awakens to the grandeur and sacred quality of the Earth process.” (p. 165) “In the larger cultural context the dream . . . both drives and guides the action.” (p. 201)
- 9. Cosmic Liturgy.** “We might think of a viable future for the planet less as the result of some scientific insight or as dependent on some socio-economic arrangement, than as participation in a symphony or as a renewed presence to the vast cosmic liturgy.” (p. 20)
- 10. Metareligious Movement.** The needed transition can only be compared to the great classical religious movements. They spread through the intellect, but perhaps even more by some unconscious force that entered the human spirit and changed human culture. This transition involves not simply a segment of, but the entire human community, even the geobiological order of the planet. (pp.84-85)

* Thomas Berry, *The Great Work* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999).