

## **Life or Money: Competing Stories, Divergent Paths**

**A conversation with Matthew Fox and David Korten**

**Session II of IV in the Ecological Civilization Series**

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**Description:** Modern society confronts an epic choice between two competing sacred stories. Creation Spirituality, a new enlightenment story with a deep intellectual lineage, affirms we are living beings who find health and happiness in the service of life. While pointing the way to an ecological civilization of justice, peace, and environmental health, it competes with the reigning story of neoliberal economics, an idolatrous religion posing as a science, in which humans are financial beings who prosper in the pursuit of money through the exploitation of people and nature.

**David Korten** [00:00:01] ...you may also know me as the former Harvard Business School Professor who turned anti-corporate and became a defector. And of course, my partner here is Matthew Fox, who is known for his defection from the Catholic Church. So, we're kind of compatriots in the revolution.

**David Korten** [00:00:31] Now first of all, how many of you were in the previous session? Okay, a fair number, but a minority. So, I'll be doing a little bit of repetition here, but I hope those who were at the previous session will forgive me. I want to start by getting a sense of the extent to which we are all on the same page, so raise your hand if you're among those who are aware that as humans, we are on a path to self-extinction. Okay, was there anybody that disagrees with that? You disagree? Okay. Now among those who raised their hands - that we're on that path - how many think that that's a problem? No, not everyone thinks that's a problem. That's interesting. Actually, I want to see: are there hands that think it's not a problem? Okay. This will be an area that I expect Matt will talk a little bit about. We've had had some discussions on the choice between a love of death, and a love of life. And of course Matt got more or less expelled from the Catholic Church, for his position against original sin and has been a leader of the framing of "original blessing."

**David Korten** [00:02:01] So, we have a big following here for original blessings. When we started putting together this series of presentations on ecological civilization - and I assume most of you know that this is part 2, of the 4 part series on ecological civilization. The first one was just the session before this in this room and both sessions are focused on the story frame, the narrative; the importance of the conceptual underpinnings of how we think about creation, how we think about life, how we think about society and our

place in it.

**David Korten** [00:03:04] Tomorrow, we will have again, starting at 12:15, two sessions: one with John Cobb, and then another - my wife Fran who was Executive Director of Yes for many years will be leading - which will be a conversation among all the key presenters in this series: so, Jeremy Lent, Matthew Fox, and John Cobb, and myself. And the sessions tomorrow will focus more on the actual action implications - what does this mean for how we organize as institutions? And what are the things that we have to do moving forward, to get away from this path to self-extinction and on to a path toward an ecological civilization, which is described essentially by the three essentials of the Parliament of the World's Religions: peace, justice or equality, and living in balance and harmony with Earth and Earth's natural systems. I was very struck in preparation, if you look at the mission of the Parliament, the sentence: cultivate harmony among the world's religions and spiritual communities, and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions, in order to achieve a just peaceful and sustainable world. So that implies a very strong "action focus."

**David Korten** [00:04:45] Now the 1993 declaration talks about the crisis that we're in, as humanity: peace eludes us; the planet is being destroyed; neighbors live in fear; women and men are estranged from each other; children die. Each of us depend on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for community, of living beings, for people animals and plants and for the preservation of Earth; the air water and soil. That of course is the alternative to which we must move. And then most recently in the 2015 Declaration on Climate Change, the statement that brings it together: Earth is an interconnected whole. The future we embrace will be a new ecological civilization and a world of peace, justice and sustainability with the nourishing and diversity of life. So that brings it together. Many of you may have noticed that often in the Parliament, as in our progressive movements in general, we tend to separate these different parts and we get caught up in all the different identities and so forth. One of the things I see in this focus on an ecological civilization is that all of these are integrally connected. And ultimately unless we move forward with one identity, as humans, that is inclusive of all people, we will continue on our path toward self-extinction.

**David Korten** [00:06:31] So, to get started on our session today... Matthew, as you all know, former Catholic priest now an Episcopalian priest. He got, essentially I guess, bounced out of the Catholic Church - or separated, for questioning original sin - and he called the Catholic Church a "dysfunctional family." Now, we're hoping maybe the church has gotten a little beyond that, and I think Matt's, as I am, a more little more friendly toward the current Pope. Anyhow, Matt's focus that he'll be getting us into around original blessing really aligns with the kind of underlying theme of this session.

When we get into our contrasting stories, it's the fundamental contrast between what is our defining sacred story? Is it a sacred money story? ...which is really what you learn in neoliberal economics: that money is wealth; making money creates wealth; the wealth creators - the world's real beneficiaries, or the billionaires - that are making big product profits and creating money. Or is our sacred story the story of life: the story of a sacred Earth; the story of a spirit emerging bringing forth the cosmos, the creation that we are beginning to understand and ever deeper frames from science.

**David Korten** [00:08:30] And this then gets us into discussions of our search for meaning and the evolving place of our spiritual traditions. I'll just share quickly two stories that kind of introduced me to this framing. One was years ago in 1999, when the WTO was meeting in Seattle, and we were preparing for the big protest there. The Seattle Council of churches sponsored a conference to alert the religious community to what the protests were about. One of the major speakers there was Marcus Borg, and his defining frames just stuck forever in my mind. He said: "Tell me your image of God, and I'll tell you your politics." ...tell me your image of God, and I will tell you your politics. And if you know his work, you know: if it's the great white father image, it looks something like me...! [Audience laughs] You know, I've always wondered where that image came from. Who would have ever imagined! Anyhow... But he says if that's your image then this is a hierarchy of righteousness. And so who is closest to God? And of course: men are closer than women, and white people are closer than people of color... And people in general are closer than animals, are closer than plants, etc., etc. He says if your image is a spirit image, and you think of creation as the spirit evolving, creating, becoming - then everything's connected; there is no hierarchy. And then you're into creation spirituality, which Matt has taken way farther, to my knowledge, than any other human being in terms of laying out: what does that mean? And how does it connect to our scripture, to our different religious traditions, and as well into the emerging understanding of science?

**David Korten** [00:10:57] Then another one of these defining experiences happened when I was in Spain at a conference, and this very short Chinese lady walked up to me. She says my name is Doctor May Huan Hall [Transcriber's note: not sure of spelling]. She says, "I am familiar with your work and I think there's a connection to what I do that you might be interested in, because I'm a microbiologist, and I'm a new biologist." What's a new biologist? Well a conventional biologist takes a cell, grinds it up, studies its chemical composition and thinks they have discovered something about life. Hmm... this is a woman for you, isn't it? She says, "I study living cells and I study how they manage and exchange constant flows of nutrients water, energy, and information." And then you begin to understand; you get a picture of life. You begin to realize that life only exists in communities that are in a constant process of self-organization, to create and maintain the

essentials of life's existence.

**David Korten** [00:12:31] So, then she led me into the human body. When you think about it, each of our each of our bodies is comprised of tens of trillions of individual decision-making living cells. And what they do is all totally beyond our consciousness and yet they're constantly self-organizing to create and maintain the vessel of our consciousness, and the instrument of our agency, in our interaction with other elements of creation. You begin to get this incredible sense of the complexity of life and the complexity of creation. And then you begin to think about this in terms of ecology, and the organization of Earth. This connects to this fact that science now tells us that there are two trillion galaxies in the whole cosmos. That's a lot of galaxies, and each of those galaxies has billions of stars and we have no idea how many planets, but a lot of planets. So far, this is the only planet we've identified that has the conditions on the surface essential to support life.

**David Korten** [00:14:00] Well, that's pretty amazing. And we are in a process as humans of destroying that capacity. That would be a crime not only against humanity, but a crime against creation. So, we begin to put this together into a deeper understanding of creation, that follows so clearly out of Matt's framing. And then we begin to think about, well, what does that mean in terms of what has put us onto the terrible path that we are on, where we are destroying ourselves, and this incredible phase in evolution's unfolding? Because only if we, to the extent we understand why we're on a bad path, can we truly begin to bring ourselves around to a positive path to the world we want, which is a world of peace; a world that meets the material needs of all, while bringing forth a sense of spiritual exuberance and abundance and love and enjoyment, of the thrill of this particular experience of life in this form.

**David Korten** [00:15:08] So, with that, again back to which is sacred, money or life? And with that I turn it over to Matt. Sort it out for us, Matt! [Audience applauds]

**Matthew Fox** [00:15:41] Thank you, David. Thank you all for being here this afternoon to be part of this important challenging topic, at this important and challenging time of human history, American history, eve of the election, and of course planetary history. I was struck by the story of the Chinese biologist, in that it echoed with a woman biologist I've known for years, Beverly Rubik, who taught in my program sometimes. She used to say - she did her doctorate at UC Berkeley. ...she used to say, "They shouldn't call it a biology lab, they should call it a *thanotos* lab. We only study dead things!" ...you kill this thing, take it apart - the frog and everything! It smells like formaldehyde, in our biology department!" She says, "That's not biology. That's not a study of life, but the study of dead things; we kill everything that comes in the door."

**Matthew Fox** [00:16:35] So I think that kind of echoes your point there and also your story on Marcus Borg was wonderful. ...tell me your image of God and I'll tell you your politics. The whole of God, the "punitive father God," for example has everything to do with right-wing politics; with why fascism in politics and fundamentalism in religion go to bed together, very very eagerly. Because it is about control; it's about the continued imperialism of patriarchy, and the enemy is always the woman. I used to say that that whether the Taliban, the Vatican or Pat *Robinson*, they all agreed on one thing: that the problem was the feminine. And that still needs a lot of healing, even under the present papacy. Though it is a step forward in many other ways.

**Matthew Fox** [00:17:44] So, I've been asked to talk, I think, about the subject of the story of money and death and the story of life. I'm reminded by a marvelous statement from Naomi Klein, who I consider one of the prophets of our time. She says: we need a full-throated debate about values. And that's really what I think these four sessions are about – a full-throated debate about values. You can't eat money! You can't eat money! Meister Eckhart said that in the 14th century: you can't eat gold! You can't eat it. Now, of course, it can help you eat, if you have some, but you can't eat the money! The money is very impersonal. By itself, it'll kill you! Eating gold is going to kill you.

**Matthew Fox** [00:18:25] I'll never forget an interview years ago, with Henry Ford Jr., when he was a multi-millionaire and running Ford, I think, and they said, "When do you have enough money?" And his answer was, "When you always have a little bit more." I thought that was real depressing, if you want to become a millionaire. You see, you're never going to be satisfied! He had multi-millions and it's always about a little bit more. That's what greed is - it's about a little bit more. As Aquinas said, it tends to infinity. Greed tends to infinity. It has no limit, and we see that borne out not only in the economics of corporations, but of course in the legislators whom are bought by them, and the Supreme Court judges' word bought by them, and have now declared for all to believe until the end of time that every corporation is a *person*, just as sacred as you are - only they get to be *immortal*. We're only *mortal* persons, but in our legal system a corporation is an *immortal person*. That's a pretty good deal! You can buy it.

**Matthew Fox** [00:19:29] So Mary Oliver, a wonderful North American mystic says: there's only one question... There's only one question; how to love the world. *How to love the world...* And Otto Rock (Transcriber's note: couldn't catch the actual name) reminds us that life at its base, he says, is irrational not rational. Money, I think, is a system set up very rationally. It's about numbers: you got it, or you don't; you have this much or that much; you owe this much or that much, etc. It's a very rational system. And of course the rational has its place. I want my pilot flying me back to California, late

tomorrow, to have his numbers right and have his rationality in place. I don't expect him to be doing circle dances or have mystical experiences, other than driving the airplane.

**Matthew Fox** [00:20:37] So, you know, there's a place for both. But it was Einstein himself who said that our culture over-values the rational and ignores the *intuitive*, which is where values come from. He says: "Values do not come from the rational or from the intellect." ...says Einstein. The intellect will give you methods; it will not give you values. And yet our entire educational system, as he pointed out - and as I intuited 40 years ago - eliminates intuition, what I would call the right hemisphere, or the mystical brain, and the creative brain really, and it values almost entirely the rational. And Einstein said the rational brain should serve the intuitive brain, but we live in a culture that honors the rational and has forgotten the intuitive brain - which is another way of saying we have forgotten values.

**Matthew Fox** [00:21:30] And in our educational system - from the bottom to the top, from children to professional school - we run the risk of turning people out who are quote, "value free," which is really to say they absorb the values of the culture, with no questions whatsoever. The values we get from entertainment, as was pointed out in the last session, and the rest. So what's the different story? The different story is about putting life first. It's an ancient story. Jeremy, who presented a wonderful slide show previously about the history of the human race, started with the indigenous peoples, and of course the value they put on the tribe and on survival, and their interconnection with the other life systems and so forth. But it was about the life of the community surviving. And of course Deuteronomy says: "I put before you living and dying choose the living." *Choose the living*. It is a choice! And I would say at this time in history, our culture in the west has pretty much, well, chosen the dying - at least my country, at this time, the United States has, because we're involved in idolatry, as Pope Francis has pointed out: *the idolatry of money*. It's a thing that becomes an obsession and therefore is an idol. And it runs things, and it determines the winners and the losers - and including of course not just the humans who are losing in poverty, but of course Mother Earth is part of the losers today. She is being treated the way the poor are being treated.

**Matthew Fox** [00:23:31] In contrast, we have so many acclamations of the other story the story of putting life first. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who stood up to Fascism and Hitler in his day, and was murdered for it - writing from his jail cell before he died. He said, and I quote, "Jesus calls persons not to a new religion but to *life*." Those are his final thoughts, before he faces death a very young age. Eric Fromm in his very fine book on evil, called *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* says that necrophilia grows when biophilia is stunted. I think that's a real key to evil: when biophilia is stunted. When the love of life is short changed, we are set up for the idols of death, including the idolatry of money. And

of course the power - money isn't itself the end, it is the power that is so seductive and significant.

**Matthew Fox** [00:24:39] Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century said: the creator is the fountain of life, who renders us drunk; those who hold their desire at the fountain of life and sweetness are drunk. We're here to get drunk on life! ...here to get drunk on life. Maybe that's why we have so much alcoholism, and drug addiction, and shopping addiction and all the other addictions that are sold to us 24/7... It's because no one has suggested, has invited us, to get drunk on life. To get high on life! It's doable, you know! That's what living really is about. That's why meditation practices, around the world, east to west. are about honoring that sacred breath. And of course the practice of yoga sound, or Hildegard of Bingen, teaching her nuns to sing her music. I know this because we had courses singing training people to sing her music. You get high on your breath! You often do in a chorus or a choir, because you've got to pull up that breath, make it big, to go on that ride, that rollercoaster ride, or what I call Hildegard's erotic Gregorian chant. And if you've ever listened to it, you'll know when you do, why it is erotic Gregorian chant.

**Matthew Fox** [00:26:04] Leo Tolstoy said: to know God and to live are the same thing. God is life; to know God and to live are the same thing. God is life. And Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel says: "Just to be as a blessing; just to live is holy." So there there's a tremendous consensus that the story about putting life first is not a new story. It's often, however, a forgotten one. And it's been swamped by the accomplishments of the modern era, which have been very considerable, in terms of technology and in terms of extracting things from the earth, and invention, indoor plumbing and all those things that we rather appreciate.

**Matthew Fox** [00:27:02] Here's Aquinas again... Again in the pre-modern consciousness, in the pre-modern consciousness, there is this awareness that you had among indigenous people that we're here to connect to all of life. Hildegard of Bingen in the 12th century said words that were quoted earlier the last session, but from Lao zu Tung, of the Taoist tradition. But she said it from her western tradition. She said that we belong to this web of life, and we have this responsibility. Well, there's a give-and-take in a web. We have responsibility for justice and balance with all the other, the rest of Creation, in this web. And she said if humans, in our greed, choose to rupture this web of life, her language was: "God will allow creation to punish Humanity." She's not saying divinity is coming after us, but Creation's coming after us; going to bite us in the butt - which is exactly what's happening. That's what global warming is, and so much else that is happening.

**Matthew Fox** [00:28:19] Here's Aquinas again: "God is a cause of all life. Divine Life is

per se alive, super eminently alive and ineffable.” And Howard Thurman, the great spiritual genius behind the civil rights movement, and Dr. King... Every time King went to jail, he took one book with him - 39 times, one book - Howard Thurman’s book Jesus and the Disinherited. So that's how important Thurmond was to the Civil Rights Movement. Thurman says the most wonderful fact of all... the most wonderful fact of all is that life is alive. ...that life is alive.

**Matthew Fox** [00:28:57] And David introduced this session, and the previous one with the important observation that, so far, life, and especially the complex life that we experience here, has not been found elsewhere. It may be, but we’re never going to have other elephants in the universe. ...or whales, or tigers or polar bears or rainforest. These are a once-in-the-universe event. Other living planets might be found, but they’ll have their own beings. Why would we want to do anything but care for this planet, which with its amazing beauty and yet its dwindling of species - the sad going on, because humans have lost our way.

**Matthew Fox** [00:29:42] Now, one story I’d like to tell I got from Brian Swimme, the physicist, is that if you put a one-inch band of steel around a growing, a watermelon on a vine - a small, a young watermelon, it will break through that steel, as it grows. Now, that's my definition of biophilia. That's my image of biophilia, and I look around at my brother and sister human beings - my other two legged ones - and I ask myself: “Why are watermelons more in love with life, than human beings?” To me, that's a really important question. What happened to our biophilia? Or are we just sitting on it? It's there. It just needs to be lit again. It just needs to be lit again.

**Matthew Fox** [00:30:47] The question was asked last session, and will be asked in the other two too: what do we do to transform the energy quickly? Because, according to the latest UN report, we’ve got 12 years left to change our ways. Well, this is precisely where spirituality comes in. Jesus had the word of *metanoia*: change your ways. Wake up! Buddha - the very name Buddha means the awakened one. So when religion is doing its job, it is about awakening people. Unfortunately we’re not living at a time when religion itself is all that alive. And so we're undergoing this crack everywhere. Our institutions are failing us.

**Matthew Fox** [00:31:46] There's a line from Meister Eckhart - he says: “If you want the kernel, you must break the shell.” ...if you want the kernel, you must break the shell. I think the shell of religion is being broken, and inside the kernel is spirituality. That's how you start religions over again – to the mystics, and everyone is a mystic, our capacity to start anew; to give birth.



**Matthew Fox** [00:32:12] I also think in education, we're living in a shell that we call academia; what Thomas Berry called "academic barbarism." And as was quoted earlier today, he's the one who said that most of the destruction of the planet is happening at the hands of PhDs; you have to be smart to learn how to tear down a rain forest in a day, that it takes God and nature 10,000 years to give birth to, and is irrepeatable. That's our left-brain smarts. It's what Einstein talked about when he said: I abhor "American Education" that leaves values out, because it leaves the intuition out. Of course, it leaves the heart out. We're educating one half of the brain, and setting people loose to destroy the planet. We've been doing this for several centuries - we can't afford to do it anymore.

**Matthew Fox** [00:33:00] We need wisdom schools, not knowledge factories... This wisdom, which by the way is feminine around the world - that has everything to do with a patriarchal imperial consciousness that is running things today. And it's the reptilian-brain out of control. For sure, this brain and this consciousness is of course not dying gracefully. It senses that its days are numbered and that's why this this big hullabaloo of anger and rage and lies, and that strange path that politics is taking today. It's the ungraceful dying of an excessively patriarchal period, that really, I think, was launched pretty much around the Agricultural Revolution and has extended up to today.

**Matthew Fox** [00:33:53] I'll never forget sitting with a wonderful human being - he won the MacArthur genius award as a farmer - Wes Jackson. He was rocking on his porch in overalls, a Methodist guy with a pipe in his mouth, rocking, and he said, "Well, I think we've been doing agriculture wrong for 10,000 years." It's the most radical sentence I've ever heard in my life, and it rang bells! Wow, maybe we've been doing education wrong for 10,000 years, and religion wrong for 10,000 years, and economics wrong... In other words, when patriarchy took over and we killed that era of ritual, and of relating the human soul, the human psyche to the universe, which is what all ritual is about. The previous speaker spoke about how, for ninety-five thousand years, we were hunter-gatherers. He did not mention that during that 95% of our existence, ritual was at its climax; it was at its biggest expression. And you'd sense that, if you've ever done ritual with indigenous people, in Africa or America or Ast... [Transcribers note: couldn't understand the previous name.] or any place that they're very serious about connecting the human soul to the psyche. And that is where the sacred comes in. If we're going to change people, we're going to change them by bringing back the sacred.

**Matthew Fox** [00:35:27] Here is Thomas Berry speaking, "An absence of a sense of the sacred is the basic flaw in many of our efforts, ecologically or environmentally, adjusting our human presence to the natural world. It has been said: we will not save what we do not love. It is also true that we will neither love nor save what we do not experience as sacred." ...*we will neither love nor save what we do not experience as sacred.* Eventually,

he says: only our sense of the sacred will save us. That, my friends, is a shortcut - with 12 years left to awaken the sense of the sacred. How many of you were at the cosmic mass yesterday morning? Nice number - about half, I think. How many of you had a taste of the sacred at that, mass? Sounds like a hundred percent.

**Matthew Fox** [00:36:19] You see, ritual is the shortcut! It's not enough for academics and others to write papers, make up words, meet in convention halls and talk to people. That's not going to save the world! Information is important, but it's one of the lies of our culture that information is over-important, because it isn't. The heart has to be moved! That's what Jesus is talking about. That's what the Buddha's talking about. That's what White Buffalo Woman is talking about and Black Elk is talking about: the heart has to be *wetted*. Hildegard of Bingen said: the only sin in life is drying up! She wrote this to bishops and abbots and the Pope, and she said, "You're drying up! Get out of your libraries! Get out of your convention centers, and do something that you stay wet and green and moist and juicy." Those were her words! Those are women's words. Those are words about creation and co-creation, and we have to start everything over again: politics economics, education, where it all gets destroyed before you're even off the ground as a young person and then you've got a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. That's a lot of fun, too.

**Matthew Fox** [00:37:32] And religion too. But it can be done! It's been done in the past! This is what the Buddha did. He took Hinduism which was a quite a labyrinth in his day, and got to the essence. Jesus took the essence of his Jewish teaching, and tried to clear the table. "Love your neighbor," he said. Well, of course, we've anthropocentrized that in the modern era, because we've anthropocentrized everything. Or as Pope Francis says: "Narcissism has been the reign of the modern era." We've been thinking only about ourselves; the narcissism... But think that your neighbor is the rocks, and the trees, and the soil, and the air. What's more neighborly than air? It's inside all of us! What's more intimate than that? ...and the oceans, and the waters. It is *all* our neighbor, is what the Lakota pray: aho mitakuye oyasin. All our relations, they are all holy, they are all sacred.

**Matthew Fox** [00:38:46] Mary Oliver has a wonderful poem called "On the River Clarion." And she's in the Bronx - she's sitting on a rock for hours, watching the water go by and the moss go by in the water. And finally, she hears them talking, and finally she hears what they're saying. The water is saying, "I am part of holiness." And the Moss is saying, "I too am part of holiness." And the rock too was saying, "I am also part of holiness." These are the facts of life, folks! These are not facts from Wall Street or the media. These are facts of life.

**Matthew Fox** [00:39:23] You know, it was Bob Costas, a Lakota teacher who worked

with me, and a wonderful man. He said to me one day, "You want to know how holy water is? Go without it for three days." I like to work with Native Americans; they're practical. He didn't say go to our conference, and produce papers. Go without water for three days! And it's cheap to do that. It's not easy, but it's cheap. It's simple. Then, that first sip of water... Then you learn gratitude. Then you learn reverence. Then you learn what the sacred means, and it's not some foreign thing up in the sky. It's not a bunch of doctrines and canon lawyers interpreting for you, that taste of sweet water; of what we all need. And we all, not just all two-legged ones, that we share with all the creatures on this planet, the mystery, the miracle, the marvel of water - that we are of course taking for granted and therefore destroying.

**Matthew Fox** [00:39:23] So I come from California. We had a seven-year drought. I think Californians did learn something about the sacredness of water, in that drought. We learned to preserve it more, etc. And we we're like, "Oh gee, we need water!" You got to drink it, you wash with it, you cook with it. Well, it's kind of nice to have around the house. But you know, how many more cracks like this, breakdowns like this, does the species have to go through, to learn the obvious: that it's all sacred? All of it has been given; it's a gift. It's grace, as Meister Eckhardt said: "Nature is grace." It's a given gift, and we can no longer afford to take it for granted. ...not clean air, not clean water, not healthy animals, and of course, not the health of our children, as things deteriorate.

**Matthew Fox** [00:41:29] And you know these migrations, that our politicians say... Oh, this is hard to even repeat what they're saying about these so-called caravans, from Central America. But the media doesn't tell us - just like it doesn't tell us when there are these crazy hurricanes and everything - that most of that migration is due to climate change. If you see satellite pictures of Central America 20 years ago, it was green. I was there 20 years ago - it was green! Today, you see pictures - it's mostly brown. That's why these people are leaving the land; they can't make a living. They can't grow things anymore. These are climate change refugees. He said ecological refugees and it's just the beginning. These people who are abandoning islands in the Pacific, because the waters are flooding over, while of course our politicians, half of them are in denial: "What me worry? There's climate change, no..." Hmmm...

**Matthew Fox** [00:42:22] So, recovering the sacred is at the heart of going deeper into the reality of life; that life is a gift. And it is a 13.8 billion year gift - it took that long, we now know, to create a planet like this one. Surely there are enough humans around to kind of wake up and say, "Isn't this special?" And isn't it true... I wrote about this 30 years ago in my book [The Coming of the Cosmic Christ](#): there's no such thing as a Roman Catholic rainforest, and a Buddhist ocean, and a Lutheran sun and a Baptist moon and an Atheist cornfield. Let's get out of these ridiculous boxes that we've put ourselves

into, and respond to what we all delight in and need to learn anew - to reverence, and to taste as sacred.

**Matthew Fox** [00:43:42] So, we are involved as a species. New words are coming up. We know the word genocide. We're involved in ecocide. We're involved in biocide. We are involved in matricide; the killing of the mother, of the killing of Mother Earth and the killing of the mother - the feminine principle in men, as well as of course in women. That is our agenda under these late hours of patriarchy. And speaking theologically, we are involved in deicide because Divinity has invested in this unique planet. That's how I see it, invested heavily. And just like the story goes - that Christ was crucified by the Roman Empire - we are crucifying Mother Earth, and her creatures, in the name of our Empire, which is the Empire of corporate greed and patriarchal excess.

**Matthew Fox** [00:44:47] The book of wisdom says, "This is wisdom to love life." That's what wisdom is: it's about this passion for living, like the watermelon has. The word for that is eros, but in our stupidity, under patriarchy we abandon the word eros and turned it over to pornographers to make money on of course - big money. But the truth is that's what eros means: it's a passion for living. Audrey Lord says, "I'm erotic when I write a poem, when I make a table, when I bake bread, and when I make love." Yes, that's what we need more of: eros. This is how people change fast: ritual and the rebirth of the sacred, and the rebirth of eros. And don't listen to the stories you have from patriarchal control ideologies, that tell you that your eros is going to destroy the world.

**Matthew Fox** [00:45:41] It's that's destroying the world – it's this love of death and false idols. Eros is not a false idol: it calls us to love; it calls us to give and to receive; it calls us to give birth. It calls us to believe in the next generation, that we are generous enough to bring into the world to want to raise, even when things are dark, as in this moment of the dark night of our species, that we are going through. So I think that this assignment you gave me, David – to talk about the two stories - I think it's at the basis of this: that we put life first [Transcriber's note: could not hear the end of the speaker's sentence.]

[Audience applauds]

**David Korten** [00:46:50] Well Matt is one of my most wonderful friends, and inspiring teachers and you continue. Thank you. We're going to do just a little back and forth conversation now, and then I'll invite my wife Fran Korten up, and she will lead us in a Q and A, and get some involvement from the whole group.

**David Korten** [00:47:17] But as you we're speaking, you were ruthless on the institutions of education and religion, for good reason. We humans do seem to depend

on institutions as a critical part of our education, and our organizing. And we need to have education, and we need to be organized, and we need probably a little help and support in our spiritual development. Now is there any hope for the institutions of religion and education as they exist? ..and what is the substitute? And I know that in your work, you have formed the Order of the Sacred Earth as a spiritual kind of process... I'll let you to describe it. But how does this all fit together in terms of your vision of what do we substitute for what we have now, as institutions of religion and education, that are doing a really terrible job?

**Matthew Fox** [00:48:24] Well, thank you, David. Yes, I think education is to learning what religion is spirituality. Learning is the kernel and learning is Joy! Joyful! It's ecstatic to learn! Aquinas says that, "Truth and justice are the objects of the heart." So when you learn truth, it's delicious and it should be - the delivering of it - should be as delicious as a good meal, and the rest. We're made for truth! And of course, the same for spirituality... So I think that, you know, I've been working at both. Thomas Berry says that the two greatest failures of the 20th century were religion and education, and I've been involved in both fields for 45 years. I don't know if my masochistic or what but... But no, I didn't take either one of them passively: I said this has to change. I said that about education 40 years ago. So, I designed a program that brought in the right hemisphere of the brain, "Art as Meditation." And the technology we have from the spiritual traditions around the world, about how to awaken the human soul and the human heart...

**Matthew Fox** [00:49:38] But especially in the west - art is meditation, dance is meditation, and clay is meditation, and painting and the rest - not to be underestimated. Claudio Naranjo, a psychologist wrote years ago, what he called extrovert meditation - what I call hours meditation - is the way of the prophets. So you don't necessarily turn out prophets or warriors, by sitting on a cushion, but you do by doing art as meditation. That's key! And check it out! A lot of the prophets were some of the greatest poets the world has ever seen.

**Matthew Fox** [00:50:25] Now as far as religion goes, I'm glad you brought up the subject of the "Order of the Sacred Earth," and especially I'm glad you're in the book, David. David wrote the forward to this book, so he's committed. And he also wrote his own essay and has a beautiful forward in it, and so forth... Order of the sacred Earth - an intergenerational vision of love and action. So it's a dream I had, two and a half years ago, to give birth to a new order - not a religious order, but a spiritual order - that would be open to people of all spiritual traditions and none.

**Matthew Fox** [00:50:56] Atheists are welcome too. The one glue, the one connection for

everyone is this - a vow that goes like this: I promise to be the best lover of the earth, and the best defender of the earth, that I can be. So, now vows are very important; vows are focusing devices. A 26 year old, when she heard about the order, she said, "That's what my generation needs! We're so dispersed by the social media; we're so distracted! We need a focus! A vow would be perfect, and of course a vow about the sacred Earth."

**Matthew Fox** [00:51:20] So when I look at the history of religion, east and west, you see that religion has its good days, and its bad days. And clearly western religion is at a very dark time, at this time in history. But I also notice that when religion goes dark, orders pop up! It happened in the third century with the desert fathers and mothers; in the fifth and sixth century with Saint Benedict; in [Transcriber's note: couldn't understand the speech] the monastic movement. Then that went sour in the 12th century, [Transcriber's note: couldn't understand the speech] Francis of Assisi and Dominic, who had no alternative order. And then in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant reformation - and you can see each of these sects, I think, denominations as an order. And then you had Ignatius and the Jesuits all then responding to the corruption in Rome at the time. Here in the 21st century, there's been plenty of corruption, as we know, and nothing new being birthed, and just people leaving. But I think that an order that's a spiritual order, that is linking up with people of all traditions, to come to the table and tell me the genius of: your Islam tradition, your Sufi tradition, your Buddhist tradition, your Taoist tradition, your indigenous tradition, your Jewish tradition, and your Christian tradition. Tell me the genius and what you bring, to bring about this ecological transformation in the next 12 years.

**Matthew Fox** [00:53:01] Let's do it together! Let's do it in communities! Not having to live under one house, but the community you could make, thanks to social media the rest of today. There's a wonderful teaching in that essay, in this book. Brian Swimme, cosmologist and friend of both David and mine, he says that if a hydrogen atom, just stays by itself - if it stays individuated - nothing changes; in billions of years hardly anything will change. But when it gets caught up in a star, a community of a star, everything changes; it gives birth to all kinds of important elements, that in turn give birth to new life. And that's his vision, because the last half of this book is drawing on people like Brian [Transcriber's note: couldn't understand the speech] and others, for their vision of what this order might be.

**Matthew Fox** [00:53:37] But that's his vision, and it's a wonderful vision, because he's calling on the habits of the universe; that is that hydrogen becomes totally different in the context of community, in the context of a star - a community that's on fire! And I know that the young people today, many of whom are very disappointed in organized religion - including many eastern people who have given up on Buddhism - a lot of young eastern

people are not going that way anymore. They can find a spiritual path, by committing to the defense of Mother Earth. And with that, comes more responsibility, and more requirements to take care of your inner life. And so the time will come when they learn more about calming the reptilian-brain, about meditation and the rest.

**Matthew Fox** [00:54:40] But first must come that fire, like the star has the fire to cook the hydrogen, to cook the isolated individuals that you were talking about the last session - and to turn them into community activists, and lovers of Mother Earth, defenders of Mother Earth. So that's our order.

[Audience applauds]

**David Korten** [00:54:58] One of the things I've been focused on recently is the recognition that traditional indigenous people lived in constant community and constant connection with nature. Virtually all of our current institutions are descendants of our period of empire; they're all about centralizing control, in ways that there was none of in traditional societies. There's a lot of reasons we can't go back to traditional societies and I'm not sure I would want to, but the key here is recognizing the importance of direct relationships - with one another and with nature. Limiting our dependence, or the interference of money, the interference in our physical world of cars that separate us - imagine car free cities - just in terms of the infrastructure, but also our institutions - of corporations, and even governments, as we know it.

**David Korten** [00:56:31] I mean, our whole concept of democracy is just to elect representatives to head the essentially imperial system of government, for top-down management. Now, if we really began to organize as living communities, where the primary connections are relationships to one another and Earth... As you were responding to my question, I was thinking about how would I answer that? And the thing that popped into my head is: we organize wealth, we organize religion, essentially around buildings. You know, we've got our churches and we begin to realize that these are very expensive structures to maintain. And very often our churches become primarily focused on how do we raise enough money to keep the building going, and to the extent that there's community, it's only within the church. It is not within the larger living community and that all contributes to the separation.

**David Korten** [00:57:28] So similarly, our education is all set up in buildings, and we go through and we get this degree, and we get that degree and so forth, and then we go out in the big world. Now, what you talk about is spiritual and living and loving and all of that; that's kind of lifelong and everything. If we really think about the transition we have to navigate, we've got a hell of a lot to learn. We don't know how to live, but we want to

learn. But that's not something you do just in school; it's a lifelong process. So where that leads me is: can we begin thinking? Well somehow we need institutions, but the institutions we have are totally unfit. And how do we organize so that religion, in the sense of spiritual deepening - spiritual learning - is in everything we do... And education is also something that we're continuously learning throughout life, and none of this is confined to some set of buildings?

**Matthew Fox** [00:59:01] Well, you're getting at something very real there. I do think that the internet, you know, is a way of running around the building part of education, and you know what you can do on YouTube, and things like that. So I think this is just in its baby steps, but clearly more and more people are learning that way.

**David Korten** [00:59:09] Yeah.

**Matthew Fox** [00:59:10] And it [Transcriber's note: could not hear the word) buildings so it saves a lot of resources, and money and labor all that. So that's one thing. But again, I think we have to go back to ritual, because in ritual you learn the bigger stories - you love to talk about the story shifting and so forth. This is how, for a hundred-thousands of years, our ancestors taught their yarn; it was primarily through ritual. Here's just one example... When I was with an aboriginal leader in Australia several years ago, there was a starry night and he said: "Well, we don't teach our children that those stars are so many light miles away; we teach them that those stars are the campfires of our ancestors. And they're up in the sky looking down on earth: what's cooking on Earth? How are the campfires doing on Earth?" Now, to me, the beauty and the power of that ancient teaching - and it's ancient; they've been teaching that for 60,000 years to their kids - is it's about [transcriber's note: couldn't understand the speech]. It's about connecting. It's about personalizing the universe. It's about personalizing the universe.

**Matthew Fox** [01:00:52] And you know, religion has these archetypes of the sacredness of all beings, that the Buddha nature, in the East or the *namaste* in Hinduism: "I salute the divine in you..." Or the cosmic Christ in the west, and in Judaism: "salaam," the image of God. So that every being is revered as something sacred and special, which in fact scientifically, we now know as true; each one of us has had a 13.8 billion year journey to be here. And our children... This is a new story! Our children need to learn this! They recall forth... Maybe they don't have two parents. Maybe, you know, they haven't had the best economic condition, but they are here and it's a privilege to be here! And you know, let's get together and make this work, you know?

**David Korten** [01:01:37] I think to make that work, we have to be very clear on the enormous changes that we need to make, in terms of everything from infrastructure



through our institutions. And I was struck by your mention of the internet. You may recall the picture in Jeremy's slideshow, in the last thing, of all of us walking around looking at our phones, instead of each other. It's fascinating to me that this vehicle gives us a way to connect globally. But the way we use it, it also interferes locally. And you know, I think about a world of really vital communities of people living, loving, learning together, but then are connected instead of being separated. We are a global species and in global participation.

**David Korten** [01:02:19] Fran you want to come up, and open this up to the rest of the group and we can be a larger conversation. This is my wife Fran Korten. Who was the head of YES magazine for the last 25 years...

[Audience applauds]

**Fran Korten** [01:03:01] So what I want to do is to invite your participation, of course recognizing there are a lot of people here, and not a lot of time. What I want to do is take three questions at a time. So I'm going to take three questions and then turn to David and Matt, to see how they would like to respond to the things that you all bring up. So who would like to participate? No questions. Wonderful. Okay, we'll just go... No! I'm sorry... Let's start with you.

**Audience member** [01:03:39] I have one question, which is how to engage people who do not believe... whoops something disconnected? ...I'm connected in the larger sense. ...people who refuse to believe that there is any climate change and who are saying things like: "Well, it's the volcanoes... It's not anything man has done. Obviously. We're never going to convince people like that, but how to engage them how to bring them to the table, so that everybody is involved in basically saving the planet if possible?"

**Fran Korten** [01:04:36] Okay. Thank you. Let me take a second question here.

**Audience member** [01:04:44] Uh, Matt, we have 12 years to go. What signs do you see that we are going to make it, or not make it?

**Fran Korten** [01:04:53] Thank you for being succinct and to the point.

**Audience member** [01:04:56] Yes. Similar to his question... How do you scale up something like what you have going on with the Earth group quickly enough you to really impact the planet?

**Fran Korten** [01:05:23] Okay, who wants to take this first?

**Matthew Fox** [01:05:30] As far as whether we have time or not, the mystics all tell us, east and west, that we should work without a “why.” So you get to do justice in order to do justice. You live in order to live. You love in order to love. So again, it is the managerial consciousness that says, “Well we got to have is a five-year plan,” etc. etc. No, if enough people get the message, and the fire is set in the heart, don't underestimate our species' capacity to change things, and change things fast. It's part of our part of our miracle!

[Audience applauds]

**Matthew Fox** [01:05:58] It's part of our miracle that we've survived this far! I love the story from Brian Swimme, how when we left Africa about 65,000 years ago, we had fire and all that, and we headed out and when we landed in Eurasia – what's today Eurasia – the Ice Age hit! Ten-thousand years of ice! And I'm sure the first thousand years was: who turned off the heat? ...was it you, or was it you or they had a [Transcriber's note: couldn't understand the word.] So they had to learn how to kill a woolly mammoth and skin it, and how to, you know, hide them in caves from the wild saber tooth tigers, and tell stories there. They didn't have any television and all the rest, you know. So, these are our ancestors! As part of the self-pity of patriarchy, they were taught that we're soft, etc. No, our ancestors survived real tough moments. They didn't have an internet. They didn't even have a university, and they did it!

**Matthew Fox** [01:07:04] So, let's quit underestimating our species! And that is again where yes, that's where the original sin ideology has taken over our western consciousness in the secular realm. It's what consumerism is all about. Consumerism is built on an original sin notion, that you don't have what it takes; some outside redeemer, like a global company, has to give you, make you beautiful. But no, we're all born beautiful. We're all original blessings. We're here for *a reason*.

**Matthew Fox** [01:07:25] And so, that's what has to be spiked up. And I love David Orr's definition of hope, the eco-philosopher: “Hope is a verb, with the sleeves rolled up.” To me, that connects to the question about the order. You know that hope is a *verb*, so if enough people feel the energy of the dance today, between despair and hope - if they feel the energy of their love and passion for the Earth - then they are going to join a movement like this. And you can't predict what's going to happen. Francis of Assisi's movement, he had like 5,500 people in it, within the first year and a half, and that was in a small population. It lit a fuse, because the timing was right. And I think the timing is right for something like an order.

**Matthew Fox** [01:08:26] One of our first people who took vows was an Atheist. She said I'm looking for a community with whom I share values, and this sounds like that something I can get into. So it's for everybody who shares that value and that could increase tremendously, very fast. And it's all about self-organizing. So there's no big headquarters, where you do it in your bio-region and you get together with the other adults, and you talked about how are you going to implement your vows, in this bio region, where you work, where you do community and family, and religion and the rest. You do it, and then you can report back, and we stay in touch by internet.

**David Korten** [01:09:00] One of the things that made me very enthusiastic about what I saw unfolding here as we approach the session with Matt, on the issue of transition to an ecological civilization, is the powerful connection between the two. That the actions we need to take require individual action, but it's the group action that is absolutely essential. You know, it's not just about recycling; it is about the shift in consciousness that then underpins a complete shift in institutions, and virtually everything we do. And my sense is that this idea of an Order of Sacred Earth, that is kind of a basic belief shift; the recognition that we are all connected and that Earth is the source of our very existence.

**David Korten** [01:10:10] But we also need a vision of what the future looks like, in terms of how we live, how we organize, because we're recognizing it's not individual - it is collective; it is a community. So the search for a vision of an ecological civilization and what that means, in terms of: how we educate ourselves, and one another; how we learn our values and communicate them; how we get our food, etc. That's all part of this framing of an ecological civilization. So this union of the two to me is hope, and I think most of the people in the room here have lived through some of these remarkable things in our human past - where we saw the liberation of India around Gandhi; the breakdown of colonialism, which basically happened almost in an instant. The Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union: it happened in an instant. ...the end of Apartheid in South Africa.

**David Korten** [01:11:11] Now, what was missing in each of these cases was an adequate vision of what would come out of that, and where it would go. And we need to be creating that vision at the same time that we're creating the awareness. I mean, you know, you saw how many people raised their hand, that know that we're on a path to self-extinction; you know that happens every place I asked the question. It's, you know, we're not alone in that recognition. It's huge, but we don't talk about it. ...and one reason we don't talk about it is because we don't see any alternative. But if we can begin to talk about it within the frame of alternative, I think we've got the potential to shift our human consciousness and our conversation in an instant.

**Fran Korten** [01:12:29] Okay, let me take three more questions, in a row, and then we'll get some answers. Ok?

**Audience member** [01:12:33] Speaking of the vision of what the future looks like, and Matt, your concept of and talking about ritual, I grew up in a faith tradition where ritual is antithetical almost to the kind of ritualistic rituals anyway - the "religiosity" I used to talk about it, of ritual. It isn't a good home for me. So, as we look at developing this vision, how do we create this shared vision and move into this in a way, that doesn't so completely destabilize everything, because we can't completely just let everything go that has been. So how do we move ahead in that, in a way that helps build the network and build who we are, and create that vision, in the way... I mean, this is doing it - I'm answering myself at the same time I'm asking the question - and yet I think there's more to it, than what I'm saying right now.

**Fran Korten** [01:13:49] Okay, thank you. How do we build that vision...?

**Audience member** [01:14:11] I was thinking about the power of experience to bring about change in consciousness. So when you spoke about rituals Matt, one of the essential pieces of ritual is it provides an experience, and once I have it and it's true no one can say: "Well don't trust it." I mean they can say it. I don't want to get too much into trying to create this vision; I want to kind of fall in love with the possibility of a vision, and let it create me. I know we want to think about it, but I don't want to think my way into a new vision - that to me is old B.S.!

[Audience laughs]

**Audience member** [01:15:09] Alistair with you, from Scotland. I was thinking about the example of previous movements that you quoted, like Saint Francis. And seems to me that there are three elements in this. One is having a powerful story, a vision that's shared, and that I think has to be around who we truly are, as part of the living world, and what is for us of ultimate concern. The second part is a strong sense that we belong to a community of people who share the same vision, the same story. But third, and equally important, that we have a methodology; we have a practice that is going to take us into the practicalities of how do we live differently together? And it seems to me we need these three components, however that may be developed.

**Fran Korten** [01:16:] Okay, so we've got three questions for you gentleman. Who wants to take it on?

**David Korten** [01:11:11] Actually, I'll just respond quickly to that last part. We're going

to have two sessions tomorrow, again starting at 12:15, and in the same room, that will look more at the sort of practical aspects of living, and how that works. That's a terribly important piece of it. I think most of the questions really related to Matt and to the Order of the Sacred Earth.

**Matthew Fox** [01:17:03] Can you remind me - the first lady in green... Sorry, I've never done this three people questions before.

**David Korten** [01:17:11] Yeah the faith Traditions...

**Matthew Fox** [01:17:14] Oh, yeah, what's gonna... what are we leaving out? I think one thing that hasn't been said is that: the young are eager to live – to live and to lead! Freudian slip... The young are eager to live and to lead. We need intergenerational wisdom. This order, its current directors are 29 years old and 33 years old. That's the generation that's carrying the future, and they should be supported by older people. We need elders to get out of their couches, away from the television set. Quit playing the stock market and golf! ...and start connecting to the young people. [Audience applauds] They're ready to lead!

**Matthew Fox** [01:17:51] When I did my book “Occupy Spirituality” a few years ago, with Adam Buckle, who you know worked for 15 years, on the streets of New York with young adults, who had been abandoned there - living on the streets... One of the questions we asked - because it was about young people's spirituality, 21 – 33 year olds, defines “young adult...” We sent out questionnaires around the country and one of the questions we asked was: “What elders, what's the role of elders in your life?” Ninety-seven percent said: “We want elders and we can't find them.” And then they added, the few that they found, “...they talk too much.” That's part of modern consciousness: not to know what meditation and shutting up in silence is about, and how important silence is.

**Matthew Fox** [01:18:36] So there is work there for everybody, the elders and the young working together. But don't underestimate this generation; they are ready to roll! Someone said at the previous session, if there was an 18 year old who spoke at this conference, it would turn everyone on! Gaia herself! I'll tell you a story. Can I do that?

**Matthew Fox** [01:19:07] A few years ago, I was on a panel in Monterrey, Mexico, with a workshop on values. Sixty-five hundred people in the house, and 92,000 online... And Leonardo Boff, the former Franciscan Liberation theologian from Brazil, and I were up there dialoging. And we were picked questions from a bowl, and he picked this one question: Is the Roman Catholic Church dying in South America today? I was so glad he picked that first, because we each had to answer the same question within three minutes.

He said, his answer was: “Yes,” and then he talked about the need for humanism and linking up with other traditions, other Christian traditions and non-Christian, etc.

**Matthew Fox** [01:19:50] It was my turn and I said, “I don't think it's just about the Roman Catholic Church. I think the younger generation has been called by Gaia herself to move on, from a lot of institutional religion. I said, we need to travel today not with basilica's in our back but backpacks! ...and the young intuit this, and they know we need practical spiritual practices to combat reptilian-brain and to empower us, to be the warriors or the prophets we have to be. So, I think that's a big part of your question - is the young people are here to lead and we elders, we're also here - we have a real important role to play. We always have...

**Matthew Fox** [01:20:23] You know, the studies have shown that the difference between Neanderthal and Homo sapiens is that Neanderthals died in their 40s; they didn't have three generations. It's because of the elders that our species has come this far. So it's not about patronizing people with white-hair, patting their heads or patronizing yourself and thinking the rest of your life is about retirement or something. Throw out that word retirement! The rest of your life - it's about the fire-ment and re-wire-ment! You become more of a mystic in your later years, and that's why you have a lot to give these young lovers, because every mystic is a lover, and every lover is a mystic. So that's where that goes.

**David Korten**[01:21:23] I think we're kind of getting down to our kind of final statements. So I'll just kind of make this my final statement. With regard to this view of elders, I think it's extremely important. Our generation has moved through a period of human history, which is truly extraordinary in terms of the transitions. And in some ways, it gives us a deeper appreciation of the possibilities, of the how we got into this mess, where stories play into it, and how we can use stories to change our future in a fundamental way. ...and that's essential. And yet the young people have the energy and the drive, and it is their future at stake, and it really is up to them to prepare and lead the way to that future. So we need to come together.

**David Korten**[01:22:20] I just want to go back, in closing and share a bit of experience that relates to this whole issue between money and life, because it's so foundational to understanding the problem that we're in right now. You know, Fran and I worked in International Development for roughly 30 years; 21 years, we lived in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and this was, in a way, we were all connected with this frame of: “We've got to get these poor people out of poverty.” End poverty in the poor countries... And it took us a very long time, but we finally realized that what was happening, when we were driving this thing - drive GDP, drive growth and growth in the economy - was we were

taking people who lived in community, lived on the land, had no money, but often had beautiful culture: they had food; they had clean water; they had their housing; they had their community, and so forth. ...and many of them leading far better lives than the poor people do now with no money whatever. So they economist says: “They're absolutely poor; they have no money.” And then we get all this garbage from the UN about we've we're ending absolute poverty, because now most people are earning a dollar and a quarter a day. What that was doing was getting them out of their communities, off of their land, dependent on jobs - lousy jobs, provided by Cheapskate corporations, so that the corporations then could take over the land, and control a means of living, etc. etc.

**David Korten**[01:24:08] And it is terribly important to have that all in mind, as we're coming to terms with the stupidity - that the realities of what we teach in economics courses, and neoliberal economics, and the whole frame that treats money as wealth, and making money as a creation of wealth. We've absolutely got to break out of that. Money is just - it's a number. It can be a useful tool, but we've got to recognize that life is about life; is about living and that's a whole different thing.

**Matthew Fox** [01:24:38] And it's about joy...

**David Korten** [01:24:40] And about joy, yeah!

**Matthew Fox** [01:24:41] And there's more joy in those villages, than there is in the cities. I just want to close by thanking David for his life's work – has been so tremendous. I've often said that President Obama's biggest mistake was not to make David Korten Treasury Secretary.

[Audience laughs]

**Matthew Fox** [01:24:41] Because his writing has been about creating an economics that works for everybody. Duh! Isn't that what we need? And by everybody, it's not just the two-legged ones; he's done his cosmological and ecological study, and he knows it is about making an economics that works for all the creatures on this earth. We can do it! We're that smart a species, just as we are that dangerous a species. It's precisely our creativity and our intellect that makes us so dangerous! Aquinas, 13th century said, “One human being can do more evil than all the other species put together.” There was seven hundred years before Stalin, or Hitler, or Pol Pot, or who have you! How did he know that? Because in the pre-modern consciousness, our creativity was honored... Our creativity was honored.

**Matthew Fox** [01:26:00] Here, it gets swept under the rug, and you know only a few get

to grab that that brass ring. But my point is that we are as a species capable of making this shift. Every religious genius has said that humans can wake up. Kabir says you have been sleeping for millions of millions of years, why not wake up this morning? Jesus uses a language of waking up. Paul used the language of waking up. Buddha *means* to wake up. You know, how stupid do we have to be? Let's wake up and let's unplug our TV sets and live, joyfully building new communities!

[Audience applauds]

**David Korten** [01:26:39] I just want to mention that the good economics that I learned, I essentially got from this gentleman in the back here - John Cobb. Raise your hand, John. ...who wrote "For the Common Good," with Herman Daly, among other amazing accomplishments. And John will be with me tomorrow at 12:15 in this room, and we will be talking about, more deeply about the economic and institutional issues. Thank you.