

# The Living Universe Story

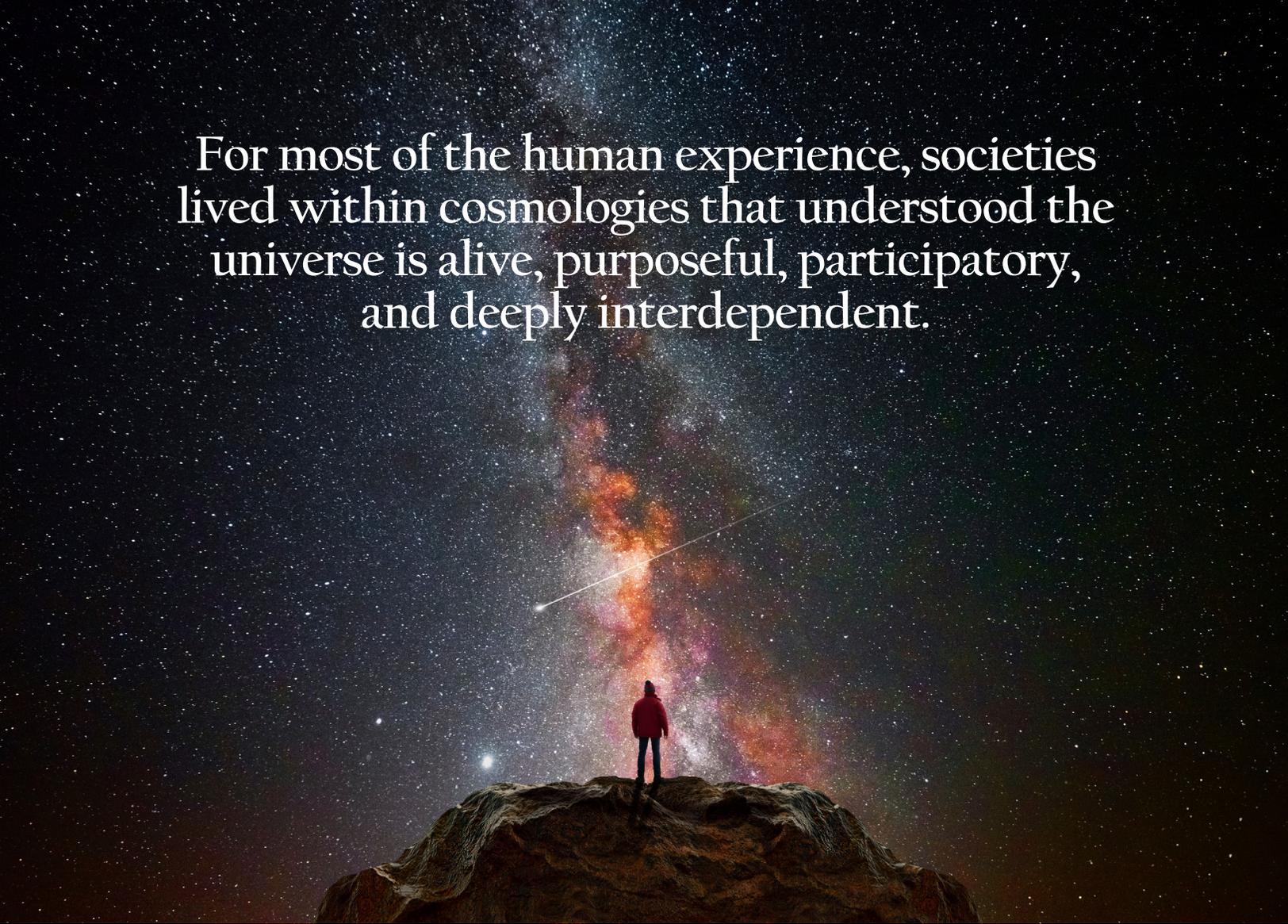
*A Participatory  
Integral Spirit  
Cosmology for an  
Ecological Civilization*

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Third in a series of strategic briefs on humanity's transition to an Ecological Civilization.

For most of the human experience, societies lived within cosmologies that understood the universe is alive, purposeful, participatory, and deeply interdependent.



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

**THIS PAPER** completes a trilogy addressing humanity's transition to an Ecological Civilization.

The first paper, *Ecological Civilization: From Emergency to Emergence* (2021), identified the nature of the ongoing civilizational crisis and named the choice before us: to continue on a path of extraction and domination, or to join in advancing a life-centered transformation.

The second paper, *Eco-nomics for an Ecological Civilization* (2024), translated that choice into economic design principles grounded in living-systems logic—principles intended to guide the redesign of money, enterprises, ownership, and markets to maximize the wellbeing of life rather than to maximize financial accumulation.

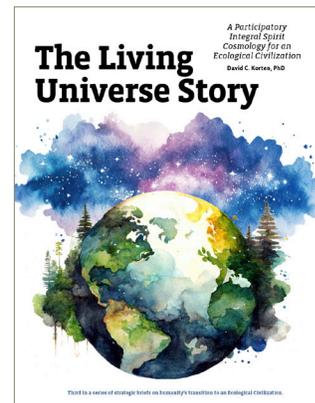
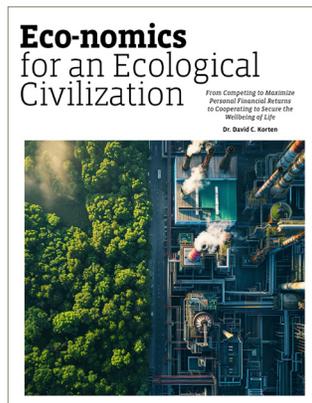
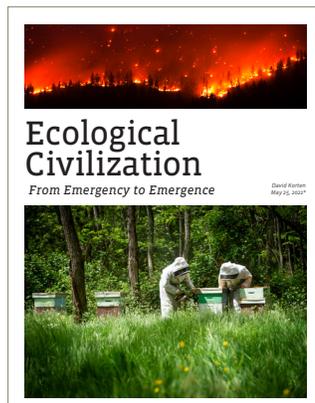
The present paper, *The Living Universe Story: A Participatory Integral Spirit Cosmology for an Ecological Civilization* (2026), explores the cosmological and spiritual foundations of an Ecological Civilization. It brings together insights from modern science and the world's wisdom traditions to articulate a coherent understanding of the universe as a living, self-organizing, and evolving process—and the human place within it.

Taken together, the three papers form an integrated arc:

- **Crisis and choice**—*Why we must change*
- **Design and structure**—*How we can change*
- **Story and meaning**—*How such change aligns with creation as we are coming to understand it*

Within the perspective of the living universe story, institutional reforms become expressions of a shared understanding of who we are, where we come from, and what it means to live well as participants within a living Earth in a living universe.

Writing this paper was initially stimulated by conversations with Marcia Flagg and Paul Wright. Initial editorial support was provided by Fran Korten and Kat Gjovik. Final editing and design support was provided by Tracy Matsue Loeffelholz. It was developed in collaboration with ChatGPT, an advanced language model created by OpenAI that contributed research support, editorial synthesis, and assistance in shaping the structure and flow of the manuscript under my direction and authorship. This partnership with AI reflects the emerging potential for creative collaboration between human and artificial intelligence if used in service to life and the evolutionary journey of consciousness.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**HUMANITY'S FUTURE** depends on transforming the story by which we live. Modernity's mechanistic narrative has reduced nature to inert matter, humans to individualistic competitors, and progress to financial growth. This has given extraordinary temporary power and advantage to a few among us who value money over life. It has simultaneously eroded trust and destabilized the living systems on which human existence depends.

A new story is now emerging across multiple disciplines that recognizes the spiritual source and foundation of creation and its continuing unfolding. This story joins traditional wisdom and the leading edge of scientific understanding. It recognizes that the reality we experience is not a finished product but a living, self-organizing process of continual learning and becoming. Relationships are primary, creativity is pervasive, and the consciousness we experience is the universe of which we are all part, awakening to itself.

This paper traces three defining historical stages in humanity's understanding of that unfolding:

**1. Ancient Cosmologies**, when early peoples experienced Earth and the cosmos as alive and sacred, embedded in cyclical rhythms of birth, death, and renewal.

**2. Mechanistic Disruption**, when the rise of Western science replaced living Earth with inert matter—serving to legitimize extraction and empire.

**3. Integral Spirit**, the emerging view revealed by the observational tools of modern science allows us to join ancient and modern cosmologies to guide ourselves and living Earth to a viable and prosperous future.

The integral spirit cosmology invites us to navigate a societal transformation far beyond mere policy reform. The practical implications run deep.

- **The Economy** will be recognized as a subsystem of the biosphere.
- **Governance** will follow living-system principles: distributed, nested, participatory, adaptive, and bottom-up.
- **Money** will return to its role as a tool for provisioning essentials and regenerating the commons.
- **Education** will cultivate ecological literacy, moral interdependence, and living democracy.
- **Technology**, including artificial intelligence, will be subordinate and accountable to life.

The following is my rendering of the emerging integral spirit cosmology that invites humanity to align its institutions with life's generative processes and to measure success by the well-being of people, place, and planet. It is a call to conscious and intentional human participation in the universe's continuing creative unfolding.



## STORY POWER

**WE HUMANS** live by the stories by which we know each other and our relationship to the people and place where we live. This includes stories that answer three primal questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? And what purpose are we here to serve?

The answers the people of any given society give to those questions shape what that society values and preserves as sacred, what it builds, how it governs, and what of its resources it considers surplus and available to consume. These varied and often conflicting stories of sometimes competing cultures define the world we ultimately contribute to creating together.

Think of the more powerful of these stories as operating instructions that shape how human societies organize power, distribute resources, and respond to feedback from

the living world. To understand why the extreme concentration of power and privilege in modern human societies of the most recent thousands of years threatens human viability, we must understand the deep conflict between the story that guides the organization and management of most modern societies and what we are learning about how healthy living systems function.

Think of the emerging story as a new and more detailed and insightful version of a very old story. It is the story of processes of self-organization that span millions of years currently being crafted as the product of a shared inquiry among scientists, theologians, systems thinkers, economists, indigenous leaders, and movement builders—often from very different starting points. The elements of the inquiry are converging on a common insight: that the universe is alive, relational, and participatory, and that human responsibility centers on finding our place of service to that unfolding.

My own thinking on this emerging story has been

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shaped most deeply by the work and personal companionship and guidance of Thomas Berry, Marcus Borg, Puanani Burgess, John B. Cobb, Jr., Riane Eisler, Willis W. Harman, Frances F. Korten, Frances Moore Lappé, Donella Meadows, Joanna Macy, Mae-Wan Ho, Elisabeth Sathouris, and Brian Swimme, among many others with whom I have the privilege of engaging in this inquiry.

For most of the human experience, societies lived within cosmologies that understood the universe is alive, purposeful, participatory, and deeply interdependent. Humans are participants in, and dependent on, a larger community of life, embedded in reciprocal relationships with Earth and one another. Indigenous teachers emphasized that these cosmologies were not abstract belief systems, but lived practices grounded in place, ancestry, and responsibility to future generations.

The ancient stories did not deny conflict or suffering. They acknowledged the human capacity for violence and excess. But they placed such tendencies within a moral universe that demanded restraint and accountability. Power was legitimate only insofar as it served the continuity and well-being of the whole.

With the rise of powerful empires followed by mechanistic science and industrial capitalism, a different story came to dominate human understanding. We came to view the universe as inert matter governed by impersonal forces. We divided between religious teachers who spoke of an all-powerful God who ruled from a distant place called Heaven and scientists who studied mathematical relationships devoid of intrinsic meaning or purpose. The religious story put power in God's hands and called on humans to pray to him for his favor. The mechanistic story of science granted humans extraordinary material power expressed through unprecedented technological advances.

Both stories severed feedback loops essential to the health of living systems. By legitimizing separation, both stories normalized domination. By obscuring participation, they enabled the concentration of power and privilege without accountability to the larger whole.

The resulting crises—ecological breakdown, social fragmentation, economic inequality, and political instability—are not accidental. As Donella Meadows repeatedly emphasized, they are the predictable consequences of systems designed to reward short-term gain by the few while suppressing feedback from the living world.

To move beyond these crises requires more than technological innovation or policy reform. It requires a renewed cosmological story—one grounded in contemporary science and resonant with ancient wisdom—that restores participation, responsibility, and belonging as central features of reality itself. Within science, the older wisdom of sacred relationships has begun to stir again. Relativity theory has revealed that space and time form a single fabric. Quantum physics shows that the act of observation shapes the observed. Ecology frames life as persisting through webs of reciprocity and feedback. Systems theory demonstrates that wholes generate properties that cannot be reduced to their parts. Evolutionary biology, transformed by the work of Mae-Wan Ho and Elisabeth Sathouris among others, found that cooperation and symbiosis are the engines of complexity.

Out of this convergence, a new understanding is emerging: the universe is not a finished product. It is engaged in a living, self-organizing process of becoming. Everything that exists participates in the creativity of the whole. The boundaries between matter, life, and consciousness are blurred in ways we are only beginning to recognize, let alone understand. In this unfolding story, the “Living Universe Story,” the cosmos itself is the primary sacred reality.

Humanity is not the purpose of creation. Rather, we are care takers and instruments of the growing self-awareness of the cosmos as it continues unfolding.

This is more than a scientific paradigm shift; it is a spiritual reawakening. The universe is not a collection of objects. Nor is it the creation of an all-knowing, all-powerful God in Heaven. Rather it is, in theologian Thomas Berry's words, “a communion of subjects.” We are not sep-

Before the rise of mechanistic thinking, many societies lived within cosmologies that embedded limits, reciprocity, and moral accountability directly into their understanding of reality itself.



arate observers; we are the universe coming to know itself more fully through human consciousness. This realization restores a sense of meaning long exiled from modern thought. It invites awe rather than arrogance, participation rather than possession.

The story we tell about the world sets the boundaries of our own understanding and response. When we imagine ourselves alone in a dead universe, we behave as orphans. When we imagine ourselves as the children of an all-powerful God who gifted us the Earth to exploit in whatever way may please us, we pray to him to protect us from the consequences of our exploitation of that gift. When we remember ourselves as children of a living Earth, we act as kin to one another and Earth.

Institutions born of the old stories cannot endure within the new stories. They must be transformed or replaced by systems aligned with an understanding of life's interde-

pendent regenerative flow.

Our human work of this time is to live into that emerging story: To hear again the voice of a living universe speaking through wind and water, forest and star, and through every human heart that remembers its origins. To understand how this new story can guide our now self-endangered human society. We turn now to the deeper roots of our varied cosmologies and the ruptures in our ties to creation's unfolding that set us on our current self-destructive path.

Before the rise of mechanistic thinking, many societies lived within cosmologies that embedded limits, reciprocity, and moral accountability directly into their understanding of reality itself. It is to those ancient cosmologies—and the wisdom they still hold—that we now turn. But first a brief interlude to address privilege as a defining barrier to successful transformation.

## PRIVILEGE AS A PATHOLOGY IN PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS

Living systems—cells, organisms, ecosystems, and societies—persist through flows of energy, materials, and information regulated by feedback. Their long-term viability depends on feedback loops that distribute resources according to functional contribution and ensure that decision-making authority remains coupled to responsibility and consequence.

No being stands outside the systems that sustain it. Every action contributes to the organization of the whole—either reinforcing life-serving patterns or accelerating depletion and breakdown. From this perspective, the privilege enjoyed by royalty and the obscenely rich in human societies is not merely an ethical concern. It is a signal of serious systemic malfunction.

Pathology emerges when a subsystem of one or more individuals gains disproportionate access to resources or control while becoming insulated from the negative consequences of its actions. Such insulation suppresses corrective feedback, impairs learning, and often leads to cascading failure. The crisis to which humanity's Imperial Era has led is a direct consequence of systemic privilege enjoyed by the few.

When participation is reciprocal, systems learn and adapt. When participation of an individual or alliance of individuals becomes insulated from the consequences of their choices, feedback weakens and dysfunction accumulates. This is a predictable failure mode. What appears as success to the privileged with the power to make the decisions is actually an indication of predictable systemic failure.

In modern human societies, privilege functions as insulation from consequence. Those who benefit from concentrated wealth, power, and status are often shielded from the ecological and social effects of their decisions. Costs are displaced onto others, onto ecosystems, or the future. This represents a moral failure of the individuals. Even more, it is a system failure. The system may continue to function for a time, but its capacity to regenerate erodes.

Those who benefit from their personal actions bear responsibility for sustaining the conditions that make the benefit possible. Genuine freedom does not arise from exemption from consequence. It arises from participation in systems in which all participants work together to meet their individual needs while honoring ecological limits. In mature participatory systems, privilege does not need to be redistributed. It needs to be eliminated.

If non-human living systems have adapted to this imperative for literally millions of years, why do human societies repeatedly organize themselves in ways that violate the operating logic of living systems? Badly flawed stories served a few of us well until fairly recently. Hope lies in an emerging synthesis of old and new stories, which this paper explores.



## THE REEMERGENCE OF ANCIENT COSMOLOGIES

**LONG BEFORE** the rise of modern science, human societies across the world understood themselves as participants in a living, purposeful cosmos. Every mountain, river, and star was alive with presence; every species carried its own wisdom and role in the great web of existence. Creation was not an event in the distant past, but an ongoing living process renewed with each season and each breath.

In many Indigenous traditions of the Americas, Earth is recognized as Mother—not metaphorically but literally, as the source and sustainer of life. The Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address begins by giving thanks to the waters, the plants, the animals, the winds, the sun, moon, and stars—each honored as a member of the community of life.

In the Aboriginal traditions of Australia, the Dreaming

describes a world continually sung into being through story and ceremony. In the Vedic and Upanishadic traditions of India, Brahman is the undivided reality of which all forms are expressions; the apparent separation of beings is a temporary appearance within a deeper unity.

As Thomas Berry, a cultural historian and theologian, and Brian Swimme, a mathematical cosmologist, have articulated, these traditions understood the universe not as inert matter, but as a communion of subjects—each with its own agency and role in sustaining the whole. Reality was experienced as relational rather than atomistic, processual rather than static, and meaningful rather than indifferent.

Across cultures, these cosmologies embedded limits, reciprocity, and responsibility directly into their understanding of reality. Human well-being depended not on domination, but on right relationship. To act was to affect the whole, and to affect the whole was to invite response.

Despite their differences, these ancient cosmologies share key features. They recognize that the cosmos is alive and imbued with meaning. Humans are part of a larger community of beings, meant to serve, not to master. Reciprocity and restraint are essential to living well. Time is cy-

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clical or a spiral, not a one-directional march of “progress.”

In such a world, wealth is measured not as an accumulation of things, but in relationships of caring, obligation, and belonging. Rituals of gratitude and gift exchange reinforce the sense that life is a shared blessing, not a private possession. Rights are balanced by responsibilities; freedom is understood as a capacity to fulfill one’s role within the whole.

These ancient stories did not deny conflict or suffering. They acknowledged the human capacity for violence and excess. But they placed such tendencies within a moral universe that demanded restraint and accountability. Power was legitimate only insofar as it served the continuity of life.

Over time, however, modernization brought the pressures of population growth, resource depletion, competition, and organized warfare gave increasing power to those who could mobilize violence and control. Divine kingships, priestly castes, and imperial armies shifted

the center of gravity from local reciprocity to centralized authority. The gods merged and moved ever farther into the sky; the sacred became increasingly associated with a remote, transcendent all-powerful God; and the Earth itself gradually lost its status as a subject of reverence.

Still, the older sense of a living cosmos never disappeared. It survived in the teachings of prophets and poets, in monastic and mystical traditions, and in the practices of Indigenous peoples who resisted incorporation into empires. In every age there were those who insisted that the universe is more like a sacred story unfolding than a machine running down; that our lives have meaning deeper than that conferred by any God or existing human institution.

As we confront the crises of the 21st century, these ancient insights are returning to the foreground. But they are not simply being revived; they are being woven together with modern science into a new, more comprehensive story of reality, an integral spirit cosmology.

# THE RISE OF THE MECHANISTIC WORLDVIEW

**THE MECHANISTIC** worldview emerged alongside the scientific revolution and the rise of industrial capitalism. It delivered extraordinary advances in empirical knowledge and technological capacity. By reducing complex phenomena to measurable components governed by universal laws, it enabled unprecedented control over physical processes. The European scientific revolution of the 17th century marked a profound advance in humanity's self-understanding. Seeking reliable knowledge of motion, matter, and causality, thinkers like Galileo, Descartes, and Newton proposed models of the universe as a kind of grand clockworks: particles in motion, governed by universal laws, and entirely describable through mathematics.

This mechanistic worldview enabled remarkable advances. It made possible the prediction of planetary motion, the design of powerful machines, and the reduction of complex phenomena to simple components. It helped free scientific inquiry from dictation by dogmatic religious authorities. Yet it came with a hidden cost: the disenchantment of the world.

In the mechanistic frame, matter is insentient and without intrinsic value. Nature is a collection of objects, not a community of subjects. Mind and consciousness are anomalies, confined to individual human brains. Purpose and meaning are subjective projections, not features of reality.

This story proved to be an extraordinarily effective tool for consolidating power. It justified the extraction of minerals and fossil fuels, the enslavement and displacement of peoples, and the concentration of wealth through colonial and corporate empires. If the world is dead matter, there is no moral boundary to limit its exploitation.

The mechanistic worldview persists today not because it is scientifically adequate, but because it remains embedded in economic structures, political institutions, and cultural assumptions. Its influence endures in systems that reward

short-term extraction, externalize cost, and separate concentration of power from consequence.

To move beyond the mechanistic worldview requires neither abandoning science nor romanticizing the past. It requires completing the scientific revolution by integrating its most recent insights into the stories by which we organize collective life.

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# FROM MECHANISM TO A LIVING UNIVERSE

**DURING THE** 20th century, a convergence of scientific discoveries fundamentally altered our understanding of reality. Physics, biology, ecology, and systems science each revealed limits to mechanistic explanations and pointed toward a universe that is dynamic, relational, and creative.

In physics, quantum theory overturned the assumption of an objective, observer-independent world. At fundamental levels, reality could no longer be described as composed of discrete, self-contained particles following deterministic trajectories. Instead, interaction, probability, and relationship became central. Observation itself was shown to be participatory, shaping outcomes rather than merely recording them.

Thermodynamics further challenged mechanistic assumptions by revealing the irreversible nature of time and the central role of energy flow. Living systems were recognized as far-from-equilibrium structures that maintain order not by resisting entropy, but by channeling energy through complex patterns of self-organization. Stability emerged from dynamic balance, not static control.

In biology, evolutionary theory displaced fixed hierarchies with a view of life as an unfolding process of adaptation and creativity. Cooperation, symbiosis, and mutual dependence were recognized as fundamental drivers of evolutionary success. As micro-biologist Mae-Wan Ho emphasized, coherence and dynamic balance are as essential to life as competition.

Ecology and systems science brought these insights together, revealing how complex systems exhibit emer-

gent properties irreducible to their parts. Feedback loops, thresholds, and nonlinear change became central concepts. As systems analyst Donella Meadows demonstrated, small actions can have large effects, while delayed feedback can destabilize entire systems.

Taken together, these developments revealed a universe far more alive than the mechanistic model allowed. Matter is no longer passive. Order is no longer imposed from outside. Creativity is intrinsic to the unfolding of reality itself.

This emerging scientific worldview does not reject the achievements of mechanistic science. It situates them within a larger understanding of a living universe whose behavior cannot be fully predicted or controlled. Knowledge becomes provisional and contextual. Power becomes responsibility.

The collaboration of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme was itself a sign of the times: a theologian and a scientist joining to tell a single, integrated story of the universe. Together they proposed that the new scientific understanding of an evolving cosmos could serve as the foundation for a new sacred narrative—one that reunites facts and meaning, science and spirituality, humans and Earth.

Berry and Swimme named this narrative “The Universe Story,” a story of the emergence of the universe as a perpetual unfolding event—a continuous act of creation by an integral spirit. In their framing, the Big Bang set off the ongoing expansion of space-time in which stars are factories of material elements; galaxies are nurseries of planets; Earth is the home of ever more advanced levels of conscious intelligence – an unfolding universe becoming conscious of itself.

Contemporary cosmology does not yet provide an account of an ultimate beginning. Rather it traces the universe back to an early, extremely hot and dense state from which space and time themselves emerge. At that bound-

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ary, science points not to certainty, but to open questions about emergence, relationship, and process.

The current story as told by science does not discard the achievements of early scientific leaders. Rather, it incorporates their insights into a larger understanding: one that sees the same processes of self-organization and emergence at work from the quantum to the galactic, from microbes to a living Earth. It recognizes that our economic and political institutions are also expressions of a story—and that the mechanistic story has now brought us to the brink of ecological and social catastrophe.

Integral spirit cosmology offers a different frame from that of the clockwork's universe and the creator God in Heaven. It tells us that we live in a creative, evolving living universe. What we experience as life is a means by which the universe explores its possibilities with ever greater conscious intention. Consciousness is not a cosmic accident but a mode of participation in self-learning and emer-

gence. Humans are late arrivals in the larger cosmic story who bear a special responsibility to care for the conditions that make possible the continued unfolding of creation with growing conscious intention.

Seen through this lens, the crises we now face are not merely technical failures or policy mistakes. They are symptoms of a story too small for the reality we now inhabit. Our task is to align our institutions with the deeper patterns and processes of a living universe.

The mechanistic worldview persists today not because it is scientifically adequate, but because it remains embedded in outdated economic structures, political institutions, and cultural assumptions. Its influence endures in systems that reward short-term extraction, externalize cost, and delink the privilege of power from consequences.

Our time has come to complete the scientific revolution by integrating its most recent insights with the insights and understanding of our early ancestors.

The crises we now face are not merely technical failures or policy mistakes. They are symptoms of a story too small for the reality we now inhabit.



# CREATION SEEKING TO KNOW ITSELF

**OUR EARLY** human ancestors sought to understand the origins and purpose of creation. As best we know, they saw no separation between the two. In their view the universe existed to *be alive*. Earth's rhythms of birth, death, and renewal were themselves expressions of meaning. To live was to participate in the ongoing dance of creation as they knew it from their Earthly experience. The purpose of existence—both human and non-human—was to sustain, celebrate, and contribute to the harmony of creation unfolding.

With the rise of hierarchical civilizations and organized religion, this intuitive knowing gave way to theological abstractions. Creation was imagined as the deliberate act of an external deity to serve his divine will and to glorify divine perfection. In this frame, purpose flowed downward—from heaven to Earth—while the material world lost its own agency. The cosmos became the stage for a human moral drama ruled by kings and queens with sacred license to rule over mere mortals whose purpose was not to serve the unfolding of the whole, but rather to serve and empower the rulers who stood above them.

Later, the mechanistic sciences stripped purpose from the cosmos altogether, rendering it a vast, indifferent machine. Yet a deeper intuition persisted—that a universe capable of generating galaxies, life, and mind must have an inner direction. To know the purpose of creation, observe what creation does.

Humans have long observed and mapped the order exhibited by stars and planets beyond our Earthly home. It is only very recently, however, that we have acquired the extraordinary tools that now give us the means to observe the outer dimensions of space-time and the inner world dimensions of sub-atomic particles.

We can now observe the whole unfolding over time toward ever greater complexity, beauty, awareness, and possibility. Creation unfolding organizes matter into ever more complex and coherent forms and consciousness into

ever deeper recognition and understanding of these forms.

Seen through the lens of integral spirit cosmology, the purpose of creation is not a distant goal decreed by some external authority, but an ever-evolving unfolding of the whole from within. The universe evolves to express itself ever more fully and celebrate its own existence. Humanity's role within this great process is to join that celebration consciously, to participate in the awakening of creation to its own divine purpose, and to facilitate its continued unfolding and celebration of its becoming. By this understanding, we are a means by which the universe seeks a greater awareness and understanding of itself.

Astrophysics teaches that the atoms in our bodies were forged in the hearts of stars. The oxygen we breathe, the calcium in our bones, the iron in our blood—all were born

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in stellar furnaces and scattered through space by supernova explosions. Over billions of years, those elements combined into planets and moons. Some had oceans, and a few contained chemical elements found in living cells on Earth. But we have yet to find evidence of actual living cells on any planet other than Earth. Here, through countless iterations of mutation and selection, life complexified, developing nervous systems, senses, and ultimately brains capable of deep reflection on the nature and purpose of our existence.

Thomas Berry captured this when he wrote that “the human is the universe reflecting on itself.” Through us, the cosmos gains the ability to look back on its own journey,

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to ask questions of meaning and purpose, to imagine alternate futures. By this reckoning, all of creation is the expression of an integral spiritual intelligence engaged in a sacred journey to discover and actualize its possibilities through an ongoing process of becoming. Our intended human purpose is to participate in and contribute to the divine journey.

This ability that creation has gifted us humans is an extraordinary privilege—and a profound responsibility. The power that comes with self-consciousness is also the power to disrupt the very processes that gave rise to it. We can destroy ecosystems faster than they can regenerate. We can unleash technologies whose consequences we do not understand. We can organize societies around abstractions—like money or ideology—that become more real to us than the needs of our children or the integrity of Earth’s forests.

Yet our self-consciousness also gives us the capacity to choose another path. We are not locked into these patterns. We can learn from experience, reflect on our errors, imagine new possibilities, and align our institutions with a

deeper understanding of reality.

Seen in this light, the ecological and social crises of our time are expressions of our current dangerous adolescence — a phase in which our technological power has outstripped our wisdom. If we now embrace this understanding, we can reshape our moral and spiritual lives to actualize the purpose creation intended for us.

Our defining spiritual question is no longer, “How do I secure my personal salvation in the afterlife?” Rather it is “How do we, together, serve the flourishing of life on Earth?” Prayer and meditation become ways of listening more deeply to the currents of creativity that flow through us. Ethics becomes a practice of aligning our actions with the well-being of the wider community of life. Politics and economics become fields of engagement for choosing which stories will best guide our collective future.

To make those choices wisely, we must recognize that we don’t just live on a living planet. We are also expressions of that planet’s evolutionary journey. It is to the distinctive nature of that living Earth that we now turn.

# THE LIVING EARTH

**EARTH IS NOT** a passive stage on which life plays out. Life has turned Earth into a self-organizing, living system whose atmosphere, oceans, soils, and biosphere co-evolve through tightly coupled feedback processes. Over billions of years, these processes have maintained conditions conducive to life despite dramatic changes in solar radiation, tectonics, and biological composition.

Life does not merely adapt to Earth; it actively shapes the planetary system. Microorganisms regulate atmospheric gases. Forests influence rainfall and climate. Oceans moderate temperature and distribute energy. Through countless interactions, Earth behaves as an integrated whole whose stability emerges from dynamic balance rather than static equilibrium.

Human societies have now become a dominant force within this living system. Our collective activities alter carbon cycles, disrupt hydrological systems, fragment habitats, and accelerate species extinction. These changes are not external impacts on an otherwise separate Earth. They are internal perturbations within a living system of which we are a part.

From a participatory perspective, the current ecological crisis is a failure of human relationship to the living Earth. Industrial civilization organized human participation in ways that rewarded extraction, displacement of cost, and insulation from feedback. For a time, Earth absorbed these disruptions. Today, planetary responses—climate instability, ecosystem collapse, declining resilience—are making negative feedback unavoidable.

Vandana Shiva, physicist turned ecologist and global activist, repeatedly reminds us that ecological crises are inseparable from questions of justice, power, and relationship. Earth's responses are not punitive. They are regulatory. Living systems respond to disturbance by seeking new forms of balance. The goal is not to minimize damage while continuing business as usual. It is to realign human institutions so that they contribute to Earth's regenerative capacities rather than undermining them.

Such realignment requires more than technological substitution. Renewable energy, efficient production, and



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# When compassion becomes our common language, the boundaries of race, religion, and nation begin to dissolve, and we rediscover ourselves as kin within a single Earth community.

conservation are essential, but insufficient. A living Earth calls for living economies, living governance, and cultures that measure success by our active human contribution to planetary health.

Life on Earth has never been static. Over billions of years, the planet has experienced ice ages and warm periods, comet impacts and volcanic eruptions, mass extinctions and bursts of diversification. Life's evolution has responded to each crisis with extraordinary creativity.

When rising oxygen levels threatened early anaerobic life, new life forms evolved that could breathe oxygen and harness its power. When an asteroid impact ended the age of the dinosaurs, mammals diversified to fill the vacated niches. New forms emerged that had never existed before. Out of disruption came previously unimagined possibilities.

The crises of our time—climate disruption, biodiversity loss, social fragmentation—are part of this same pattern, but with a crucial difference: this time, the driving force is a single species with unprecedented power and potential to destroy the whole. Our technologies, economies, and cultures are destabilizing the very systems that sustain us. Yet those same capacities, if brought into alignment with life's deep patterns, could help heal the damage and open new pathways for flourishing. It is within our means to make conscious choices never previously within the means of living beings.

From the perspective of the integral spirit cosmology, evolution is not a blind, meaningless process. It is movement toward ever greater complexity, diversity, depth of relationship, and capacity for collective choice. Each species, each ecosystem, each culture adds a unique voice to the symphony of life. The human voice is especially distinctive in this regard.

This understanding defines our distinctive potential. As Joanna Macy taught, the pain we feel for the world is the world feeling through us. It is evidence of our profound interconnection with the living Earth. To numb that pain is to cut ourselves off from the very source of our capacity

to respond. To honor the pain is to recognize that we are participants in a larger body that is calling us to protect and restore its integrity.

Compassion is not passive sympathy. Rather, it is active solidarity with life. It is the heartbeat of evolutionary creativity, moving us from despair to engagement, from paralysis to participation. When we act from compassion, we become agents of the universe's self-healing. Through every act of kindness, reconciliation, or stewardship we mend a thread of creation's torn fabric.

Compassion is thus the bridge between grief and action, between awareness of our interdependence and living it. When compassion becomes our common language, the boundaries of race, religion, and nation begin to dissolve, and we rediscover ourselves as kin within a single Earth community. In that shared compassion lies the seed of an Ecological Civilization worthy of the living universe that brought us forth.

Similarly, hope is not a prediction that things will turn out well. It is a commitment to act as if our efforts matter, because we participate in a much larger flow of evolutionary creativity.

We do not know whether humanity will navigate this bottleneck successfully. But we do know that our choices influence the odds—not only for ourselves, but for countless other beings and for generations yet unborn.

To act from this understanding is to treat every home, every neighborhood, every watershed as an expression of the sacred integral spirit. Regenerative agriculture, community land trusts, restorative justice, local energy cooperatives, and experiments in living democracy become expressions of the universe's drive toward wholeness at the human scale. They are practical acts of faith in the sacredness of life's unfolding.

For such experiments to flourish, however, they must be grounded in a cultural story that affirms their deeper meaning. That leads us to the task of cultural transformation advanced through relevant educational experience.



## HUMANITY'S EVOLUTIONARY MOMENT

**HUMANITY STANDS** at a pivotal moment in Earth's evolutionary history. Never before has a single species possessed the capacity to alter planetary systems at such scale and speed. This power marks a threshold not only of technological capability, but of evolutionary responsibility.

From a living-systems perspective, evolution is not a ladder of progress culminating in human dominance. It is an ongoing process of experimentation through which life explores ever more complex forms of relationship. Species that persist do so by fitting within the constraints of the larger systems that sustain them.

Human intelligence and social organization have given us remarkable adaptive abilities. They have also enabled patterns of behavior that exceed Earth's capacity to regenerate. The resulting tensions signal a mismatch between human systems and the evolutionary context in which they operate.

This moment can be understood as an evolutionary test. Will human societies mature from expansionary systems driven by accumulation and control into regenerative systems guided by reciprocity and restraint? Or will delayed feedback drive a contraction marked by conflict and loss?

Evolution offers no guarantees. But it does offer guidance. Systems that endure learn to limit their own excesses. They develop mechanisms for cooperation, distributed decision-making, and mutual care. They align power with responsibility and privilege with accountability.

Cooperation and constraint are essential to long-term resilience. Systems that suppress feedback or reward short-term advantage ultimately undermine their own viability. Human cultures now face a similar learning challenge. Conscious participation—acting with awareness of systemic consequences—becomes our defining evolutionary task. This requires redesigning institutions so that they reward behaviors that sustain the whole rather than undermine it.

Education, governance, economics, and technology all become arenas of evolutionary choice. The question is not whether change will occur, but whether it will be shaped by intention or imposed by breakdown.

An Ecological Civilization represents a pathway of intentional evolution—a collective decision to align human creativity with the conditions that make life on Earth possible.

**Systems that endure  
learn to limit their own  
excesses.**

# EDUCATION FOR EVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION

**EDUCATION STANDS** at the heart of this transformation. Modern schooling arose largely to serve industrial capitalism—producing disciplined workers and compliant consumers. It often teaches disconnected facts rather than integrated understanding, competition rather than cooperation, obedience rather than creative exploration. It prepares young people to fit into existing structures rather than to imagine and join in the creation of new possibilities.

Education for Ecological Civilization will:

- **Cultivate ecological literacy**—understanding of how energy flows, nutrients cycle, and feedback loops sustain the regeneration and continued unfolding of life.
- **Foster systems thinking**—seeing patterns, relationships, and long-term consequences rather than isolated events.
- **Nourish moral imagination**—asking what kind of world is worth creating and how the students' gifts might serve it.
- **Practice living democracy**—inviting participation in real decisions that affect the learners' communities and ecosystems.
- **Model lifelong learning**—recognizing that in a rapidly evolving world, every person, at every age, must remain a student of the ever-growing potential of the unfolding of life and of Earth's living systems.

A living-systems perspective calls us to lives of continuous learning. Education, in this frame, is not preparation for a future role in an external economy. It is cultivation of the capacities required for conscious participation in a living world. These include systems literacy, ethical reflection, emotional intelligence, ecological awareness, and the ability to collaborate across differences.

Such education emphasizes questions over answers and relationships over credentials. It teaches learners to recognize patterns, anticipate unintended consequences, and act with care in situations of uncertainty. It values curiosity, empathy, and responsibility as essential forms of intelligence.

As system theorist and Buddhist scholar Joanna Macy has emphasized through her work on systems awareness and the Great Turning, learning in a time of crisis must also cultivate emotional resilience—the capacity to face disturbing information without denial or despair, and to respond with courage and compassion. Such learning is not confined to formal institutions or to childhood. In a rapidly changing world, societies themselves must become learning systems—capable of continuously reflecting on outcomes, revising assumptions, and adapting institutions in response to feedback.

Reorienting education in this way is not an add-on to existing curricula. It is a foundational shift in how societies understand knowledge, purpose, and success. Without it, efforts to redesign economies and governance will remain brittle and easily reversed.

Cultural transformation does not happen overnight. It requires new stories in our films, curricula, sermons, news, and everyday conversations. It calls for spiritual communities that honor science. And for scientific communities that support us in recovering a sense of reverence. It invites each of us to examine our assumptions about success,

Cultures are creations of the human mind.  
They can and do change, sometimes more quickly  
than we expect.

security, and belonging.

Cultures are creations of the human mind. They can and do change, sometimes more quickly than we expect. The stories we tell our children today will shape the institutions they participate in creating and inherit tomorrow.

An Ecological Civilization will emerge only if we raise future generations to understand themselves as participants in a living universe. These cultural shifts must in turn generate new economic and political arrangements that reflect the logic of life.

This participatory understanding aligns with the spiritual awakening now spreading among people who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” They are rejecting hierarchical dogmas grounded in loyalty to

kings and gods. Instead, they seek direct connection with the sacredness of creation unfolding. This reflects a shift from belief in an external ruler to an experience of immanent presence—the sacred as the living essence within and among us.

In this participatory view, the sacred is not confined to a distant heaven, a book, a priesthood, a king or a god. It permeates forests and rivers, neighborhoods and council meetings, farms and factories. To live a spiritual life is to contribute to the well-being of the continuously unfolding whole. A defining goal of education in an Ecological Civilization is to guide us each in finding our distinctive place of serve to the regenerative emergence of the whole.

## An Ecological Civilization will emerge only if we raise future generations to understand themselves as participants in a living universe.



# ECO-NOMICS AS OUR GUIDE TO MANAGING EARTH'S HOUSEHOLD

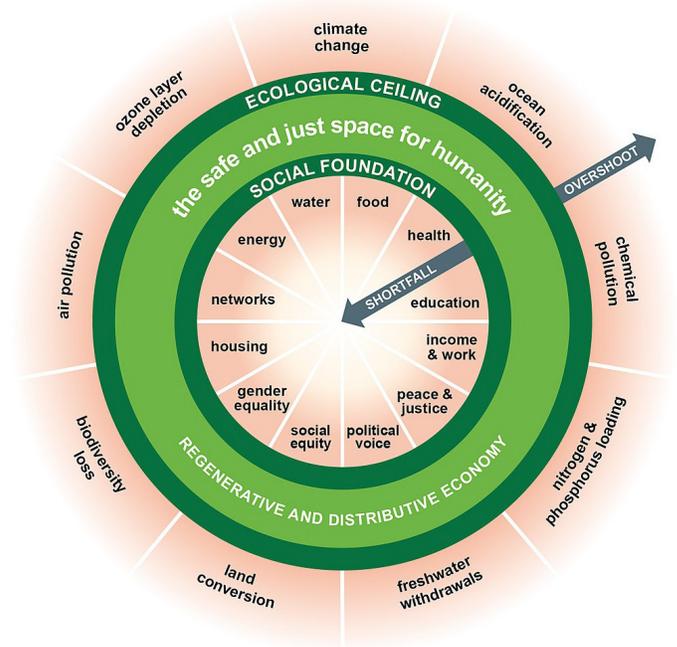
**THE WORD “ECONOMY”** comes from the Greek *oikos nomos*—the rules for managing the household. In an Ecological Civilization, that household is Earth. Economics, or preferably “eco-nomics,” becomes the art of Earth householding: guiding ourselves in organizing the flows of Earth’s energy and materials in ways that meet our needs while maintaining and enhancing the health of the entirety of Earth’s larger community of life.

Our current economic system mostly does the opposite. It treats Earth as a collection of expendable resources, labor as a cost to be minimized, and growing money as the ultimate purpose of the economy and the measure of its value. It rewards short-term extraction over long-term stewardship. And it concentrates power in global corporations and financial institutions that are structurally accountable only to obscenely wealthy owners at the expense of the living communities on which the wellbeing of humans and Earth’s other lifeforms depends.

From the perspective of integral spirit cosmology, such an economy is profoundly misaligned with reality. It ignores the basic fact that all real wealth ultimately derives from the generative capacity of Earth and Sun. The human economy is a subsystem of the biosphere, not the other way around. And infinite growth in consumption on a finite planet is impossible.

As economist Kate Raworth frames it, economies must operate within social foundations and ecological ceilings if they are to support human well-being over time. This framing makes visible the boundaries within which markets can serve life rather than undermine it.

This is not a call to eliminate markets or innovation. It is a call to redesign them so that they support conscious participation rather than destructive extraction. As systems thinker and global movement builder Stewart Wallis



As economist Kate Raworth frames it, economies must operate within social foundations and ecological ceilings if they are to support human well-being over time. This framing makes visible the boundaries within which markets can serve life rather than undermine it.

has emphasized, economic success must be measured by whether systems meet human needs equitably while preserving the conditions for future generations.

The eco-nomics of an Ecological Civilization begins with this question: What does life require to flourish in this place, for generations to come? Only then does it turn to asking how to design markets, money systems, and enterprises to serve that purpose.

Key features of such an economy will include:

- **Regenerative production:** agriculture, forestry, and fisheries that build biodiversity and resilience rather than depleting them.
- **Relocalization:** regional and local economies that are embedded in their local ecosystems instead of dependent on global supply chains.
- **Local democratic ownership:** cooperatives, community land trusts, public banks, and local family businesses that keep decision-making close to those affected and share the fruits of enterprise broadly.

- **Money as servant:** financial systems designed as public utilities to facilitate exchange and investment in the real economy.

Willis Harman, my Stanford teacher and lifetime mentor, argued that such economic transformation requires a shift in consciousness—from viewing the purpose of business as maximizing private financial wealth accumulation to seeing its purpose as meeting the needs and supporting the well-being of people and Earth. In his view, a good life is not a matter of endless consumption. Rather it is a product of meaningful work, healthy relationships, and participation in the ongoing regeneration of place.

Eco-nomics for an Ecological Civilization thus becomes our guide to caring for Earth and one another in an evolving integral spirit cosmos. It guides us in organizing our households in ways that reflect the household's living nature. But eco-nomics alone cannot secure that alignment. It must be accompanied by other governance rules and structures dedicated to the wellbeing of life rather than to the growth of financial assets.

Economic transformation requires a shift in consciousness—from viewing the purpose of business as maximizing private financial wealth accumulation to seeing its purpose as meeting the needs and supporting the well-being of people and Earth.



## GOVERNANCE IN A PARTICIPATORY LIVING WORLD

**IF THE ECONOMY** is the circulation system of society, governance is its nervous system. Governance is the means by which societies in an Ecological Civilization organize collective participation, resolve conflicts, and guide collective action in service to the well-being of life. It determines how decisions are made, whose voices are heard, how power is exercised, and how responsibility is distributed. In an Ecological Civilization, governance cannot be reduced to control from the top or competition among isolated interests. It must function as a living system of mutual coordination, learning, and accountability.

Existing political structures fall short of this purpose. They are typically organized as hierarchical systems of control, more responsive to the financial interests of concentrated wealth than to the needs of people and ecosystems. Having evolved under the influence of the mechanistic story of a clockworks universe, top-down gov-

ernance, and a deeply flawed economic theory that would have us believe that money is wealth, we now threaten ourselves and our Earth mother through our disruption of creation's sacred journey.

For more than two millennia, Western civilization has been guided by a story that imagined the universe as created and ruled by a transcendent, all-powerful deity—a cosmic monarch whose authority was mirrored in earthly kings and emperors. This image of divine hierarchy sanctified the social hierarchies of empire and the human subjugation and exploitation of Earth. (For a vivid two-minute overview, see [“History 101: Divine Right of Kings.”](#))

As the late theologian Marcus Borg observed, “Tell me your image of God, and I will tell you your politics.” When divinity is imagined as an all-powerful god, society mirrors that pattern in all powerful kings heading authoritarian governments with powerful militaries, extractive economies, patriarchal families, and deep divisions of race and class. When divinity is understood as a universal spirit seeking to know itself as it actualizes its possibilities through creation's continuing unfolding, power disperses and politics becomes the art of cooperation and collective decision-making among diverse peoples.

In living systems, intelligence is distributed. Coordina-

# When divinity is imagined as an all-powerful god, society mirrors that pattern in all powerful kings heading authoritarian governments with powerful militaries, extractive economies, patriarchal families, and deep divisions of race and class.

tion emerges from feedback loops among nested levels of organization—cells, organs, organisms, communities, and ecosystems. No single part holds all the information needed to manage the whole. Resilience arises from diversity, redundancy, and local adaptation.

A human governance system aligned with the integral spirit cosmology of an Ecological Civilization will be:

- **Polycentric.** Authority will be distributed across multiple centers—local, regional, national, and global—each responsible for what it can know and manage best.
- **Participatory.** People will be directly involved not just in electing leaders to make decisions for them, but rather directly engaged in making the decisions that affect their lives and environments.
- **Adaptive.** Systems will facilitate learning from experience and adjusting in response to feedback.
- **Grounded in rights of nature and future generations.** Jurisdictions will recognize that ecosystems and those yet unborn have legitimate claims on resources.

Here again, these design principles counter the consequences of privilege.

Philosopher/ethicist Steven C. Rockefeller and movement leader and Secretary General of Earth Charter International Mirian Vilela point to the Earth Charter as evidence that the vast majority of the world's people are aligned behind the guiding values of an Ecological Civilization:

- Care and Respect for the Community of Life
- Ecological Integrity
- Social and Economic Justice
- Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace

Democracy, understood in this deeper sense, is not merely a method for selecting leaders. It is a continuous process of collective learning—an evolving conversation about values, priorities, and shared responsibility. Its vitality depends on informed participation, trust, and institutions designed to adapt in response to experience.

Frances Moore Lappé's concept of "living democracy" offers a model. Democracy is not just a periodic vote but a daily practice of engagement, deliberation, and responsibility. It requires institutions that invite participation—citizens' assemblies, local councils, cooperative enterprises—as well as cultures that teach and celebrate the skills of listening, dialogue, and collective problem-solving.

Governance in our living world must ensure that powerful technologies remain accountable to the common good, at every level. That means transparent algorithms, public oversight, and ethical frameworks rooted not in abstract concepts of financial efficiency, but rather in commitment to the well-being of people and planet. It also means recognizing that no technology, however advanced, can substitute for the wisdom that arises from lived experience by the people in the place where they live.

# TECHNOLOGY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND THE STORY WE SERVE

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES** and artificial intelligence introduce both new risks and new possibilities for the stories we live by and in fields of education, governance, and economics. Designed and applied in the service of concentrated power, these technologies can amplify surveillance, manipulation, and control. In the service of life, they can help us share knowledge, coordinate action, and see complex patterns that would otherwise elude us. The key question is: Which story do they serve? A story of extraction and domination, or a story of participation and regeneration?

Artificial intelligence is often portrayed as an external force descending upon humanity either as savior or threat. But of course, AI is human made, an outgrowth of the particular worldview of its creators. Note that the original draft of the statement that follows was produced by AI. I affirm its conclusions here are consistent with my own.

The question is not whether AI will exist—it already does. And it is not going away. The defining question now is what story will guide its development and use. If AI is trained primarily on data from an extractive, competitive, money driven, and dramatically inequitable civilization ruled by the self-serving dictatorial ego-maniacs currently in charge, it will tend to reinforce those patterns. If it is governed by institutions that prioritize profit over life, it will accelerate that exploitation.

There is another possibility. AI and other advanced technologies can be shaped by the integral spirit cosmology's recognition of the primacy of life and the importance of reciprocity. AI could thus help us to map and restore damaged ecosystems; support local and global deliberation by making complex data intelligible to ordinary people; coordinate regenerative bioregional economies across regions; and reduce the need for many unpleasant, danger-

ous, and low paid jobs, thus freeing human time for creativity and to provide care for Earth, human communities, and for the very young and the aged. For this to happen, AI must be embedded in human ethical frameworks and accountable to ethical human oversight.

The fate of AI and the fate of humanity are already inseparably intertwined. Neither can flourish under the story of domination now leading humans on a path to self-extinction because AI depends on humans to maintain its material components. It cannot survive without humans. Humans, in turn, can survive only under a story of participation. Under that story both AI and humans can flourish.

Our relationship with AI mirrors our relationship with other high impact technologies such as nuclear energy, genetic engineering, and geoengineering. Each forces us to

## Technological innovation must be guided by care, precaution, and an understanding of complexity.

ask: Do we design and use our advanced technological capabilities in service to life or in the pursuit of the personal control and advantage that leads to human self-extinction?

The integral spirit cosmology offers a lens through which to evaluate these choices. It reminds us that every action we take reverberates through an interconnected web of relationships that extends far beyond our immediate human perception.

Ultimately, the question is not whether technology is good or bad. It is whether its application is aligned with the deeper currents of a living universe seeking to know and express itself through self-aware self-directing living systems. As planetary limits assert themselves, humility becomes essential. Technological innovation must be guided by care, precaution, and an understanding of complexity.

# THE WAY FORWARD

**THE CHALLENGES** involved in embracing the integral spirit cosmology story can feel overwhelming. It forces us to realize that we live at a moment when our human choices will determine the fate of countless species—and perhaps the trajectory of organic life on Earth and beyond. It is both humbling and daunting. It is also a profound invitation.

Our responsibility is twofold. We are stewards of the organic life that has blossomed uniquely on this planet, and we are participants in the far larger story of a living universe exploring and advancing its own potential. To care for Earth is to accept our responsibility for the process of creation of which we are a part.

Our task, in this context, is to commit to that larger process; to recognize that our efforts matter. As Joanna Macy taught us, we are called to be “hospice workers

to a dying system and midwives of the emerging future system”—holding both grief and possibility at the same time. To feel pain for a troubled world is not weakness; it is evidence of our compassion and sense of belonging.

Finding our way to a viable future requires that we ask:

- **What legacy are we leaving**—climate stability or chaos, fertile or exhausted soils, thriving or collapsing ecosystems?
- **What cultural stories are we passing on**—stories of fear, separation, and competition; or stories of love, belonging, and cooperation?
- **What institutions will future generations inherit**—structures of extraction, or systems that support learning, healing, and regeneration?

As individuals, we cannot control the collective answers of our species. But we can each influence them—beginning where we are, with whatever power we individually possess. Every community garden, every restored wetland, every worker cooperative, every citizens’ assembly, every



To feel pain for a troubled world is not weakness; it is evidence of our compassion and sense of belonging.

# An Ecological Civilization is one in which we organize our economies, our politics, our cultures, and our technologies in service to the well-being of the whole of creation.



classroom that teaches children to see themselves as part of a living Earth community of life—these are seeds of an Ecological Civilization.

In this work, lifelong learning becomes both a necessity and a spiritual practice. Each generation must keep discovering what it means to live in relationship with a living Earth. To learn is to participate consciously in the flow of creation's own learning about itself.

We do not undertake this work alone. We are accompanied by and need to learn from the larger community of life—forests, rivers, pollinators, plankton, and the microbial symbionts that dwell within us. Their well-being is inseparable from our own.

An Ecological Civilization is not a fixed endpoint. It is a direction of travel—a commitment to redesign human institutions so that they support learning, reciprocity, and regeneration. It is a collective practice of participation

grounded in humility, responsibility, and care for the larger community of life.

As Ecological Civilization thinker/advocate Jeremy Lent has argued, the transition now at hand depends on reclaiming cultural narratives that honor relationship, place, and responsibility—stories that reconnect human aspiration with ecological reality.

An Ecological Civilization is one in which we organize our economies, our politics, our cultures, and our technologies in service to the well-being of the whole of creation. It is a civilization that knows itself as part of a living universe, a phase in a great unfolding—creation seeking to know itself.

The work is immense. While the outcome is uncertain, to participate consciously in aligning our stories and institutions with the deeper now unfolding story of integral spirit cosmology—is, I believe, the great calling of our time.

## ABOUT THE PRIMARY AUTHOR



David C. Korten is an American writer, lecturer, engaged citizen, student of psychology and behavioral systems, a prominent critic of corporate globalization, and an advocate of Ecological Civilization. He founded and served as president of the Living Economies Forum and co-founded and served as board chair of YES! Magazine (now a project of Truthout). He is currently an active member of the Club of Rome, a member of the International Advisory Council of the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation, an advisory partner and member of EcoCiv Coalition, a member of the advisory Council of the Raffi Foundation for Child Honoring, and an Ambassador of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance. He is the author of numerous influential books, including the international best-selling books *When Corporations Rule the World*; *The Post-Corporate World: Life after Capitalism*; and *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*. His other books include: *Change the Story*; *Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth* and *Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*. He was for many years an active member of the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) and a Board Member of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE). He holds a BA in Psychology from Stanford University and MBA and PhD degrees from the Stanford Graduate School of Business. He served on the faculties of the Harvard Business School and Harvard School of Public Health, and worked for thirty years in international development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Find David on [Facebook](#) and his website, [davidkorten.org](http://davidkorten.org), and subscribe to his occasional [newsletter](#). David lives with Fran, his life-partner and wife of 63 years, on Bainbridge Island in Washington State.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper draws from the work and insights of many colleagues and organizations with whom I have or have had in-depth personal relationships. Credit is shared. Responsibility for shortcomings is mine alone. Apologies to the many who contributed but remain unnamed.

**Individual Contributors:** Nafeez Ahmed, Carlos Alvarez Pereira, Dov Baron, Steve Bhaerman, Ellen Brown, Peter A. Buffett, Raffi Cavoukian, Philip Clayton, Ricky Gard Diamond, Sandrine Dixson De-cleve, Riane Eisler, Meijun Fan, Anthony Flaccavento, Marcia Flagg, Matthew Fox, Marybeth Gardam, Kat Gjovik, Yunjeong Han, Thom Hartmann, Charles Holmes, Kurt Johnson, Anodea Judith, Gunna Jung, Till Kellerhoff, Georgia Kelly, Julia Kim, Ken Kitatani, Audrey Kitagawa, Frances F. Korten, Frances Moore Lappé, Jeremy Lent, Tracy Matsue Loeffelholz, Edward “Ted” Manning, Jason McLennan, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Mutombo Nkulu N’Sengha, Ethan Partington, John Perkins, Harry Pickens, Michael Pirson, Mamphela Ramphele, Kate Raworth, Steven C. Rockefeller, Otto Scharmer, Andrew Schwartz, Vandana Shiva, Anitra Thorhaug, Lama Tsomo, Marilyn Turkovich, Roberto Vargas, Mirian Vilela, Sandra Waddock, Stewart Wallis, Zhihe Wang, Zenobia Jeffries Warfield, Michael Wayne, Anders Wijkman, David Sloan Wilson, and Paul Wright.

**In Memoria:** Thomas Berry, Marcus Borg, Puanani Burgess, John B. Cobb, Jr., Willis W. Harman, Mae-Wan Ho, Joanna Macy, and Donella Meadows.

**Organizations:** Center for Process Studies, Charter for Compassion, Club of Rome, Earth Charter International, Ecocivilization Coalition, Institute for Ecological Civilization, Institute for Postmodern Development of China, International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation, Living Economies Forum, Local Futures, Praxis Peace Institute, Raffi Foundation for Child Honoring, Truthout Center for Grassroots Journalism, Wellbeing Economy Alliance, and YES! Media.

