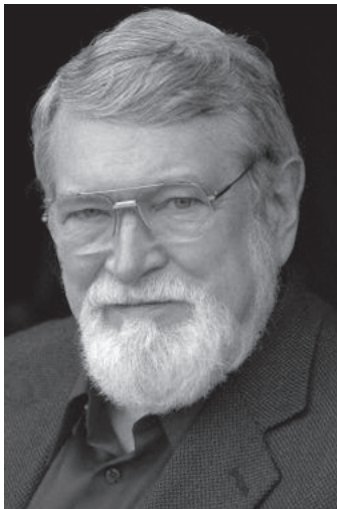


## Simple Eloquence and Profound Insight

David Korten

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Thomas Berry's simple eloquence and profound insight have touched the lives and thoughts of a great many people in both visible and invisible ways. Although I only had the privilege of meeting with him twice in person, our lives touched in numerous ways and his thinking had a profound impact on the direction of my work.

Back in 1994, when I was writing the epilogue to the first edition of *When Corporations Rule the World*, I was puzzling over a common reaction when I spoke to audiences about my belief that we humans are headed down a path to social and environmental self-destruction. I would often get a response along these lines, "That's true, but it would be so expensive and inconvenient to change." It was like people were saying, "What's the profit in human survival? We'll know the party's over when the last light goes out."

As I was struggling to sort out why survival isn't a sufficient motivator for change, I read *The Dream of the Earth*. Its defining statement jumped out at me: "For peoples, generally, their story of the universe and the human role in the universe is their primary source of intelligibility and value. The deepest crises experienced by any society are those moments of change when the story becomes inadequate for meeting the survival demands of a present situation." Bingo. I realized that this was the key. To make the changes essential to our survival, we humans must have a creation story that makes survival meaningful.

That insight from Thomas led me to see the connection between economic crisis and spiritual crisis and to focus much of my work on changing the defining stories of the prevailing culture. The latter includes helping people recognize the not so subtle ways in which contrasting creation stories shape our economic institutions and behavior.