

## Sharing Thomas Berry's Knowing-Loving Oneness Project

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Richard Norgaard is Professor of Energy and Resources at UC Berkeley. He is among the founders of the field of ecological economics. His recent research addresses how environmental problems challenge scientific understanding and the policy process, how ecologists and economists understand systems differently, and how globalization affects environmental governance. He is the author of *Development Betrayed: The End of Progress and a Coevolutionary Revisioning of the Future*.



Organist David Jewel, playing with all stops out in the sanctuary of my youth at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley, bared my soul to the great unknown. Six decades and two organ upgrades later, Larry Marietta elicits strong feelings of wonder and deep respect. Thunderous organs, soul wrenching music, and the words of Christ coevolved tightly over the past few centuries into a powerful catharsis and pathway to an open soul. But, with all due respect to this approach, I prefer the immensity of desert canyon silence periodically made palpable by the subtle descending song of the canyon wren.

I know awe in nature. The sandstone canyons of the Colorado Plateau are my primary retreat. Floating along the Colorado and its tributaries, moving quietly past massive vertical cliffs, and scrambling deep into still side canyons, occasionally out to the silent moonscape above. Across this vast desert in the middle of the American West, along those special places where water slices through the sandstone and threads of life flourish, the canyon wren simply asks why with a descending song capped by its starting note and the echoing reveries from adjacent walls are sufficient answer.

In my young adulthood, in the company of untrammelled nature's most vociferous defenders and renowned photographic chroniclers, I came to intimately know—to love for there is no other way of really knowing—the quiet beauty of the Glen Canyon of the Colorado River. This intimate awareness, however, soon dissolved. The pain I felt was sharpened by the silence with which the canyon's creatures, verdancy, and grandeur were drowned by its own waters backing up behind a massive concrete dam. Of course the canyon could not scream out against the human arrogance, the acting on specialized engineering science with an economized love for material desires rather than full knowledge-love of the whole of creation. Nor could the canyon wake up an ignorant public, shouting out against how modern people delegate authority through political and economic institutions, distancing and absolving us from the responsibility to know-love before affecting life, human and all.

Thomas Berry senses and communicates the extended whole glory of life, not separating human and other, and calls for a new story that bridges and begins to reconfigure science and religion both toward knowing-loving oneness. I share in and carry on his project in my own small way as I strive to help bridge economy and ecology, fragmented science and public understanding. My ten-year old son whistles the descending reverie of the canyon wren, breaking the silences of his struggles with homework and simple joys of our walks.