

Invitation to Eco-Zoic Wisdom Circles

Di Shearer

Editor's Note: Di Shearer lives in South Australia. She holds four graduate degrees—PhD, DMin, MEd, and MA (theology). She is a spiritual director and a guide to wisdom practices. What follows would be introduced by a short cover letter or email inviting people to join Eco-Zoic Wisdom Circles.

What does Eco-Zoic mean? What's new about it?

The term Eco-zoic combines all the words beginning with Eco, especially ecology and economy, and all the words ending in Zoic, especially life in all its forms. A literal translation would be Home of Life, a place in which to dwell in balance, harmony, and wonder.

We have lived for tens of thousands of years in what has been called the Ceno-zoic era. Ceno means New and zoic again means Life. So, it is the period of New Life which arose after the time of the dinosaurs and has existed in more or less the same pattern over 60 million years. All the conditions of our present existence suggest a new form of life needs to emerge, especially among the human species.

What wisdom systems are drawn on?

Eco-Zoic Wisdom Circles are small groups of people committed to four foci identified by Thomas Berry. These are:

- the wisdom of Indigenous peoples the world over;
- the wisdom of ancient religious systems both institutional and the free-flowing wisdom of spiritual practices in parallel to these and largely lying hidden from majority cultures;
- the wisdom of women across cultures; and
- the wisdom of science especially as new advances in cosmology, mathematics and newly formed fields of scientific enquiry take shape and contribute to traditional forms.

Who or what belongs in an Eco-Zoic Wisdom Circle?

Any human being may belong, and because Eco-Zoic Wisdom wants to recognize the interconnection of human life with non-human life, all creatures, plants, animals, minerals and so forth, all belong and are brought to or given consciousness within the circle. It is based on the principle also elicited in the writing of Thomas Berry: *We are not a collection of objects. We are a communion of subjects.*

How big is an Eco-Zoic Wisdom Circle?

Eco-Zoic wisdom is needed globally. As members of the human species, we are growing a global nervous system, or mind if you like, across the planet, called by

Teilhard de Chardin and others, the noosphere (from *nous*, mind, and *sphere*, envelope). We are the Universe becoming conscious of itself. But to be meaningful to everyday life and to draw some sense from history, we need national wisdom circles, cultural wisdom circles, and religious wisdom circles. First of all, we need small cells, or circles, of 3-6 people who in some way represent the four aspects of wisdom above and come together on a regular basis to share insights that bring us out of the old New Life, the Ceno-Zoic, into the New New Life, the Eco-Zoic. This is our changing identity as a species that is currently shaping the well-being or otherwise of the planet.

Who is welcome and how do I join?

Eco-Zoic Wisdom Circles are an unfettered movement that is already practised under many ecological and spiritual names. New circles will be formed as people respond. You may find a place for yourself in one of these new groups by filling in the attached application and returning it to dishearer@icloud.com.

Suggested Internet Resources to start or further your Eco-Zoic journey:

Center for Ecozoic Studies (directed by Herman Greene)

<https://www.ecozoicstudies.org/>

DeepTime Network (directed by Jennifer Morgan) <https://dtnetwork.org/>

Green Mountain Monastery (directed by Gail Worcelo)

<http://www.greenmountainmonastery.org/>

The Work that Reconnects (directed by Joanna Macy)

<https://workthatreconnects.org/>

Some Basic Reading to be shared as we meet:

For borrowing or purchasing:

Thomas Berry: *The Dream of the Earth*

Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story*

Thomas Berry: *The Great Work*

Available for free download:

Herman Greene: The Ecozoic Way: The Foundational Papers of the Center for

Ecozoic Studies: <https://tinyurl.com/CESFoundationalPapers>

Jennifer Morgan: Foundational Resources:

<https://dtnetwork.org/category/foundational-resources/>

Duane and Colleen Elgin: Choosing Earth

https://choosingearth.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Choosing-Earth_2022_PDFV8b.pdf

There are many others which you are welcome to share with your group and beyond your group to similar groups across the world.

Expression of Interest: Please contact dishearer@icloud.com