

## 2018-19 CHRONICLE 6 -The Ecozoic Era 2

### A Way Forward

In my almost thirty years working in the Arctic, mostly as a management consultant, I helped many Inuit and Dene councils and government departments develop strategic plans. An essential part of these plans was a vision. The overall vision provided an organizational context for these groups. They pointed the way forward into the future.

In my last chronicle I introduced Brian Swimme's and Thomas Berry's concept of an Ecozoic Era. It was a vision of a *mutually enhancing relationship between our species and Earth*. In this chronicle I will explain why all of us need a new vision—particularly this vision.

Question: So why do we need this particular vision from Berry and Swimme?

Answer: Because their vision is radically different, far reaching and all encompassing.

The organizational visions had one thing in common. They assumed that the world they were working in was relatively stable. There would, of course, be some economic and political changes in their service environment but their world, or more specifically the Earth, would remain relatively the same. Swimme and Berry's Ecozoic vision is radically different. It assumes that earth as we know it will not be the same.

That might strike some as preposterous but, as I was writing this, I read about a [new report](#) published by the U.N. Scientific Panel on Climate Change. Ninety scientists throughout the world reviewed six thousand studies. Their conclusion: they anticipate a major world-wide climate crisis as early as 2040. The major causes, of course, are our economic systems and carbon fuels polluting the environment. They recognize that if we have any chance of turning things around we must act immediately. But they are not optimistic. As one scientist put it, "*We need to reverse emission trends and the world economies on a dime.*"

So how can Swimme and Berry predict an Ecozoic Era? They can't. What they can predict is the same thing scientists are telling us. If we don't change our ways we will be in an impossible situation. They can predict that if we are to succeed as a species it will only be because we have established a mutually enhancing relationship with our species and Earth. Finally, they can predict that if we are to change our relationship with Earth it will require us to experience a change of consciousness-- to become aware that we are earthlings. We are part of a living Earth and the living Earth is part of us.

So where do we start?

We must recognize the urgency of our situation and I think this starts with a change in our thinking. I'm reminded of a favourite cartoon....

Two pilots are in the cockpit flying their plane in the clouds. Suddenly they notice something up in front of them. It's a mountain goat. One of the pilots says to the other, "Hey, I wonder how that mountain goat got way up here in these clouds."

We tend to incorporate things outside of us into our own frame of reference. We have difficulty incorporating ourselves into a different frame of reference, one that we interpret to be outside and therefore unreal. We need a very different way of thinking that will lead to a change in our consciousness. So I will leave the last words to an unorthodox thinker.

Yogi Berra the famous Yankee catcher once said, "*When you come to a fork in the road take it.*" Well, according to the U.N. Report on Climate Change we have certainly come to the fork in the road. We are running out of time. We can take one of two roads.

There is the road called "Business As Usual" It seems like a super highway. At most it promises some minor modifications to the existing systems...if it is deemed that changes are even needed.

The other road is called the Ecozoic Road. It is much less glitzy and at present is more of a walking path. It offers a new vision into the future based on a new and mutually enhancing relationship with Earth. So which road will we take? That is up to us.

Yogi cautions us, "*The future ain't what it used to be.*" We must prepare ourselves for a very different world with very different challenges.

He also encourages us. He knows that many people or perhaps even most people in the beginning will not want to sign on to walk down the Ecozoic Road with us. He tells us this is to be expected. We must be patient and be prepared for a long struggle. As Yogi liked to say in his inimitable style, "*If the people don't want to come out to the ball game, you can't stop them.*"

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