



## Toward a Contemporary Cosmology – A brief history of the Universe

In order to conceptualize the macro phases of the Universe's development, I described three stages in a *Guide to the Universe Story* that I printed in 1999 when Thomas Berry dedicated a Universe Story Walk on our property. More recently, I grouped the 14 one-billion year phases into seven steps, each with a two-word title. Thus, put succinctly, you can tell the whole story of the unfolding of the Universe by saying:

“The Universe has embarked on three great endeavors during which it accomplished monumental feats on its 14-billion year journey into complexity-consciousness. During the First Great Endeavor, the Universe focused on **Turning Energy into Matter**. It spent about two billion years *Coalescing Clouds* of gaseous matter. The 2<sup>nd</sup> two billion years, saw the emergence of an abundance of *Exploding Stars*. For its Second Great Endeavor, the Universe focused on **Turning Matter into Systems**. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> two-billion year period, the *Foundational Principles* emerged (differentiation, communion and autopoiesis) that ensured its long-term vitality. During the 4<sup>th</sup> two-billion year period, *Complex Building Blocks* encompassed an Other World of mystery, care and compassion. Finally, in its Third Great Endeavor, the Universe has been working on **Turning Systems into Consciousness**. The first stage in this task, the 5<sup>th</sup> two-billion years, involved creating a *Life-Giving Platform* with eight planets and a host of other objects around a mid-sized star. In the 6<sup>th</sup> period, particularly on Planet Earth, the Universe *Harnessed Energy* giving it bodily form. Now, in the 7<sup>th</sup> two-billion year epoch, all citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are helping birth *Embodied Consciousness* with self-reflective capacities...and the future awaits.”

My book, *Through Three Portals*, details a cosmology of an emerging Universe, describes how this perspective informs and shapes the decisions and actions in diverse aspects of society and within individual's daily lives and, finally, provides metaphors that foster interaction with reality's pervasive numinous aspects.

F. Nelson Stover  
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