

Henry Nelson Wieman (1884-1975)

Philosopher and theologian Dr. Henry Nelson Wieman identified and expanded on the process of Creative Interchange in his writings and teachings throughout the 20th century. His final book, *Man's Ultimate Commitment*, made the case that the fullest attainment of humankind cannot be reached until people make the ultimate commitment—to bring about **Creative Interchange**, the real source of human good and potential transformation. “Man is made for creative transformation as a bird is made for flight,” he writes.

Creative Interchange occurs, according to Dr. Wieman, “when the individual finds one or more persons with whom he can engage in that kind of interchange which creates in each an awareness of the original experience of the other person.”

We must counteract the forces that obstruct Creative Interchange, writes Wieman, such as prejudice, all forms of ignorance, and blocks to the creative process. There are no guarantees that Creative Interchange will bring this world to peace and justice, he notes, but it has that potential.

The author of ten books and scores of articles, Dr. Wieman taught at many universities including as professor of philosophy at Occidental College (1917-1927), professor of philosophy of religion at the University of Chicago Divinity School (1927-1947) and professor of philosophy at the Southern Illinois University (1956-1966), where archives of his letters and papers are stored. While ordained to the Presbyterian ministry as a young man, Wieman became involved in the Unitarian church after 1950 and was influential there.

Martin Luther King Jr. explored Wieman's ideas in his Ph.D. dissertation, “A Comparison of the Conceptions of God in the Thinking of Paul Tillich and Henry Nelson Wieman.”

Dr. Wieman has impacted untold numbers of people, and his often complex ideas have been made more accessible by protégés such as consultant Charlie Palmgren, founder of **SynerChange International**.

For further reading on Wieman and Creative Interchange, see:

Man's Ultimate Commitment - Henry Nelson Wieman

The Chicken Conspiracy - Charlie L. Palmgren and Stacey Hagan

The Greatest Good - Charlie L. Palmgren and William H. Petrarca

Also on this website:

Four Phases of Creative Interchange

“Creative Interchange in Groups”