

Henry Nelson Wieman

August 19, 1884-June 19, 1975



Dr. Henry Nelson Wieman was a leading 20th century American religious philosopher, professor, and author of such books as *Religious Experience and Scientific Method*, *The Wrestle of Religion with Truth*, *Methods of Private Religious Living*, *The Issues of Life*, and *Man's Ultimate Commitment*. One of his best-known works is *The Source of Human Good*.

As a teacher, preacher, thinker, and writer, Wieman was dedicated to defining the process of **human transformation**. Ultimately, he called it creative interchange—that which operates in human life with such character and power that it will transform man as he cannot transform himself.

Wieman's early years

Born in Rich Hill, Mo., Wieman was the first of eight children of Alma Morgan and William Henry Wieman. Both parents were graduates of Park College, in Parkville, Mo. Wieman enrolled in Park College himself, intending to become a journalist and right before graduation in 1907, he had an epiphany that would shape the rest of his life:

"I came to my room after the evening meal and sat alone looking at the sunset over the Missouri River. Suddenly it came over me that I should devote my life to the problems of religious inquiry. I never had a more ecstatic experience. I could not sleep all night and walked in that ecstasy for days."

Although he had little interest in becoming a minister, he then enrolled in San Francisco Theological Seminary in San Anselmo, California, and later attended Harvard, where he earned his Ph.D. He taught at Occidental College, the University of Chicago Divinity School, the New School in New York City, the University of Oregon, and the University of West Virginia.

In 1950, he was granted ministerial fellowship with the American Unitarian Association and the next year was offered a faculty position in philosophy at the University of Houston. In 1956, Wieman was invited to be a distinguished visiting professor of Philosophy at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

Wieman and Innovative InterChange

In 1966, Wieman met and formed a working relationship with Dr. Erle Fitz, a practicing psychiatrist, and **Dr. Charlie Palmgren**, now chief learning officer of **Innovative InterChange Inc.** Together, the three founded the Center for Creative InterChange.

Fitz, Palmgren, and Wieman met regularly in Wieman's home to focus on how creative interchange could be the basis for psychotherapy, applied behavioral sciences, and **organizational development**. After Wieman's death, Palmgren continued to nurture the creative interchange philosophy, identifying the conditions necessary for the CI process to occur and developing tools to help people remove the barriers to those conditions.