

Rev. Jeanelyse Adams

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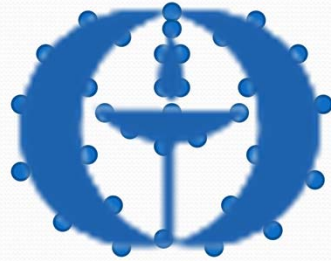
Photo Source:
<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/henrynelsonwieman.html>

How can we be truly religious beings in this world?

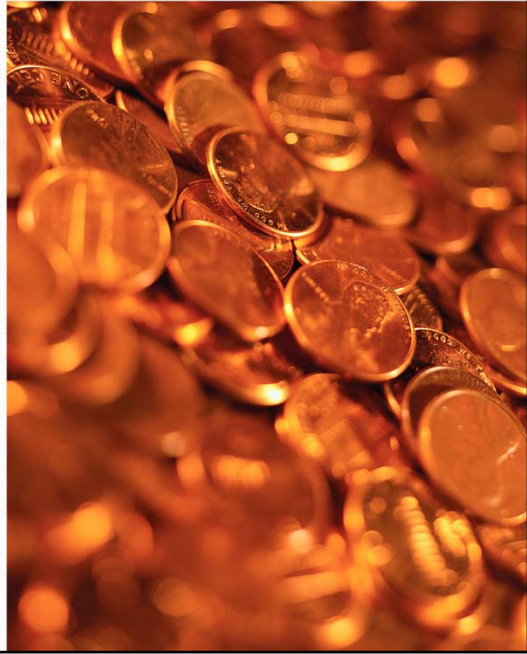
- **Henry Nelson Wieman**

Today's Goals

- Connecting the dots between:
 - Congregational polity
 - Covenant
 - Process Theology
 - Your Experience



Pennies




What is your
favorite song or
hymn to sing
during worship?

Why?



What was the difference
in your experience?



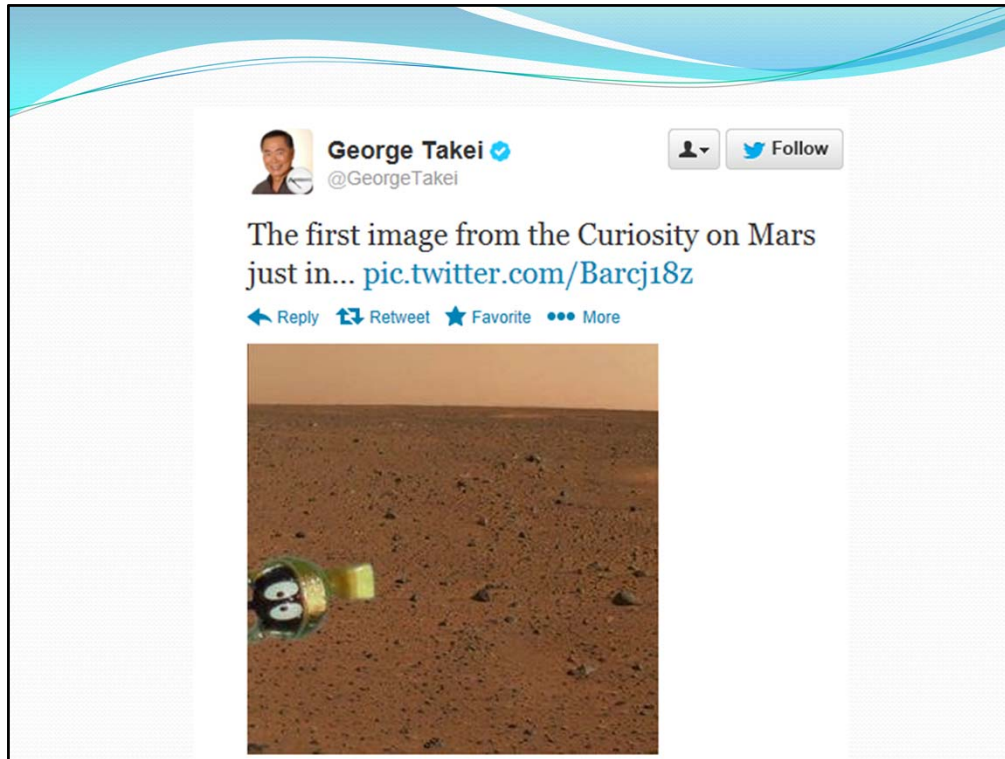


“I met a man with a dollar.
We exchanged dollars.
We each still had one dollar.
Then I met a man with an idea.
We exchanged ideas.
Now we each have two ideas.”

- attributed to Don Davis, Founder, Syn-Aud-Con
<https://www.synaudcon.com/site/about/mission-2/>



What happens when you have a group of people exchanging ideas?
Each encounter enriches the whole group.







Dedham, MA



In 1637 a group of about 30 Puritan families had moved to the newly-chartered settlement of Dedham, Massachusetts. Unlike the Pilgrim settlers in Plymouth or the earlier Puritan settlement in Salem, this faithful group did not know one another before forming their new community.

They came from different parts of Great Britain, and some had previously settled in other areas of this then-new world of North America.

Their first order of business was to quickly establish how they were to fairly divide the land so that they could plant their crops, build their homes and fence their pastures.

Once they had taken care of their food and shelter needs, they were able to turn their attention to forming the *religious* part of their community.

The good people of Dedham approached their communal religious life with seriousness and intention.

They scheduled a series of meetings over the course of a year, held every Thursday evening, taking turns in the homes of various families, with all of the townspeople invited to participate. As part of their intentionality, they adopted a few simple rules:

Rule 1: They would decide before leaving each meeting what question to discuss next week.

That way people were more apt to share *considered* thoughts.

Rule 2: Each week the host of the house would begin, speaking to the agreed-upon question.

Then everyone else could speak by turns.

Rule 3: Each one could, as they chose, speak to the question,

or raise a closely related question and speak to that, or state any objections or doubts

concerning what any others had said,
"so it were humbly & with a teachable hart
not with any mind of caviling or contradicting."
In other words, Rule 3 was: Here we speak our own
understandings or doubts. No arguing. (or nit-picking)

The record reports that all their "reasonings" were "very
peaceable, loving, & tender, much to edification." (or
learning together)

What is instructive for us today,
are the kinds of questions that they started with.
The questions weren't about the Bible or what they
believed. They were about what kind of society they
wished to create. What were their highest values?
How did they wish to be together?
Did they even need to create a church?
Couldn't they just live those values as friends and
neighbors?
After a year of careful discernment they decided
that the society they wanted to create
was going to reflect their understanding of
creating the Kingdom of God on Earth,
what we might call the Beloved Community,
a society that promoted justice and peace
through reasonable laws.

Their decided that their highest value was Love...

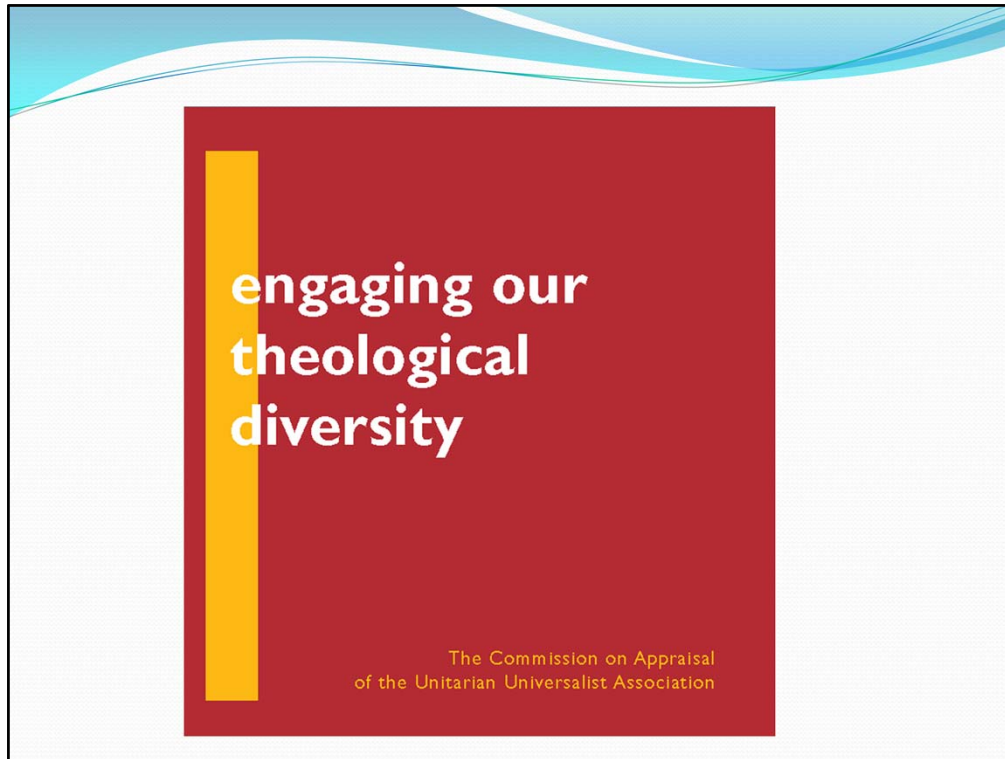
as in “Love is the doctrine of this church.”

Our Covenant: The 2000-01 Minns Lectures: The Lay and Liberal Doctrine of the Church: The Spirit and the Promise of our Covenant by Alice Blair Wesley



In order to discern the will of God, we believe that the best process is to come together in a faithful group and discern together.

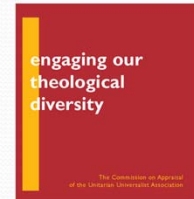
No bishops, no popes, no presbyteries, just the gathered faithful with openness and love.



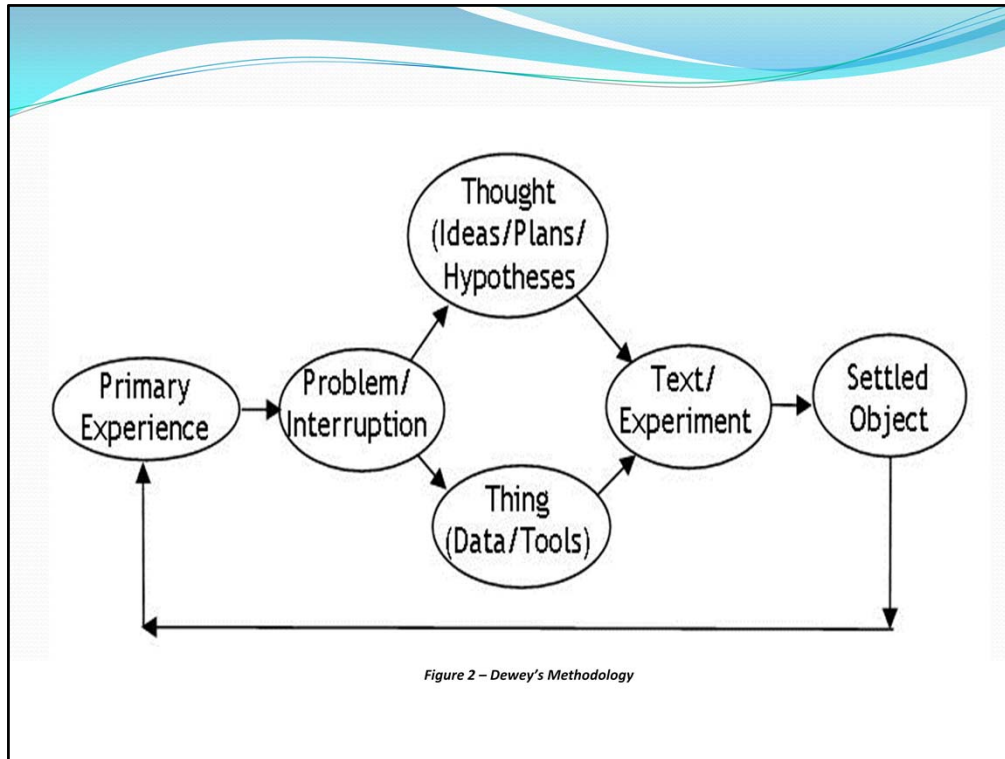
We may not use the same theological language, but the underlying trust in that process of discernment is still core to who we are.

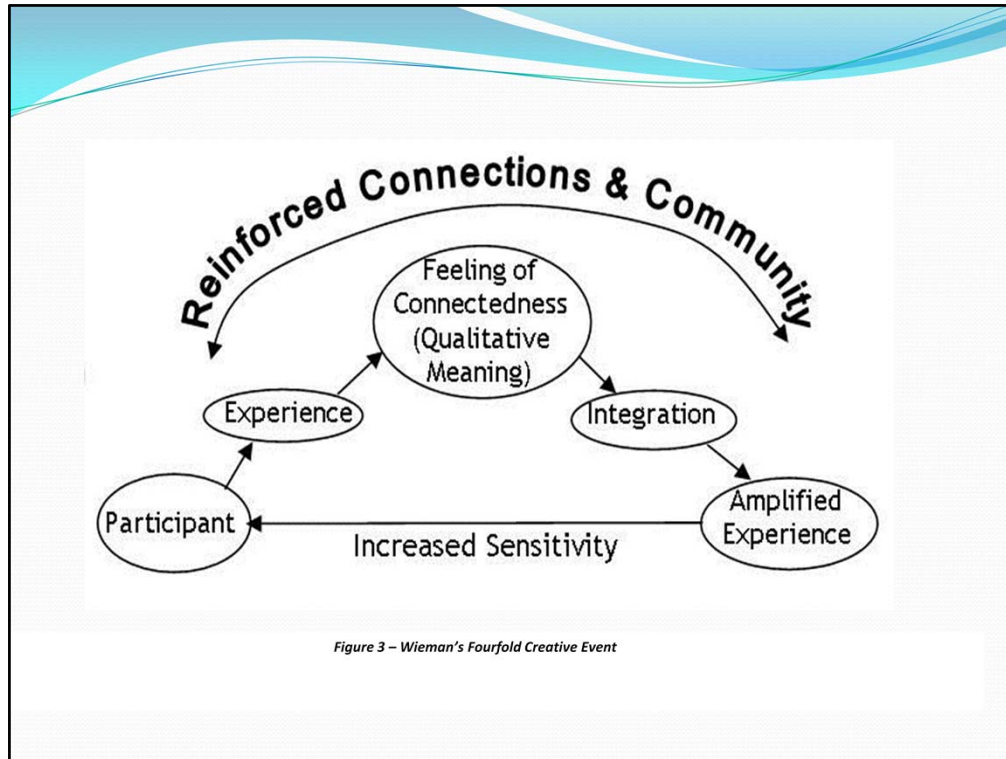
**“We deepen our wisdom in community
when we share our stories and
engage in dialogue
across our differences.”**

**“Highly Important”
82% of lay folk
91% of ministers.**



Engaging Our Theological Diversity
The Commission on Appraisal of the UUA
May, 2005 (page 68)



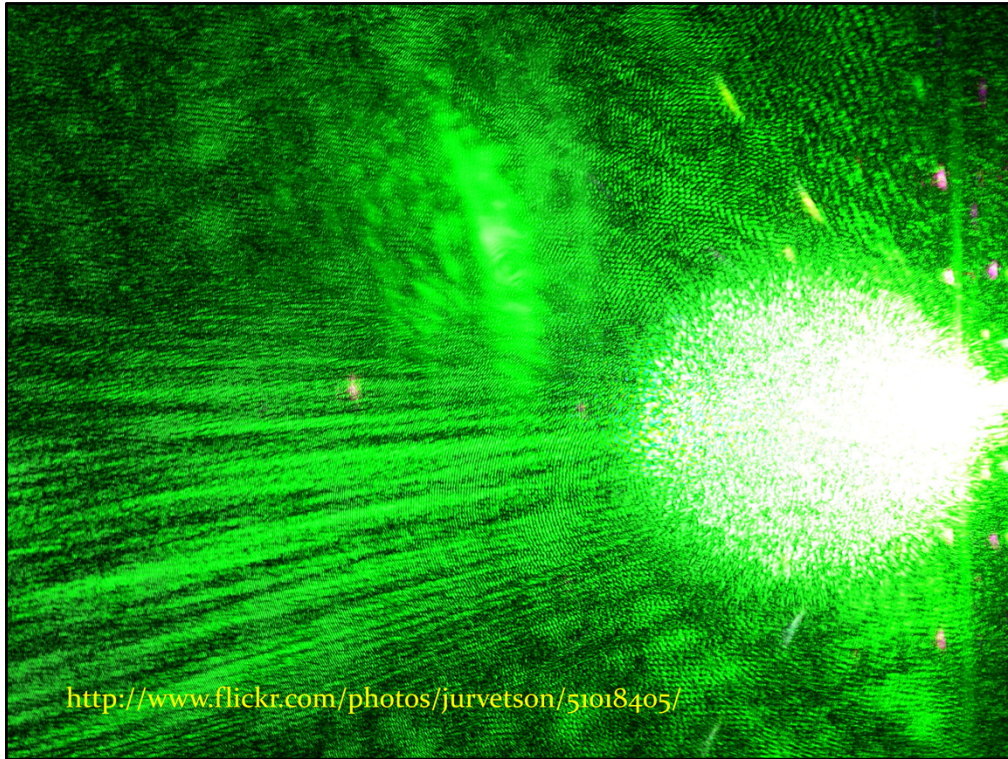


qualitative meaning—the feeling of connectedness between the present event and its connected (past and future) events.

Openness b=needed for the integration



I'd like to bring us to a more modern, UU theological understanding



World of Quantum Physics
Potentials and probabilities
Process



Process Theology



Photo Source:
<http://www25.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/henrynelsonwieman.html>

**The process of
creative
interpersonal
encounter is the
source of human
good.**

- **Henry Nelson Wieman**

Perchings and Flights

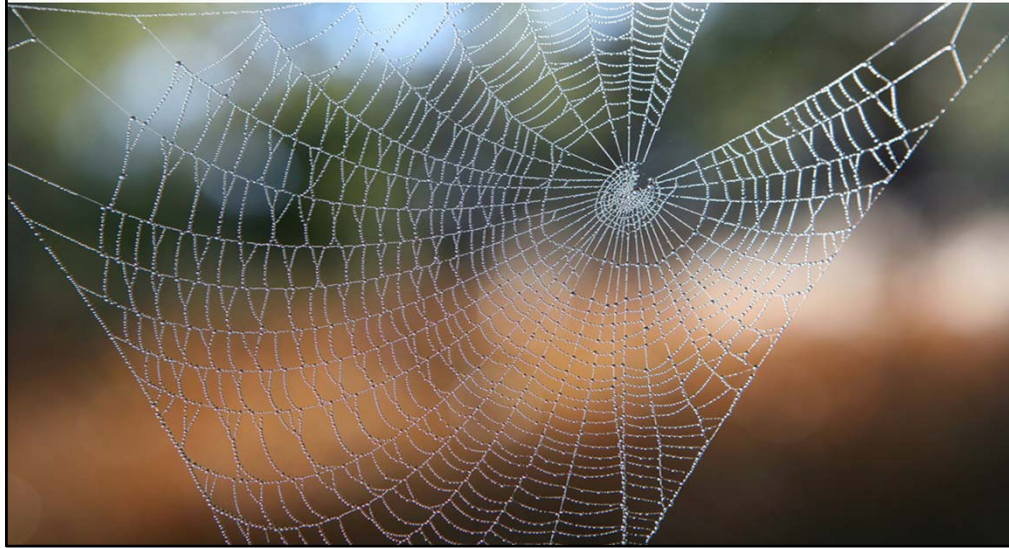


American Pragmatism
School of Philosophy





“God as Creative Event”



The Creative Event is the guiding thread that produces the feeling of connectedness between the present event and its connected (past and future) events.

The unifying element of the universe

(Wieman, *The Source of Human Good*, 18.)



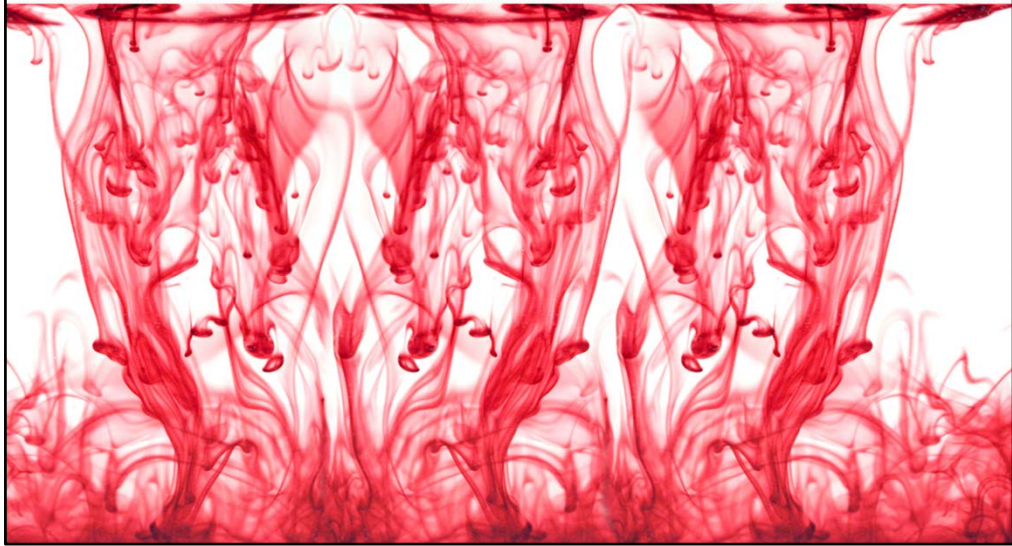
For the Creative Process to occur, it needs human freedom and agency, which are both beyond the control of the Creative Event, i.e. God.



Sacred Inspiration

God as the Creative Event is like a sacred inspiration toward goodness working in the lives of humans, encouraging us to deepen and widen our connections with the rest of creation.

Integration



Integration





The interesting stuff is happening during the flight, not the perching.

Maximum Diversity



Credit: Cary Fowler/Global Crop Diversity Trust

Wieman hypothesized that the universe was constructed on a principle of maximum diversity that calls for “a more richly inclusive whole.” Like Dewey, Wieman felt that humankind was at a critical point – it will either destroy our civilization with our new technologies, or be under the domination of a ruling elite unless we were able to find mutual solutions via creative interchange.

Southworth, 106.

Wieman, *The Source of Human Good*, 56.

Southworth, 27.

Openness





the church could be the answer: “Such an agency, pointing directly to the source of human good and directly to the duty of man to meet its demands with assured promise of growing good with these demands are met, can lead the march of humanity in this time of danger.” The church could provide the conditions that promote creative events in the world: more sensitivity, increased symbolic communication, more small-group associations and education for creativity. Wieman, *The Source of Human Good*, 292.

Wieman, *The Source of Human Good*, 289-291.

Behavioral
covenants work
like flight
attendants on
the plane

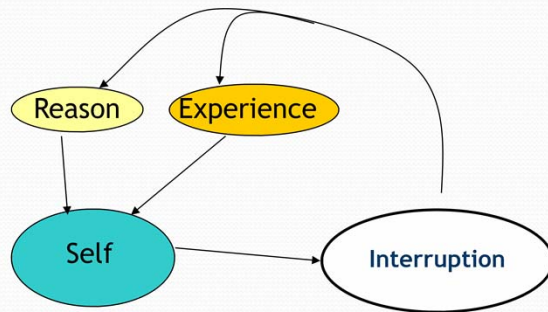


Aspirational Covenant

What Our Faith is
calling us to

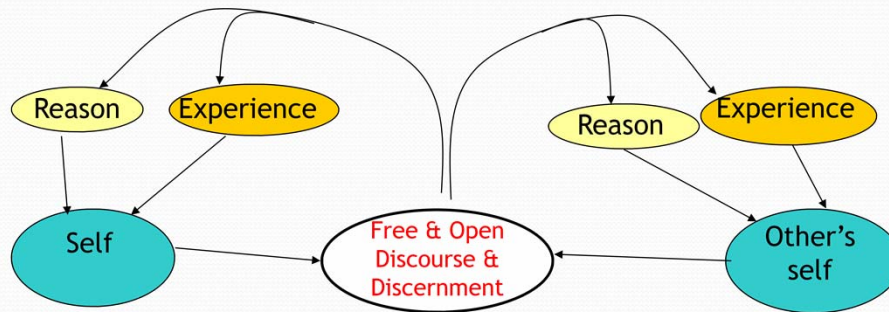


The Importance of Covenant



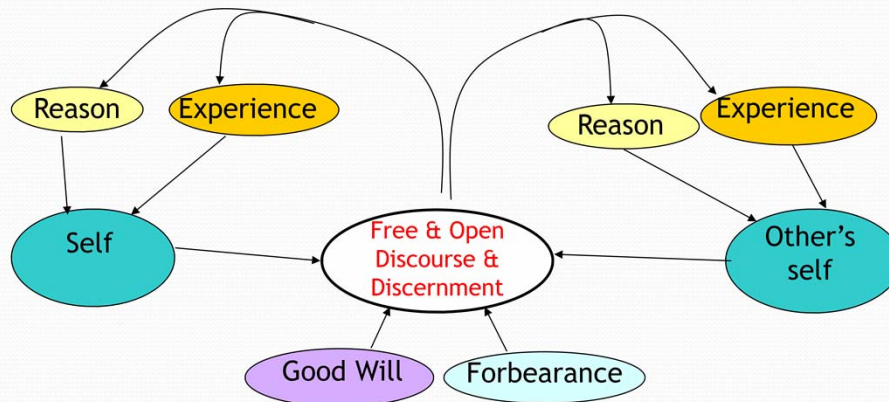
Rev. Renee Ruchotzke

The Importance of Covenant



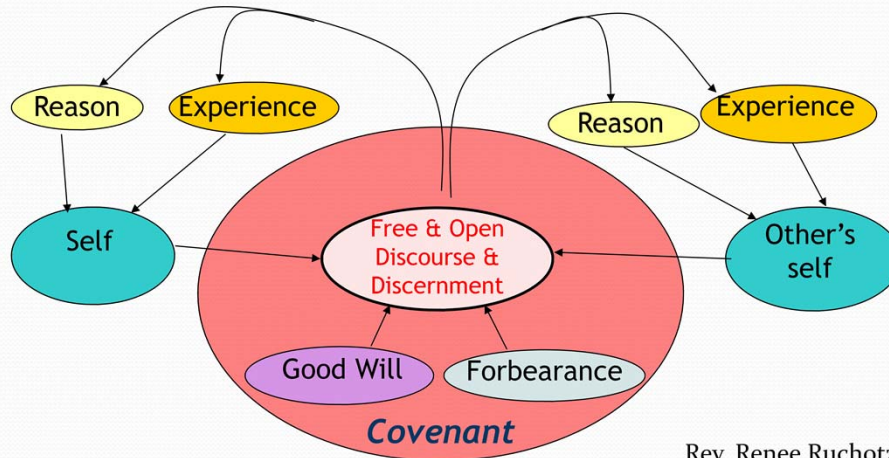
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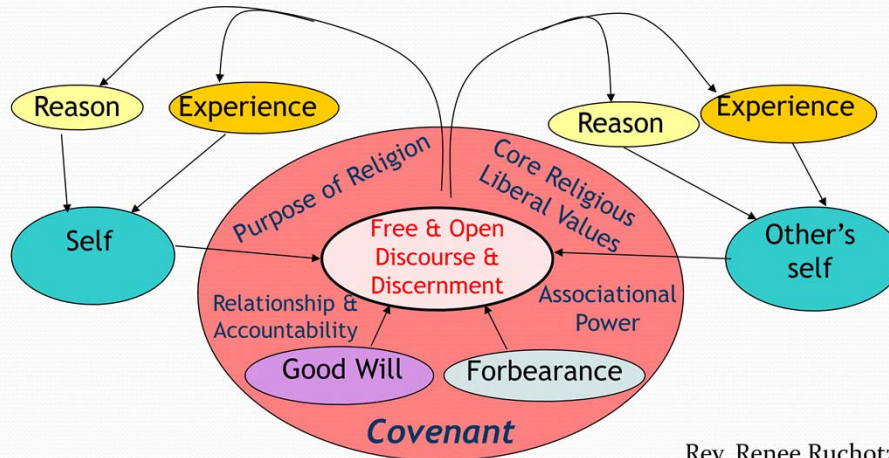
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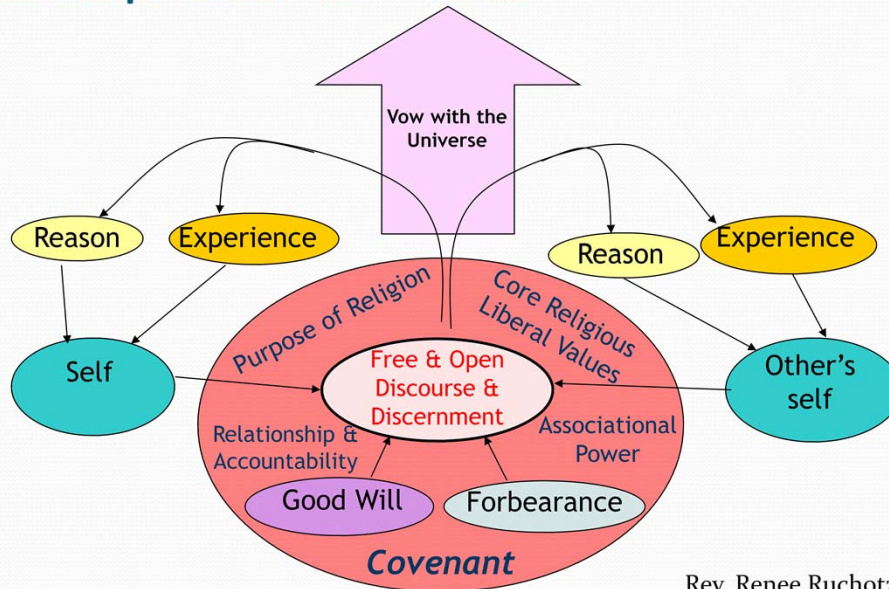
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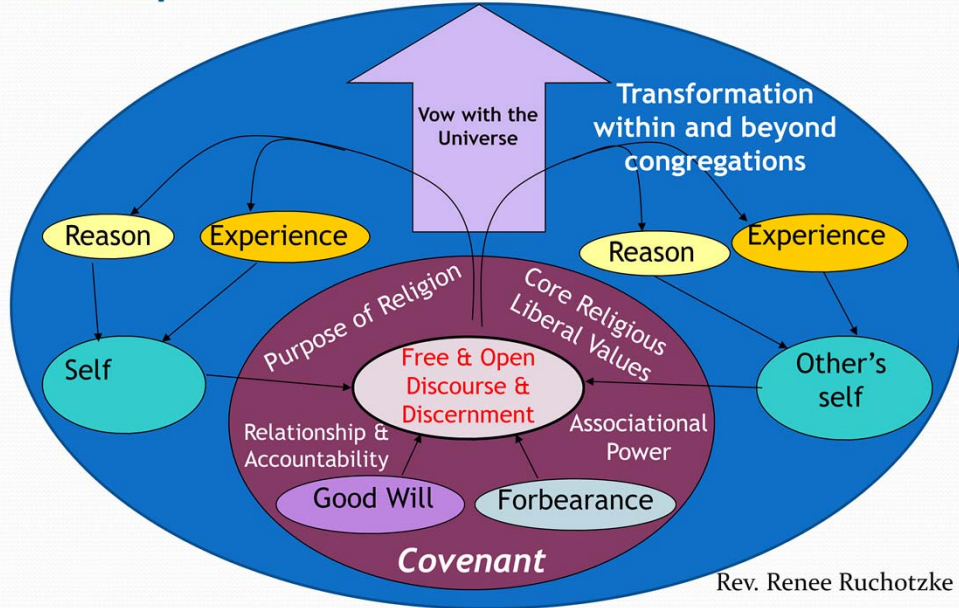
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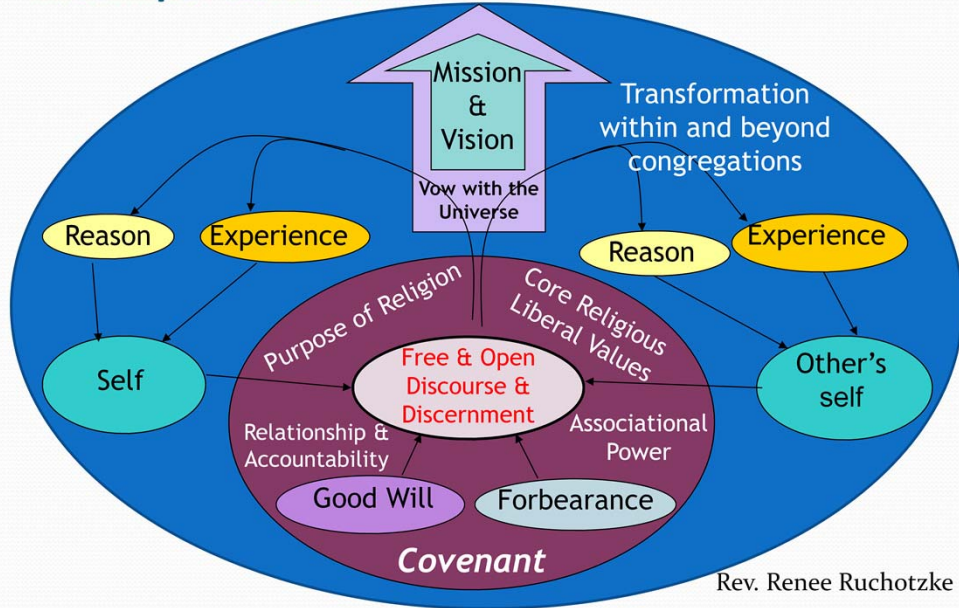


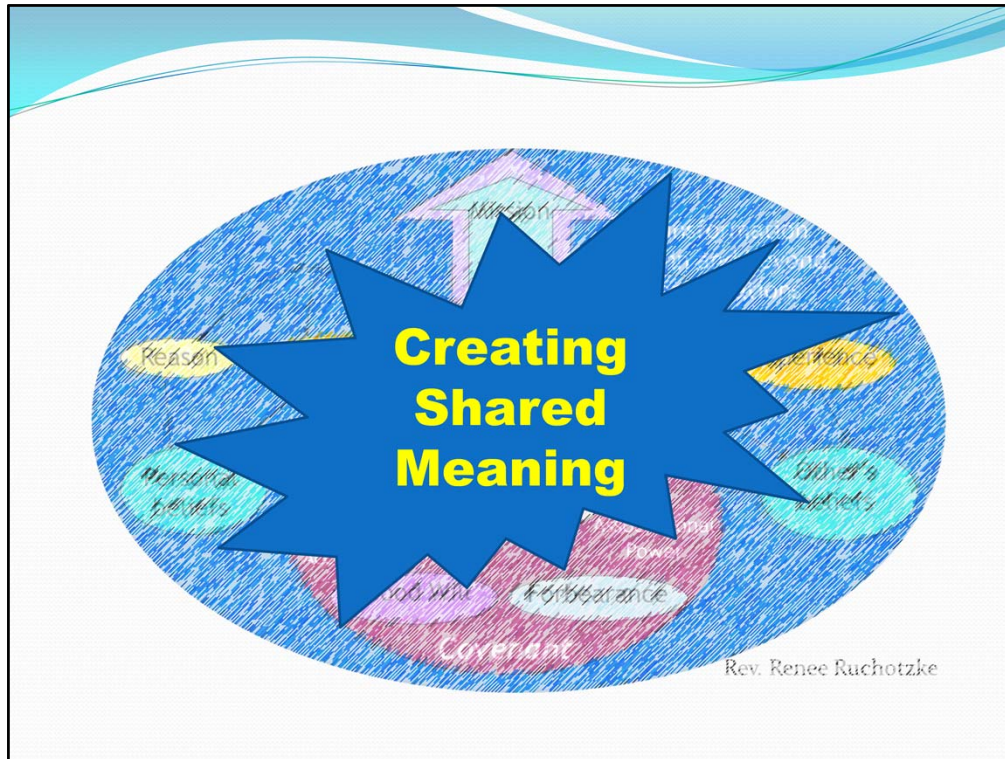
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The Importance of Covenant



The Importance of Covenant





Diversity = Enrichment



Credit: Cary Fowler/Global Crop Diversity Trust



5 Movements of Leading

- Initiation
- Following
- Integrate
- End
- Self

Noticing



The Importance of Covenant





What is Radical?

- Counter-cultural (I into we)
- Links spirit and science
- Shared Leadership (Power with rather than Power over)

Radical Relationships II: The Theology of Covenant



Thank you!