

PRAGMATIC THEOLOGY AND THE NATURAL SCIENCES AT THE INTERSECTION OF HUMAN INTERESTS

by Victor Anderson

Abstract. This paper elicits a twentieth-century American story that is deeply rooted in the legacy of American philosophical pragmatism, its impact on a particular school, and its reconstruction of American theology. The paper focuses on three generations of American theologians, and it centers on how these theologians reconstruct theology in light of the science of their day and how they maintain a true plurality of insights about human life in the world. The pragmatic theologian regards the creative exchange between theology and natural science as an opportunity for renewing our understanding of religious life and appreciating the various commitments of scientists and theologians as they meet at the juncture of human interests. The first voice is that of the early Chicago School of Theology represented by Shailer Mathews, Gerald Birney Smith, and George Burman Foster. The second voice is that of Henry Nelson Wieman, a second-generation theologian at Chicago. The final theologian discussed is James M. Gustafson, former Professor of Theological Ethics at Chicago.

Keywords: American pragmatism; Chicago School of Theology; human interests; pragmatic theology; theology and empirical sciences; vitalist theory of Christian theology.

THE VITALIST THEORY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chicago School of Theology was defined by Shailer Mathews, Gerald Birney Smith, and George Burman Foster. These theologians belonged to a monumental moment in the history of American theology. As academic theologians, each not only

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was committed to the reconstruction of Protestant scholastic theology but also sought to bring theological thinking in line with the new evolutionary science and impulses of the times. Each was also committed to theology's contribution toward the advancement of social sympathy in American democratic life. To be sure, the Chicago theology was an outgrowth of the influences of American pragmatism on religious thought. But it also converged with the golden age of Protestant liberalism, its eclipse of biblical narrative by the scientific method, a strong identification of the divine actions of God with the processes of nature, and an optimistic view of human and social progress.

At the forefront of these intellectual movements were the Chicago theologians. Just as the new evolutionary science of the nineteenth century constituted a secularization of philosophy, psychology, and history from their long-standing service to the queen of the sciences, theology, these Chicago theologians inaugurated a secularization of American theology. In the wake of their movement, "many of the classic structures of traditional theology, as well as post-Newtonian schemes of natural theology, were thus disrupted. The static yielded to the dynamic; stability to flux; history and becoming emerged as dominant categories of thought," says the American religious historian Sydney Ahlstrom (1972, 771).

Like American philosophers, many American theologians, especially those at Chicago, could not resist the seductions of the positivist vision of human creative intelligence advancing along an evolutionary journey. They could not resist the lure of human consciousness marching from a primitive scientific past predicated on the magic, myths, and fictions of magical religions. The Chicago theologians were intellectually intoxicated by the march of human creative intelligence conceptually moving from its reliance on a metaphysical chain of being grounded on the apriority of absolute Mind. They wanted a theology that would contribute to the advancement of learning, guiding human intelligence creatively, spiritually, and ethically through the age of positive science. Matthews, Smith, and Foster were committed to the languages of their scientific moment: experimentalism, observation, discovery, general laws of nature, and probability. And they sought a theology that would help advance Auguste Comte's and John Dewey's "Religion of Humanity," the well-ordered society, and a brave new world. Smith writes, "Today the theologian is facing a world of ideas and aspirations which owe their origin to scientific, social, and industrial activities which have altered the conditions of human living. [The theologian] must therefore consider the problems of religious belief in relation to all these comparatively new but intensely real factors of modern life, and so formulate Christian convictions that may enable men to carry their religion into all realms of life" (Smith 1916, 486). For the Chicago theologians, theology must be correlated with the social, scientific, and philosophical transitions of the times if it is to be a vital contributor to the

advancement of learning in the twentieth century. I have called the achievement of these theologians pragmatic theology.

The pragmatic theology of the Chicago School proposed a new direction and method of theological inquiry. Both the direction and the method were based on the monumental book by James Tufts, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, et al., *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903). The pragmatism of the Chicago philosophy department signaled the golden day of progressive social liberalism and the advancement of democratization in learning, and it set the agenda for inquiry in the human sciences under a naturalistic epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Just as *Studies in Logical Theory* had announced the independence of philosophical thinking from the burdens of rational-idealist epistemology, absolute metaphysics, and a priori logic, in 1916 the Chicago theologians produced their equally monumental work *Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion* (Smith 1916). It announced the independence of theology from Protestant scholasticism and apologetic theology. It reflects both the temper and the problems of the times to which pragmatic theology was an answer. In the preface, Smith writes,

That Christianity is today passing through one of the most significant transformations in its history is a fact apparent on every hand. The present generation has come into full consciousness of the New World, which has arisen as a result of the discoveries and inventions of the past century or more. New social and industrial conditions, new acquaintance with the non-Christian world of today, a more thoroughgoing knowledge of the vast stretches of human history, and a new science with its promise of a hitherto undreamed of mastery of the forces of the universe, have led to a new appreciation of the task of the Christian church. Thus the divinity school today is attempting to organize the education of ministers of the gospel and of religious teachers and missionaries with reference to many situations and problems which formerly did not exist. (Smith 1916, v)

Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion was a constructive response to the American theologian's changed situation. As John Dewey saw American pragmatism as the reconstruction of philosophy, pragmatic theology was also critical and reconstructive. It would bring theological method in line with the methodology of the natural sciences. Theology was conceived as research into the religious quality of life. It was not church dogmatics. The pragmatic theologians did not presume the truth of classical theological explanations of the nature of the world or of human experience. Instead, they argued that if theology is to be intelligible as a faculty of the new research university, its method of inquiry has to be congruent with criteria of intelligibility operative in other fields of inquiry, including the natural sciences. In this regard, Matthews says,

If the purpose of theology is held to be functional and if it is an ever-growing approximation to ultimate reality through the satisfaction it gives to the ever-developing and changing religious needs to different periods, then, theological method

becomes to a considerable extent empirical and pragmatic. Theological reconstruction will seek, first of all, not philosophical means of adapting a theological schema to our modern world, but will rather reproduce the actual procedures of theology in its creative epochs. (Mathews 1916, 76)

Foster suggested that theology must respond critically to the scientific languages that define the twentieth century, and “the great words are organism, organ, function, development, and such categories as belong consistently with these” (Foster 1909, 13). Smith concurred, saying that in light of the advancement of nineteenth-century evolutionary science, the theologians must “consider the problems of religious belief in relation to all these comparatively new but intensely real factors of modern life, and so formulate Christian convictions that may enable men to carry their religion into all realms of life” (1916, 486). At the intersection with natural science, the theologians exchanged the languages of orthodoxy, special revelation, divine authority, and dogma for the languages of growth and decay, change and flux, movement and impetus. The categories of natural science colonized and subjugated the theological rhetoric of creation ordinances, immortality, bodily resurrection, and miracles. Not even God was spared. God was remade in the languages of pragmatic theology. God symbolizes the creative, dynamic, vital interest, and impetus of the world and human experience. God is the process that brings all things toward their maximal fulfillment and flourishing. By means of every critical method and insight of the natural sciences, pragmatic theology researches the creative, novel, and vital functions and interests of human life and the religious quality of that life. These ideas contributed to the vitalist theory of religion, in which theology at its best seeks to correlate doctrine, beliefs, and religious ideals with the vital interest of human life in the world.

I do not want to give the impression that the relation of pragmatic theology to natural science was one-dimensional. Rather, it was diacritical. The pragmatic theologians were not uncritically capitulating theological inquiry to the technological and strategic rationality of the sciences. They were skeptical toward the overblown optimism associated with the advancement of science in the United States. For instance, Foster argued that “we no longer believe that science . . . is in a position to solve the supreme questions and riddles of human life” (1906, 14). And Ahlstrom indicates that the Chicago theologians “gave religious expression to the dynamic aspects of life and stood off the moral, social, and philosophical oversimplifications of scientific positivism” (1972, 782–84). Inasmuch as the pragmatic theologians employed the languages of the natural sciences in their attempts to understand the world, its processes and organization, they also sought in theological language to appreciate the world with its open-ended, mysterious, and numinous qualities. They sought the religious quality of life.

Foster understood the fundamental interest of theology as the recovery of the relevant human need for God and of God's meaning to human life. The pragmatism of his theology crystallized in a rather cryptic saying: "[God] was original before [God] was traditional." The task of theology is to make the concept of God original for the scientific age, just as it was for the church (Foster 1909, 56–57). For the Chicago pragmatic theologians, the fundamental question of pragmatic theology was whether, in its conversation with science, theology could empirically understand and appreciate the processes of religious development through which human pursuits, triumphs, fears, joys, and hopes are cosmically and universally fulfilled. For them, God became the symbol of "the universe in its ideal-achieving capacity" (Foster 1909, 109). Theology and natural science converged on nothing other than the fundamental and mutual interest in understanding and appreciating human life and the world itself as a plenitude of being and value.

THEOLOGY AND THE ORGANIZATION OF HUMAN INTERESTS

According to Henry Nelson Wieman, the intersection of theology and science occurs at the "Organization of Human Interests." Wieman was born in 1884 and died in 1975; he was a second-generation theologian of the Chicago Divinity School. He obtained his Ph.D. from Harvard, where he came under the influence of William James and John Dewey through his academic mentors William Hocking and Ralph Barton Perry. Under Hocking and Perry, he wrote his dissertation, *The Organization of Human Interests* ([1918] 1985). The theme that characterized Wieman's thought throughout his career was "All interests should be so organized as to function as one; and that one should be creative interest. Interest which is directed to developing a fuller consciousness of some object, purely for the sake of experiencing that object, and not for any ulterior end, is what we call creative interest" (Wieman [1918] 1985, 3). The satisfaction of human interest is what Wieman understood to be the fundamental concern of science and theology.

At the intersection of human interests, the natural sciences and theology meet. Each seeks to understand particular concerns, desires, wishes, objects valued, and the value of their individuated interest in relation to other human interests. Theology and natural science have a fundamental interest in (1) relating the various human interests to each other, (2) disclosing the organization of human interest, (3) understanding the coherence that this organization provides the social group (the manner in which it relates to the environment, indeed, to larger wholes), and (3) appreciating the structures that sustain human life as well as the processes that creatively move human communities toward human flourishing.

Wieman's conception of human interests includes "all the activities of a physical organism." They include the physiological activities of the human body that keep it healthy, striving, and thriving and psychological activities that structure and condition the possibility for creative intelligence. They entail thinking, feeling, perceiving, judging, and understanding. They include aesthetic activities and capacities that structure the possibility among human beings for admiration, love, appreciation, and even worship; they include human capacities for moral activity. Through such acts and capacities, human beings may creatively promote trust, loyalty, and social sympathy and project their plans for human betterment. And the organization of human interests includes the capacity of human communities to transcend the immediacy of their own contexts, experiences, and particular form of life. The creative impetus of this organization leads human beings to relate their own particular organizations as nations, people, tribes, and speakers of a language to larger wholes, to integrate the immediacy of their particular social interests into the possibility of cosmic understanding, appreciation, and fulfillment. This possibility of cosmic integration Wieman defined as the greatest good of creativity.

Wieman was not suggesting that only theology could contribute toward an understanding and appreciation of this cosmic possibility. Theology's historically received creeds about creation and its orders and its accounts of human nature and destiny are too limited, particular, and inadequate a basis for revealing the unity of human interests. For the natural environment, climate, rivers, soil, seaboard, mountains, the wider cosmic processes, and the relation of human life to others, to animals, plants, and mineral substances, all require that our various arts and sciences develop special interests in the structures, conditions, and particulars of the world. However, Wieman also proposed that each science and discipline may contribute, in the end, toward an enlargement of our understanding and appreciation of the world shared by all, the world shared by scientist and artist, philosopher and theologian, geneticist, physicist, geophysicist, zoologist, biologist, and botanist; by anthropologist, psychologist, historian, and other students of the humanities. All have a fundamental interest in understanding and appreciating the world. To this larger end, Wieman rejected the idea that our faculties of arts and science should be considered isolated islands of distinct, specialized, and unrelated knowledges.

In the end, he was a man of his times. He understood the fundamental interest of science and theology to each be committed to the encyclopedia of creative human intelligence. For this Chicago pragmatic theologian, the fundamental interest of science and the humanities is present in the original momentum of creative intelligence itself. That interest is the systemization of learning so that human fulfillment can be maximized. And this will be achieved, he says, "when all antagonisms of life become a system of mutually sustaining interests." Wieman was sure that this end could

come about if science and theology coordinated their particular interests ([1918] 1985, 6). The discovery, promotion, understanding, and appreciation of the organization of human interest involves the creative exchange between our various sciences and arts. Each science has its subject or object of critical scrutiny. Each has a fundamental interest in that object and considers it worthy of consideration. Each takes hold of an aspect of human life that is worthy of understanding and appreciation. Our various studies are reflections on pieces of the world. In the cooperative exchange between science and theology, together we discover, understand, and appreciate possibilities, limits, the contingencies of things, and the way all things contribute to the world.

Pragmatic theology and natural science meet in a “creative interchange” where the concerns of neither theology nor science are purely disinterested. Following his teacher Ralph Barton Perry, Wieman held that the various objects of scientific and theological inquiry have an intrinsic value that attracts the attention of scientists and theologians. This attentiveness and all that follows from it he called a creative interchange. In the interest of understanding and appreciating the organization of these creative interchanges, theology and the natural sciences cooperate toward understanding and appreciating the cosmic processes that integrate all particulars.

The greatest good is experienced when one is most fully committed to that creative interchange which integrates diverse activities into an expanding system, absorbing new activities when encountered, controlling conflicts and diversities in ways that are mutually sustaining, and endowing each participant activity with the value of the total expanding system. Even when this creativity is obstructed and beaten back we experience the greatest good to the measure we are fully committed to it, because the creativity carries the potentiality of all the great values ever to be experienced in human existence. This is religious commitment of the kind to be joined with science. (Wieman 1975, 271)

In Wieman’s pragmatic theology, the fundamental impetus that moves the creative interchange between theology and natural science is the union of human creative intelligence with God. The religious impetus is driven toward the unity of human interests in the creative process and structure that fulfill human flourishing. That structure and creative process in which all exist, all participate—not always without conflict, but always with interest—is God. Wieman says,

In seeking God, we seek to know what operates in human life to transform man as he cannot transform himself to save him from evil and lead him to the best that human life can ever attain, providing that man commits himself in faith to this reality and meets the other conditions demanded. . . . What actually operates in human life after this manner might conceivably be the ultimate reality on which all existence depends, sometimes called Being with a capital B. It might be the First Cause or the Highest Perfection. It might be omniscient, omnipotent and have any other attribute you wish. But it need not have any of these characteristics. (1975, 283)

If the religious end, union with God, is to be the interest of both science and theology, Wieman insisted that God must be available to both science and theology. God must grab the attention and interest of scientist and theologian. God must be open to their creative interchanges, if God is to be understood and appreciated as that which encompasses and integrates the particular interests of science and theology.

Wieman did not believe that science and theology must display complete agreement in their various ways of taking hold of the world. Speaking the same language, writing in the same prose, and eliciting the same vocabulary are not requirements of their creative interchange. But Wieman saw the cooperation of theology and science as lying in their mutual understanding of and appreciation for the organization of human interests as it processively and creatively structures and conditions human flourishing. For Wieman, God is simply given to all as the process that is creative of human good.

THEOLOGY AND THE EMPIRICAL SCIENCES

At the end of the twentieth century, James M. Gustafson carried on the conversation inaugurated by the early Chicago theologians and Wieman. According to Gustafson, if creative exchange is possible between theology and science, cooperation between these faculties will depend in no small measure on whether they are in some sense talking about the same thing, the same reality, even if in different languages. In a voice reminiscent of the early Chicago School, Gustafson regards religious life as an aspect of the organization of human interests. For him, religion exists within a complex nexus of natural and social relations. And inquiry into religious life requires a complex method of analysis. The theologian stands, therefore, between two possible worlds of explanation. One world is the world of natural and scientific explanation, and the other is the world of belief in God. The task of theology is to understand the world of religious life in a manner that has both eyes open on both worlds, the world of science and the world of theology.

Whatever claims are made for revelation, one cannot deny that human experience is an indispensable aspect both of how it is known and what is known through it. Whatever claims are made for reason, theological arguments for the existence of God are based upon human experiences of other persons, of nature, and of society. Both revelation and reason are human reflections on human experiences. (Gustafson 1981, 147–48)

The claims that theologians and scientists make about experience are also made within a whole web of relations. And in a language that rehearses Wieman's pragmatic theology, Gustafson calls experience "a process of interaction between persons, between persons and natural events, and between persons and historical events." How we come to terms with

the world, its realities, and its experiences involves creative exchange, interaction, and interdependence between persons and others in experience. The organization of human interests is continually being “assessed in communities of shared common objects of interests and common concepts, symbols, and theories” (Gustafson 1981, 115). Therefore, in the creative exchange between multiple communities of explanation, mutual understanding is gathered, differences in points of view are expressed, perspectives and interpretations from a broad range of gifted members are enlisted, and consciences are formed when informed reasoning is brought to clarity (Gustafson 1984, 316–17).

Gustafson is aware of the competitive character of the sciences and that scientists often make claims that are hostile to those made in religious communities (1981, 138). He is well aware that the sciences are themselves riddled with internal methodological debates over the appropriate criteria of intelligibility and knowledge (1974, 226–28). He therefore does not make the naive claim that scientific discourses offer the most adequate account of the world of human interests. Rather, like the Chicago pragmatic theologians and Wieman, Gustafson proposes that if our fundamental interest is to make intelligible the whole matrix of human life in the world, theology and science ought to cooperate toward that end.

Each of our discourses brings into focus different aspects of human life, the environment, the natural world, and their meaning and value. In their creative exchange, however, mutual understanding and appreciation for all aspects of the world constitute our fundamental interest. The sciences in their explanatory practices can check unreasonable metaphysical claims about the world supplied by theologians as they talk of God, human nature, and human destiny (Gustafson 1981, 331). But on normative questions about the value of human life, the natural sciences are limited by self-imposed constraints on their judgments and must interact and remain in dialogue with other communities of inquiry (Gustafson 1974, 222–26). Therefore Gustafson challenges religious thinkers to approach the sciences with both eyes open, for questions about the nature, limits, procedures, and criteria of intelligibility remain quite open in the sciences as in theology.

In the intersection of theology and science, I think that Gustafson is quite right to remind us that cynicism is out of order. Theology intends to offer a cognitively significant and meaningful account of the way things are. Therefore “what we say about God must be congruent in some way with what we know about human experience and its objects through the sciences,” says Gustafson (1981, 251–52). If theology is not to be reduced to the realm of sentiment, poetry, fiction, aesthetics, and ethics, if it proposes that the things theologians say about God, the world, human nature and destiny, and human interests are explanations as well as norms, then

theology must be open to the creative exchange of interpretations emergent in the intersection of theology and science.

Science and theology meet at the intersection of human interests. Both render the world and human life meaningful. Theology "is an effort to make sense out of a very broad range of human experiences, to find some meaning in them and for them that enables persons to live and to act in coherent ways" (Gustafson 1981, 158). Here, however, it must compete with social and biological interpretations of the world as well as with various theological interpretations of creation. Theology is practiced in the context of great relativity. If its claims are to be publicly intelligible beyond narrow parochial confines, theology may best be practiced as a dialogue partner not only among various faith traditions but also among various scientific communities.

Working between scientific explanation and religious life, theologians must choose from among the many interpretations of the world. Sometimes we are warranted in adjusting or even jettisoning beliefs that were once basic for religious thinking. But we do so in light of the best insights gained in dialogue with others intersecting with us at the organization of human interests. If there exists any method for mediating the differences of interpretation between theological and nontheological interpretations of the world, according to Gustafson, it will be pragmatic—that is, it will depend on the practical consequences that follow for the adherents of one view or another (Gustafson 1981, 158). In practical terms, our claims in theology and science are tested by (1) their adequacy to explain the broadest range of human experiences, (2) the kind of direction they give to human actions and character, and (3) the degree of coherence they provide for understanding the measure of human life in the presence of ultimate reality, the processes that bring life, all life, into being, sustaining it, directing its actions and patterns, and perhaps even bringing about its demise.

The ability of human beings to bring to fruition their plans, to satisfy their hopes and desires, to care for the earth that sustains them and others—this capacity for transcendence can be understood and appreciated theologically as an endowment from God, the creator and sustainer, the powerful other who establishes the possibilities for creative exchange directed toward the fulfillment of human interests. But there are limits to human action in the creative exchange. The power that establishes the possibility of transcendence also conditions limits. In the creative exchange, failure to understand and appreciate limits and finitude not only threatens the fulfillment of human interests but also threatens the world.

Notwithstanding the possibilities of transcendence in the creative exchange, insofar as God may be understood and appreciated as the ultimate process and power on which life is sustained and limited, God may not have the survival of human beings as an ultimate end. Therefore, "Human purposes and human conduct have to be evaluated not simply on the basis

of considerations derived from reflection about what is good for [humanity]. Rather, reflection is needed on how human life is to be related to a moral ordering objective of our species. It may be that the task of ethics is to discern the will of God—a will larger and more comprehensive than an intention for the salvation and well being of our species, and certainly of individual members of our species” (Gustafson 1981, 112–13).

PRAGMATIC THEOLOGY

In *Pragmatic Theology* (Anderson 1998), I returned to the tradition I have been describing. In my own journey to find a theological way of understanding and appreciating the intersection of science and theology, I met these theologians at the intersection of human interests. My aim in the book was to present pragmatic theology as a viable theological and moral interpretation of religious life and its public significance. Like the pragmatic theologians before me, I recognize that the adequacy of my proposal depends on there being a basic agreement among philosophical pragmatists, academic theologians, and the sciences about the value of human life in a world that is characterized by open-ended processes, processes that shape possibilities for both transcendence and finitude. Scientists and theologians live among shared realities, in a common world, and participate in a shared collective life. Pragmatic theology provides a lens through which to conceive these human interests. It is a particular way of understanding and appreciating the world in its concrete actuality and transcendent potentiality. The world and its processes are contingently related. And world processes are open to the novelties arising from the transcendent potentials of reality.

Pragmatic theology sees reality not as fixed or closed but rather as fluid, dynamic, and processive. Reality exhibits the possibilities of tragedy and irony in human experience. Pragmatic theology is a way of taking hold of the world in the paradoxical, rhythmic processes that make for life and death, emergent galaxies and collapsing universes, life formation and deformation. It maintains a moderate optimism about human creative activity, for it is a way of coming to terms with the precarious character of life. Yet I do not regard fatalism about human life as a disposition that is consistent with pragmatic theology, and cynicism is equally out of order. With Robert Corrington, a philosopher at Drew University, I accept both finitude and transcendence as regulative ideas in the interpretation of human existence and the world. Corrington says:

Nothing is more basic to the human process than the perennial tension between finitude and transcendence. These two dimensions encompass all aspects of experience and ideation, and govern the various ways in which persons encounter themselves and their world. Finitude is most sharply manifest in the boundary situations that limit and alter the outward movement of the self. . . . Transcendence is

always operative within and against finitude and cannot cancel or annul the various traits of our finite existence. (Corrington 1992, 40; emphasis added)

Pragmatic theology recognizes that there are limits to human capacities for altering environmental conditions, conditions that paradoxically sustain life while often threatening human flourishing. There are limits to persons' capacities for establishing a harmonious coexistence with other species and among members of their own species. I do not think, however, that tragedy and irony are total. For even Nietzsche understood tragedy as giving way to the comedic character of life, "a robust pessimism" disclosed in laughter.

As they meet at the intersection of human interests, theology and science attempt not only to come to terms with those processes and patterns of life that form rather predictable, expected, and routine constellations of meaning and value but also to understand and appreciate the serendipitous quality of life. Pragmatic theology and natural science together seek to take hold of the powers that bring persons into being, that limit their actions, and that confront them with the possibility of closure and death. The possibility of transcendence can be theologically understood, interpreted, and appreciated as a moment of natural grace whereby human beings do not live out their lives as if they were absolutely fated and bound by historical circumstances and nature's determinacy.

Theology and science together provide interpretations of human life, human interests, and the boundary conditions of finitude and transcendence. Recognition of such boundary conditions neither warrants fatalistic and cynical outlooks on life nor requires indifference toward human cooperative endeavors to make human lives morally livable. While acknowledging the precariousness of life and human finitude, persons are warranted in maintaining hope against destructive closures, openness toward a wider vision of human potential, expectation that the creative processes of life will lead toward moral fulfillment, and recognition that the realization of human flourishing might well be a sign of divine grace.

Developing such a religious interpretation led me to the tradition of pragmatic theology and natural science as they intersect at the juncture of human interests. As each discipline seeks to satisfy the basic question of its relevance to human interests, the various vocabularies need not be the same. They may indeed intend different answers to questions of meaning and value. However, if we are open to comparison, there must be criteria on which we base our agreement. I have proposed that such a basis can be established if we stipulate that the adequacy of our various descriptions and redescriptions of human action and purposes in the world be based on the contributions that our interpretations make to the social, moral, and cognitive fulfillment of human life and the processes of the world.

Pragmatic theology regards faith and hope as genuine tools to be used against the powers that threaten human life and the world. There is a

collective message to be read in the writings of the American theologians from the early Chicago School, Wieman, and Gustafson. The message is that human fulfillment and transcendence can be grasped theologically when human creative intelligence is open to experiencing ever-widening effects of creativity and new transformations of experience that come from beyond the confines of one's own localized community of self-interest. Greater human fulfillment and transcendence can be understood and appreciated when our human interests are sympathetically instantiated in forms of community, and when creative exchange arises through free, open, and creative dialogue between faith and science as they meet at the intersection of human interests.

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