

## Welcome

Welcome to this open, uncluttered, unhasty space. Here, my published work finds a home, as does everything you need to know about The Wisdom Project, a multi-aspected, nonpartisan initiative that delves into many areas. There's more, too, ranging from theology to politics to the arts to book reviews..., well pretty much wherever I have roamed or whatever I have been commissioned to write. You will also find in-depth interviews with fascinating people, and a safe pace for conversation.

I have also included info about Openings, a quarterly, hard-copy-only "little magazine" that I began publishing in 1998. It has an international readership but is currently on sabbatical. Most of the interviews on this site and several of the articles were originally published in Openings.

### **Thinking of wisdom]**

My area is the historic wisdom tradition of the old-world Middle East and its relevance for what today we tend to call secular life. The wisdom literature of the Bible is especially important for this because it only rarely mentions religious activities. Instead, it focuses on issues of everyday life and our work "in the world," as people tend to say. A wisdom-based way of reasoning for our life and work in the world has been a serious interest of mine for a long time, and for more than twenty years it has been informing much of the writing and teaching I have done in the US and the UK. In the historic wisdom literature we can find many "lost" ideas, principles, and norms for pretty much all of modern life ? from finance to architecture, from science to education, from the arts to foreign affairs. Its potential just needs rediscovering and applying. This article, an [Introduction to the Wisdom Tradition](#), brings fresh eyes to the subject and will give you some clues to that potential.

### **The Wisdom Project]**

Much of this site is devoted to the current incarnation of [The Wisdom Project](#), which is a multi-aspected initiative (research, writing, teaching, special papers, roundtables, consulting, books, and so on). The Project has two main purposes. One is to comment on the thinking that drives contemporary relations and foreign policy decision making between the United States and Middle East states. The other is to look at how the agency of wisdom offers an alternative to rigid ideological reasoning and other impasses in U.S. - Middle East relations, especially negotiating what I call their secular/religious intersection.

I believe that the long-neglected wisdom tradition offers national leaders, secretaries of state, foreign ministers, ambassadors, diplomats, negotiators, policy analysts, and others in the field, including religious leaders, a rich resource for building more cooperative relations between peoples who are different.

(Like my current work, previous incarnations of The Wisdom Project advanced wisdom-based approaches in environments where human diversity is normative, cooperation is essential, and human flourishing desired, such as in education, social relations, the business world, environmental responsibility, the arts, communication, and intercultural dialogue. Such initiatives took place mainly in England and America, where I taught and wrote about them, prior to focusing on the book about wisdom-based U.S.-Middle East relations.)

### **International Relations]**

People who work outside the field of international affairs also read my work, but it is often the case that, when addressing an event or a topic, the material assumes a knowledge about how international relations work, which some readers may not have. So from time to time I put articles on this site about "understanding international relations and foreign policy," especially between the United States and Middle East states.

My hope is that these articles will make this world-changing field accessible to people who are busy, perhaps with their studies, their careers, or their families, and do not have time (rightly so) to spend digging behind the scenes for answers, but who would nevertheless like to be more more well-informed. These articles try to fill in as many blanks as possible and to give readers a handle on the complexity and multi-dimensionality of international relations, such as why certain foreign policies are chosen instead of others, or why leaders make the decisions they do.

I also include these introductory articles on international events, issues, policies, and political actors because they act as a revealing contrast to the wisdom-based, alternative approach to U.S.-Middle East relations that is taken by The Wisdom Project and the new book I am writing. (Some of the material in this series of introductory articles has been adapted from chapters in the new book.)