

The Wisdom Project

Since 2002, The Wisdom Project has focused on developing wisdom-based Christian ? Muslim and U. S. ? Middle East relations. These two areas (the domestic and the international) hugely influence each other, either to pull us together for common good or to pit us against one another in damaged, disordered, or broken relations, if not in violence, war, or rumors of war. Most people don't want this, but they don't know how to change it. The Wisdom Project is a multi-aspected initiative (research, articles, teaching, special papers, roundtables, consulting, and books) that is steadily working for change by offering an alternative way of reasoning to rigid ideological analysis and decision making.

The Project has two main purposes. One is to explore and analyze what drives damaged, disordered, and broken relations between Christians and Muslims and the United States and Middle East states. The other is to look at how the agency of wisdom offers an alternative means for public flourishing in those contexts, especially when negotiating the so-called secular/religious intersection. The long-neglected wisdom tradition offers Christian, Muslim, and Jewish leaders, as well as political leaders, secretaries of state, foreign ministers, diplomats, negotiators, mediators, policy analysts, and others a rich resource for building more cooperative relations among peoples who are different.

But my current work had its seeds planted a long time ago. The subject of wisdom itself has occupied my mind and much of my previous work for years. Strangely, it even began to capture my imagination long before I recognized it for what it is -- a vital agency for human flourishing among people who are different. That got me stumbling into the early-1980s and desperate for a tutor. I found him in British philosopher and theologian John Peck, who soon read me like book and explained why I'd benefit from exploring the historic wisdom literature. And so I set out. Well, I'd done any number of "Bible studies" up to this point, and I assumed that this would be "another one of those six month things." No way! The agency of wisdom is essential for advancing initiatives in which human diversity is normative, cooperation essential, and human flourishing is desired. This was no Bible study. It was a way of life. Slowly I began to understand the potential that a wisdom-based way reasoning held for our contemporary world.

The agency of wisdom is essential for advancing initiatives in which human diversity is normative, cooperation essential, and human flourishing is desired. The key to this, I saw, was that, on the one hand, we had to do a lot of unlearning and, on the other hand, we had to learn wisdom together with others, including with others who were not like us. If there was such a thing as "common grace," as the Christian faith teaches, then God had given gifts of insight to all human beings, and we could all learn wisdom from one another.

Knowing this strongly compelled me to keep going, and I have been trying to incorporate what I understand about the agency of wisdom into my life and work ever since. By the early-1990s, I was working with individuals and groups in the U.S. and the U.K. to advance wisdom-based approaches in areas of education, the business world, family and social life, environmental stewardship, government responsibility, and especially the arts, communication, and inter-religious engagement. It was rewarding and led quite naturally to the major book [Uncommon Sense](#): God's Wisdom for Our Complex and Changing World (SPCK, 2001) that I co-authored with British philosopher and theologian John Peck, former principal and senior tutor of College House (Cambridge, England) and a co-founder of the inimitable [Greenbelt Festival](#).

For some assumptions and background to The Wisdom Project, I have included, exclusive to this site, a fairly comprehensive article about the historic wisdom tradition and biblical wisdom literature, here: [The Wisdom Tradition - See With New Eyes](#). You will find much about the agency of wisdom there. Some discoveries may surprise you, for the article does not cover the usual ground. Instead, it presents a "lost" way of reasoning that has tremendous potential today in our work at cooperative and peaceable relations in pluralist contexts, if not human flourishing. And in [Wisdom Actors, part 1](#) and [Wisdom Actors, part 2](#), you will deeper insight into the wisdom tradition and its literature, with suggested applications for today.

Finally, there's a [blurb about the book](#) I am writing on wisdom-based intercultural Christian ? Muslim and international U. S. ? Muslim Middle East relations.

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