

Wisdom or War?

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by Charles Strohmer

Wisdom or War? is the working title of the book I'm writing about wisdom-based international relations between the United States and Muslim Middle East states, including the significance of domestic relations between Christians and Muslims on those international relations.

Wisdom is an agency of public cooperation, peace, and even human flourishing amid pluralist situations. If you want to know what has been missing in relations between Christians and Muslims in America and between the United States and the Muslim Middle East, it is wisdom.

Recent years have seen ideological coercion, sectarian interests, and misplaced religious and political zealotry dominate our public squares and halls of power, defining conversations, enacting agendas, and aggravating divisions. Instead of seeking wisdom to pull together for mutual good, we have absorbed and rely on ideological views that have taught us how to pit ourselves against one another. The result is damaged, disordered, and broken relations, if not violence, wars, and rumors of war. Most people don't want this, but they don't know how to change it.

Wisdom or War?, simply put, is a book about wisdom as an agency, or means, for changing these domestic and foreign relation into more cooperative and peaceable, if not flourishing, ones. In this regard, the agency of wisdom is especially vital for more peaceably negotiating of the rough secular/religious intersection of U.S. ? Muslim Mideast relations.

Background for the book]

My area is [the historic wisdom tradition](#) of the old world Middle East and particularly the biblical wisdom literature, with its chiefly ?secular? interests and concerns. Over the years much of my writing and teaching has been in the U.S. and the U.K. to help individuals and groups understand how the ideas, principles, and norms of the wisdom tradition can help them develop wisdom-based approaches to environs today where human diversity is normative, cooperation essential, and human flourishing desired ? such as in education, social life, the business community, environmental responsibility, and especially the arts, communication, and religious engagement in the public square.

Wisdom or War? is a natural outgrowth of this past work. The book is the current main ambition of [The Wisdom Project](#), which is a multi-aspected, nonpartisan, initiative that seeks through articles, talks, special papers, roundtables, and other means to educate individuals and groups to understand and develop wisdom-based approaches to intercultural and international relations.

The agency of wisdom energizes us to focus and build on human mutuality. When people who differ sit down honestly and openly to seek wisdom together, a process is set in motion for easing tensions, defusing adversarial relations, and reaching justly cooperative and peaceable agreements. It's hard work, but it works. The parties participate in a wisdom-based way of reasoning for constructing intercultural and international relations. It is a much needed alternative to sitting round the table trying to reach agreements based on rigid ideological orientations, which tend to be based on contradictory, sectarian interests rather than on human mutuality.