

Summary

The meeting was an interfaith discussion on the topic of wisdom, facilitated by David Griffith. Participants introduced themselves and shared their backgrounds, including Anju (Hindu), Matthew (Anglican), Chris (Pagan), Andrew (Baha'i), Phil (Christian), and Joy (Quaker), Professor David (Anglican). Matthew presented on wisdom in the Christian tradition, focusing on its roots in the Old Testament and its embodiment in Jesus Christ. Joy spoke about the Quaker perspective, emphasizing the divine spark within each person and the communal search for wisdom during silent worship. Andrew shared a passage from the Baha'i Faith about striving for unity reflected in service. The discussion explored commonalities across traditions, such as the feminine aspect of wisdom, with references to figures like Sophia and Julian of Norwich. Participants also touched on the challenges of applying wisdom in modern contexts, including the rise of AI and existential threats. The conversation highlighted the value of wisdom as a unifying concept across different faiths.

Christian Wisdom Tradition Presentation

The meeting began with Matthew's presentation on "Wisdom in the Christian Tradition," exploring the concept of wisdom in the Old Testament, its practical application, and the embodiment of wisdom in Jesus Christ. The discussion highlighted the distinction between worldly wisdom and God's revealed wisdom, emphasizing the importance of wisdom for all Christian believers.

Quaker Spirituality and Divine Wisdom

Joy explained the Quaker approach to wisdom and spirituality, describing how Quakers believe in "that of God in everyone" and seek divine wisdom through silent worship. She explained that Quakers meet in silence to connect with their inner divine spark, where insights and wisdom may be shared with the group. Anju connected these concepts to the Bhagavad Gita of Hinduism, noting similarities in the ideas of divine light within and selfless compassion.

Baha'i Wisdom and Unity

Andrew read a passage from a Baha'i text written by Baha'u'llah in 1873 or 1874, emphasizing themes of unity, service, and wisdom. The text urged people to be examples of virtue, avoid division, and focus on love and justice.

Female aspects

Chris, then discussed a painting of Sophia as Wisdom in the Marketplace of Norwich by Juliet Winhurst and highlighted Mother Julian of Norwich's writings about God as both mother and father, highlighting the feminine aspect of wisdom in Abrahamic traditions. Andrew raised questions about how humans perceive their essential selves and the connection between divine attributes and gender. Chris shared insights about the Shekinah and Julian of Norwich's wisdom-oriented perspective on God as both mother and father, while Andrew suggested that divine wisdom comes from God but is filtered through human experience and limitations.

Christian Wisdom and Scientific Interpretation

David Griffith discussed the concept of wisdom in Christianity, explaining how it provides a more helpful approach than literal interpretations of creation accounts when considering scientific understanding of the world. He noted that wisdom is presented in the Bible as the first thing God created before the world, suggesting that the order and patterns found in nature reflect divine wisdom. Joy questioned whether ancient writers intended their texts to be taken literally or as metaphors, suggesting that the feminine representation of wisdom in Proverbs might be a symbolic way to represent the union of God's divinity rather than a literal description.

Cross-Faith Wisdom and Global Challenges today

Phil emphasized the importance of concise insight and wisdom in practical situations, while Chris raised concerns about how AI systems might suppress wisdom rather than enhance it. The discussion touched on existential threats throughout history, including nuclear threats and climate change, with participants reflecting on how wisdom applies to current global challenges. The conversation ended with agreement that wisdom represents common ground across different faith traditions, with examples shared of how spiritual teachings from various traditions can complement each other.