

## **ENVISIONING A BETTER WORLD THROUGH SCIENCE, POLITICS, AND RELIGION**

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**T**he challenges of our world require fundamental reflection on human knowledge, power, and politics. Climate change, overpopulation, pollution, geopolitical insecurity, international terrorism, they all relate to our common endeavor to rule and control the world rather than take responsibility for our place in it. All these problems follow from an anthropocentric and ethnocentric perspectives as opposed to more holistic worldviews. Our era has even been called the ‘anthropocene’ as it is the first geological era where the earth itself is profoundly affected by human presence and activity.

If we want to change this, we must reconsider our views of knowledge, power, and politics. In the development of science, knowledge and power were intrinsically related. The positivist model of science took knowledge as the insight into how things work in order to be able to influence that. This has improved human life and reduced many risks and problems. It has also created new problems (risk society). Politics served to balance the interests (and enhance the interests of the own group).

What we need to add is wisdom how to use our knowledge and power. In envisioning a better world that brings peace, justice, and sustainability for all, we need a type of politics that is based on ideals and visions, not just power and interests. Here religion and politics become parallel world of thought as both envision a better world. We can learn from religious thought (Christian and Islamic) the golden virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, courage, and apply these to our academic and political work.