

The Chester Ronning  
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The Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

## Newsletter

Editor  
Dittmar Mündel

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Debbie Smeaton

Photography  
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*From the Director's Desk...*

### Walking Straight Street in Damascus

In March my good colleague Professor Ibrahim Abu-Rabi' included me in an invitation from Dr. Abdul Fattah al-Bizem, the Mufti of Damascus, and Shaykh Hussam al-Din Farfour, the Vice Rector of Al-Fatih Islamic Institute and one of Syria's eminent scholars, to come to the land of Cham, the land of messengers and prophets, to Syria. The purpose was to engage numerous Muslim scholars and members of the Syrian government in conversations on Islam and the West. The invitation was the result of our thinking together about Islam and the various ways Muslims seek to engage the modern world. From April 22<sup>nd</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup> we were in Syria along with a few colleagues and friends from Canada and the United States. From our first steps on Syrian soil to our departure we were hosted in a way rare in my experience. The richness of desert hospitality we read about in ancient texts surrounded us. We had an opportunity to listen to some seventy scholars, men and women, in the conference planned by the Al-Fatih Islamic Institute and held at their location in central Damascus and also at the National Library of Syria and the University of Damascus.

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In the traditional home of Shaykh Farfour we were treated to a number of short talks throughout an evening that could have come out of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, each talk elevated by the Shaykh's breaking into a Sufi song joined by five marvellous musicians on drum and tambourine, a chant that drives deep into the heart and raises one into the precincts of praise. Both the reflections and the chant were so deeply satisfying that our hunger was unnoticed until we were ushered to a laden table for dinner just after midnight.

Through all of these remarkable days there was a seriousness that made a demand on both the mind and the heart. In the dailyness of life one glimpsed the compelling ways Islamic tradition has shaped the ancient city of Damascus and how it continues to order time. You are never out of sight of a few mosques and when the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer five times a day thousands of little shops in the souks shutter quickly and the proprietors rush off to return in fifteen minutes, having bowed their heads and bent their knees and turned their face toward Mecca and toward the Divine.

*Cont'd on Page 2*



*The immense precinct of the Temple of Jupiter in Damascus was chosen as the site of the Christian church of St John the Baptist in the late fourth century. When Damascus became part of the Islamic Caliphate in 638, the east end of the church was adapted for Muslim worship and the structure was shared by Christians and Muslims for almost seven decades. The Umayyad Caliph Al-Hisham took over the entire building in 705 and transformed it into the most magnificent mosque the Islamic world had yet seen.*

*Continued from Page 1*

The awful ways of international politics, both recently and over the last century, marked most of the scholars' presentations. We were invited to think in a sustained way about the struggle of the Palestinian people, of whom a million or so make their home in Syria, about Iraqi refugees, and about the somewhat older plight of the Armenians, many whom also sought refuge in Syria. The question of the capacity of Islam for the modern world came together with the question of the modern West's capacity for local and regional culture and for a religious tradition that informs so much of daily life and refuses to be privatized. We will be examining these compelling questions in this year's offerings at the Ronning Centre.

A number of these questions will be considered in "Christianity, Islam and Modernity: Nostalgia for the Absolute and the Dream of Freedom", a course I am teaching with Dittmar Mündel and to which the public is invited. We are pleased to host the Mufti of Damascus and Shaykh Farfour along with a number of other Muslim scholars listed in the program. We are also pleased to have the Augustana Distinguished Lectures given by F. Volker Greifenhagen of Luther College, University of Regina. These as well as many other lectures will shape the Fall season at the Ronning Centre. I hope you will be able to join us for many of the occasions when we gather to think together.

— David J. Goa

*Dr Abdul Fattah al-Bizem*  
*Mufti of Damascus*



*Shaykh Hussam al-Din Farfour, Vice*  
*Rector of Al-Fatih Islamic Institute*



## TOP ISLAMIC SCHOLARS TO SPEAK AT RONNING CONSULTATIONS

Two of Islam's most eminent religious scholars will visit the Chester Ronning Centre and address Ronning Consultations in Camrose and Edmonton in October. H.H. Shaykh Dr Abdulfattah al-Bizem is the Mufti of Damascus – the highest religious authority in the city – and Rector of the Al-Fatih Islamic Institute there. He has made a special study of Islamic mysticism. H.H. Shaykh Dr Hussam el-Deen Farfour is Vice-Rector of the same Institute and Lecturer at the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. His fields of interest include Islamic theology and Arabic literature.

Both hold doctorates from Al Azhar University in Cairo. Founded in AH 365/AD 975 (and in many ways a model for universities subsequently founded in Christendom such as Oxford and Cambridge), Al Azhar is often considered to be the leading university in Islamic studies at the present time.

The Al-Fatih Islamic Institute was founded in AH 1375/AD 1956 by Shaykh Muhammad Saleh Farfour (Dr Hussam Farfour's father). Its graduate studies soon attracted imams and religious scholars not only from Syria but from Turkey, Jordan, and elsewhere in the Islamic world. Undergraduate programs in Islamic jurisprudence and its foundations, Arabic language and literature, and the sciences of the Qur'an and the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad) were added in AH 1391/AD 1971. Today the curriculum has been broadened to include studies in European languages and literatures, so that graduates of the Institute are well qualified to represent Islam in many parts of the world. The Institute opened its doors to women in AH 1385/AD 1965.

The Institute's stated goals include not only the establishment of a sound understanding and practice of Islam among Muslims but also, in relation to other peoples, "to instil the noble values and manners for which Islam calls, and to establish belief in all the previous revealed Messages, in order to spread tolerance, brotherhood, mercy, and justice among people all over the world". It is therefore not surprising that Dr al-Bizem and Dr Farfour have in recent times visited Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, USA and York St John University in England. While they are in Alberta they will be able to explore the possibilities for student exchanges between Damascus and Edmonton.

In April and May of this year a party of Albertan clergy, scholars, and students had the opportunity to travel to Damascus and hold discussions with many students and faculty at the al-Fatih Institute, enjoying the abundant hospitality of Shaykh Farfour, as well as – since he is also a man of musical talents – his rendition of Sufi mystical songs. We may hope for repeat performances of these in October.

Ali Maher R. Shawwa, Muslim chaplain at the University Hospital in Edmonton, says of the scholars' visit, "I hope [it] will open a new window in the relationship between the Middle East and the New World, i.e. Canada, and give a better understanding of Islam, showing the reality of it. This opportunity may not be repeated so I welcome them and urge every one to come and attend."

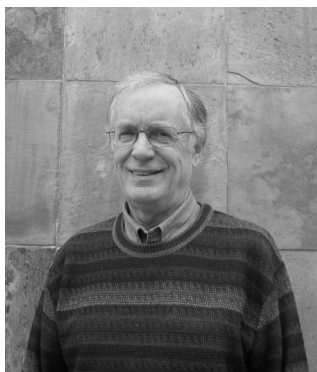
-Nicholas Wickenden

Oct. 21-22 in Camrose and Edmonton  
 See the "Calendar of Events" in this Newsletter



Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS



2008 Augustana Distinguished Visiting Fellow  
Lectures—Booklet

### **Ethical Choices in a Pluralistic World**

*Roger Hutchinson*  
(\$15.00 + GST)

2008 Ronning Forum—Booklet  
**Jesus for President**  
**Reclaiming Culture for Christ**

Two Lectures  
*Molly Worthen*

2008 Consultation—MP3 CD  
**The Trumpet's Uncertain Sound:**  
**War and the United Church of Canada**  
*Tom Faulkner*

2008 Seminar—MP3 CD  
**God and Evolution:**  
**Conversations with the Christian Tradition**  
*Craig Wentland*

2007 Augustana Distinguished Lectures—  
Booklet or MP3 CD

### **New Directions in Human Rights**

(Three lectures)  
*Clinton Curle*

2007 Consultations—one MP3 CD each  
**Can You Be a Christian Apart from the Church?**

*Brian Krushel*

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**Waiting for St. Benedict: Liturgy, Memory,**  
**and the Re-Imagination of Community**  
**in an Era of Globalization**

*Mark Charlton*

2007 Ronning Forum—MP3 CD  
**Living Together with Disagreement:**  
**Pluralism, the Secular, and the**  
**Fair Treatment of Beliefs in Canada Today**

*Iain Benson*

2007 Study Circle—MP3 CD  
**The Bible:**  
**From Weapon to Life-Giving Word**  
**Parts I and II**

*David Goa and Dittmar Mündel*

*A listing of past publications that are  
available for purchase is on page 14*

*Booklets or CDs are available for \$12.00 + GST unless otherwise marked.  
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## Muslim-Christian Relations will be Theme of Augustana Distinguished Lectures

Political Islam has preoccupied Western liberal democratic nations for the past three decades. Its stupendous rise and influence in the Middle East, from the time of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 until now, has led to claims that there is an inevitable “clash of civilizations” between Islamic culture and Western culture, secular or Christian. However, the moral and spiritual basis of Islam is not well understood by Westerners—nor by many Muslims, as Ali Allawi bemoans in *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization* (Yale University Press, 2009).

Among Christians, “to love our neighbour” means that we have to understand our neighbour, whether in Canada or overseas. As a “most noble object of our love” (Luther), our neighbour, on the one hand, shares our common humanity, our being made in the “image of God” (to use biblical language), and, on the other hand, has particularities, a history, a culture, a distinct religion. Islam views Christians and Jews as “people of the book”, as people of faith, if they truly submit to the will of God. How does Christianity view Muslims? What do Christians have to know about Islam even to have a “view” beyond the TV images of terrorists and theocrats?

Franz Volker Greifenhagen, a Lutheran pastor and professor at Luther College in Regina, has been invited by the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life to deliver this autumn’s Augustana Distinguished Lectures, since he has devoted much research and many public presentations to helping Christians understand Islam both in its origins and in the context of contemporary Canadian society. To illuminate the origins of the Qur’an and the Hebrew Bible, as well as the similarities and differences between them, the Rev. Dr Greifenhagen will speak on “Isaac Reads (with)

Ishmael: The Bible and the Qur’an”. To give us an appreciation of Muslims in Canada, he will speak on “‘Little Mosque on the Prairie’ and Modern *Convivencia*”.

Dr Greifenhagen teaches both Hebrew Bible and Islamic Studies and has given particular attention to comparison of the Hebrew Bible and the Qur’an. A graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, he holds his STM from the Saskatoon Theological Union, and his PhD from Duke University. While working toward his STM degree, he taught Homiletics and Liturgics at LTS. He is a sought-after presenter, author of numerous articles and co-author of *An introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2008).





## Point & Counterpoint

— Dittmar Mündel

# The Gift and Malaise of Modernity

When Canadian and Mexican students visit or volunteer on a Hutterite colony during Augustana's Puebla-Alberta Community Service Exchanges, they are attracted by the calmness that comes from everyone having a role and place in the community, from not having to "impress" others or from being under pressure to make something of themselves. The students are discovering some of the strengths of "traditional societies", in which tradition solves many of the questions they have to face as individuals. At the same time, some of the students comment that the members of the colony should be "free to choose their life". They should be free to choose what they make of themselves, free to choose their religion, free to pursue their dreams.

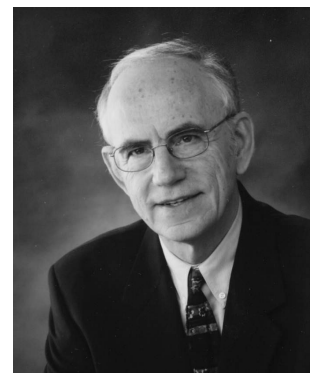
In Mexican villages such as Santa Lucia, the students discover the power of traditional societies, in which a community shares the same moral horizon, as well as the force of modernity in eroding this life. Outwardly they see the shared moral horizon in the fact that the vast majority not only go to mass on Sundays, but also structure their lives with shared rituals. Yet "modernity" is a strong force in Santa Lucia, since most households have someone working (as undocumented workers) in New York or New Jersey. They send back not only money and consumer goods, but also an "image of the good life" that is pulling the social fabric of the village apart. Aside from the long or permanent absence of many parents, the fabric is unravelling as the next generation wants "to have a better life" and "make something of themselves". Our Canadian and urban Mexican students are particularly sensitive to the shadow side of the "good life" that the modern world provides, since they have grown up in it and find it shallow. The students are longing for rootedness, for a genuine alternative to modernity. Many of the parent generation and the young in the community, by way of contrast, want to be free from the limits of their place, their local economy, and their traditional culture.

The notion of freedom to do what you want, and not live within the limits of tradition and a given culture, is both a gift and a burden we have received from modernity. The slogan of the European Enlightenment was "dare to think on your own". Don't rely on tradition, on social hierarchies, or on "old wives' tales" to tell you what to do or think. Throw off your chains and be free! Both the French and the American Revolutions, in different ways, put this dream of freedom into action. On the level of understanding the world, the scientific revolution tried to free our minds from being trapped by common wisdom so we could discover the facts of our world and change it through technology.

In *The Revolution of Hope, Toward a Humanized Technology* Erich Fromm argues that we are at a crossroads in modern society. We can go further down the road of defining progress by economic growth through increased technology. But then we will become more passive inwardly and more anxiety ridden. Or we focus on structuring our lives around not a mechanical but a "human system". Humans live essentially by faith, hope and charity. This is what animates them and makes them active and interested. To live in this way humans have to cultivate fortitude and courage rather than more technical skills.

*Continued on Page 10*

*Dittmar Mündel has been a faculty member of Augustana, teaching in Religious Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies, since 1980.*





## The Living Faith of the Dead

Jaroslav Pelikan, Sterling Professor of History at Yale University and the foremost scholar in the twentieth century on the history of Christian ideas, turned from his work to the dinner placed in front of him. It was two hours into the flight and he spoke to the gentleman sitting next to him. After the usual exchange of pleasantries he was asked about his work. Since Pelikan had just written a book honouring the centennial of the University of Chicago, *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination* (Yale University Press, 1992), he hit his stride, quickly, making the case for the teaching of the humanities to the young. After perhaps twenty minutes the gentleman said it sounded like they pretty much did the same thing. Pelikan was as close to flummoxed as he had perhaps ever been. Johnny Unitas, the “greatest there ever was,” the quarterback who remade a city, Baltimore, who remade a team, the Colts, and remade football itself, thought they pretty much did the same thing? “When I go back to pass,” Unitas said, “I don’t throw the ball to where the receiver is. If I do that the receiver won’t be there when the ball arrives. I throw the ball to where he is going to be when he gets there. You’ve been telling me you throw the tradition to the students in such a way that when they are all grown up and in important positions they will look up and catch what you’ve thrown to them.”

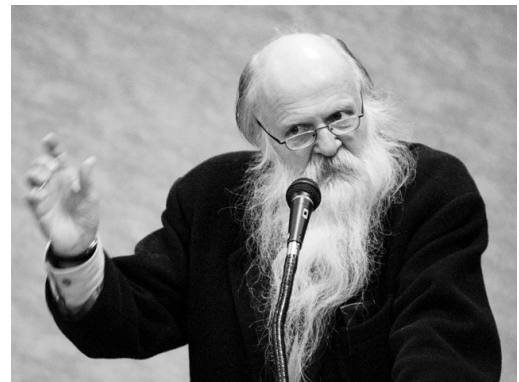
When Pelikan first told me this story he asked why it was that an NFL quarterback understood the purpose of our work with the sources of knowledge on culture, but so many university professors simply did not get it. In both museums and universities, which are key institutions of knowledge in a liberal democratic society, it is easy to forget the civil vocation of scholarship. There are those who love learning for its own sake, which is a laudable way of shaping one’s life as a scholar, in my view. There are those who see their scholarship as being in service to a corporate interest, political ideology, knowledge industry or advocacy on behalf of what may often be a laudable cause. Of course there are also always those who

have lost their way and assume their career is the only thing that ultimately matters; there may be more in this category than we might wish to think.

The challenge of remembering the tradition well and teaching its sources in life-giving ways has also proved enormously difficult for religious communities and for the institutional and intellectual leadership of these communities. Religious traditions have been central at times in preparing the way for cultural and social change, in justifying such change and in resisting it. Similarly, the struggle of emerging secular societies and liberal democratic society to understand and respond to the fears and aspirations of religious communities has been equally challenging. The struggle between tradition and modernity is not new, but the intensity and gravity of this struggle in both Christianity and Islam has shaped much of the modern world and is playing itself out at the centre of many of the geopolitical issues that splash across our television screens and the pages of our newspapers. To understand the new nativism in some European countries, so notable in the recent European Union election, and the rise of Islamist movements and virulent secular movements, the religious right and left, in so many contexts requires that we learn, not only about the history of colonialism, but about the profound struggles of tradition and modernity.

“Tradition is the living faith of the dead.  
Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”

*David J. Goa, Director, speaking at an international conference on human rights.*





## Poetry as a Religious Undertaking:

In November, the Chester Ronning Centre will welcome our first poet to engage the issues of religion and public life. In the popular mind, certainly in developed Western countries, the writing and reading of poetry is usually seen, at best, as a kind of cultural ornamentation, embroidery on the garment of a civilized society. At worst, poetry may be seen as emotional and aesthetic self-indulgence, or simply as irrelevant to the important issues of the day. So, perhaps the first question to ask is, “Why poetry?”

Certainly, in earlier times, the claims of poetry were grander than in our own. Sir Philip Sidney, renaissance hero *par excellence*, found that poetry was more effective than either philosophy (with its precise precepts) or history (with its endless train of examples) at getting at life’s purpose: “the ending end of all earthly learning, being virtuous action” (23). Because poetry was able to couple “the general notion with the particular example” (27), it could persuade and motivate readers to virtuous action better than any other form of learning.

John Milton, the epic poet and religious reformer, saw poetry as having a task parallel to that of the preacher: “to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and publick civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune . . .” (923). Poetry performed a psychological process that induced people to want to perform the good.

In our own times, partly because poetry has become a marginal medium — compared to movies, television, or novels — its practitioners are more modest in their claims. However, contemporary poets do not shy away from articulating the immense value of poetry. Consider, for instance, Adrienne Rich’s formulation:

*A poem can’t free us from the struggle for existence, but it can uncover desires and appetites buried under the accumulating emergencies of our lives, the fabricated wants and needs we have*

*urged upon us, have accepted as our own. It’s not a philosophical or psychological blueprint; it’s an instrument for embodied experience. But we seek that experience, or recognize it when it is offered to us, because it reminds us in some way of our need. After that re-arousal of desire, the task of acting on that truth, or making love, or meeting other needs, is ours (12–13).*

Rich suggests that we have so many phony desires foisted upon us by a consumer culture that we almost forget what we really need and long for. Poetry can provide a moment of awakening, a shock that allows us to see truly and to care for what really matters. It is a method of re-sensitization; it is a piercing of the deception that familiarity brings. And thus, says Rich, “Poetry is not a resting on the given, but a questing toward what might otherwise be. It will always pick a quarrel with the found place, the refuge, the sanctuary, the revolution that is losing momentum” (234).

Poetry has a way of harassing us to see and feel in unaccustomed ways. As such, poetry often takes us to places we did expect, and did not want to go. As Margaret Atwood insists, clear seeing and feeling take their toll: “The facts of this world seen clearly / are seen through tears...” (“Notes,” 5.1–2). The precision of poetic language promotes defamiliarization and induces us, through metaphor, to see likenesses that we did not previously acknowledge. In this sense, poetry can be an incubator of new possibility, a catalyst for a new relationship to our world. Atwood again helps us to see what happens in poetry when she explains, “For me, poetry is where the language is renewed. If poetry vanished, language would become dead. It would be embalmed. . . . It’s true that poetry doesn’t make money. But it’s the heart of the language” (“What,” 227).

Potentially poetry has much to offer us. As an “instrument for embodied experience” and the source of imaginative renewal, poetry can tease us to new insights that reconfigure our world, and



## An Introduction to Tim Lilburn

open us to its forgotten possibilities. So, what about this particular poet we have asked to speak to us? Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Tim Lilburn became a Jesuit and moved around Ontario and the United States to pursue his education and fulfil his vocation. He left the Order in the 1980s and worked on farms around Kitchener. When he returned to Saskatchewan, he took a job teaching philosophy at St Peter's College in Muenster. A Governor General's Award winner, he currently teaches writing at the University of Victoria.

In a recent issue of *The Walrus*, Mark Dickinson describes Lilburn as one of the chief proponents of "an ecological renaissance under way in Canada" (62). When he was living in Regina, Lilburn wrote that he was struck by the fact that people living in the city had only the most tenuous relationship to the land in which they lived. Mostly European settlers had colonized the land without really coming to know it, and thus the experience that many of their posterity feel is one of profound displacement (*Going*, 170–71).

Two of his essay collections deal with the problem of what to do with this sense of alienation: *Living in the World as if it were Home* and *Going Home*. His exploration of this problem of homelessness, in both poetry and prose, leads Lilburn to consider the relationship between *eros* and sorrow. Despite our yearning to know the world, particularly the world of nature, we are unable to name it or fully comprehend it. Poetry aims at such naming and knowledge, but inevitably fails. The resulting poem is a trace, a sign, a pointing towards a reality that resists formulation. Such failure leads necessarily to sorrow, to a mourning for what we lack.

Neither nature nor God can be seen directly. Lilburn relies on Christian mystics and ancient Greek thinkers to help him through this difficult awareness. He takes his reader on a spiritual journey that urges an emptying of all yearning and the need for abundance and possession. Frequently, Lilburn embraces the meagre offerings of the prairie landscape, a world pared down. Following the practices

of mystics and contemplatives, Lilburn seeks a kind of absence: "Looking takes you so far on a leash of delight, then removes it and says / the price of admission to further is your name" ("Contemplation", 7–8).

Alison Calder explains that Lilburn's method of poetic seeing is "based on humility instead of ego" (x). This stance of humility need not be seen as mere emptiness, however, but a place of fierce listening or alert attention for what nature might reveal beyond our need to control and manipulate it. Lilburn puts it this way:

*poetry still strikes me as a religious undertaking, whether it is written or read, because it is an attempt to listen inside things, an attempt to "hear" the interiority, the deeps, of crows and mountains of basaltic rock: as a result, it constantly edges towards ekstasis, a bewildering, somewhat destabilizing, yet vivifying exile from oneself* (Afterword, 47).

In short, Lilburn seeks to help us with these vital questions: How, then, shall we live vitally? How shall we be here?

- Paul W. Harland

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*Continued from Page 9*

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*Point and Counterpoint from Page 6*  
*The Gift and Malaise of Modernity*

Is modernity all bad? Fromm doesn't claim that; it is only bad if human development is subsumed under a machine-like system. And the signs that this is happening are all around us. In a somewhat different vein the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, in *The Malaise of Modernity*, gave a defence of the modern ideal of “making something of yourself”, of developing your self authentically and uniquely. He names the three malaises of modernity as “lack of a shared moral horizon”, being caught in bureaucratic thinking, and favouring technical reasoning over other modes of gaining truth and wisdom. However, at its deepest, the desire to be free to live an authentic life will lead us back to community and culture, since none of us is autonomous. It will lead us back to reconsidering under what moral horizon we are living. Modernity is indeed both a gift and a burden.

### **Coming Next Term: The Genius of Pietism and the Challenge of Modernity**

This Ronning Centre Study Circle will feature a series of conversations to be held at Messiah Lutheran Church in Camrose. Watch the Winter 2010 Newsletter for further details.

## **Judaism Seen as a Dynamic Interaction**

Judaism is rarely a tradition based in a black and white understanding of truth. Rather, adherents are encouraged to examine a multiplicity of possibilities and “right” answers. This leads to a dynamic interaction where every answer can be seen as expressing truth.

David Kunin, Rabbi of Beth Shalom Congregation, Edmonton, received his BA from Brandeis University and Ordination and his MA from the Jewish Theological Seminary in America, in New York. He initiated the “Walking Together” program in Edmonton following the vandalizing of one of the city's mosques and speaks widely on understanding religious differences. Rabbi Kunin serves on the Academic Senate of St. Stephen's College and is Vice President of the Edmonton Interfaith Centre.

He will conduct a Ronning Centre Consultation entitled “Judaism: A Dynamic Interaction” on 24 September, Thursday, 5:30 – 7 p.m., in the Chapel, Faith & Life Centre, Augustana Campus in Camrose.

## **Controversy Not New Over Naming of Bishops**

Critics regard the consecration of female bishops in the Anglican Communion as a decisive break with a universally-received episcopal ministry. Historical research, however, demonstrates that the first black male bishops did not enjoy a universal reception either.

On Wednesday, 28 October, Jane Samson will explore the implications of the consecration in 1864 of Samuel Crowther as a “missionary bishop” to provide a critique of the notion of a seamless reception of male episcopal ministry.

Jane Samson is Professor of History at the University of Alberta and a Research Associate of the Ronning Centre. Her work investigates British conceptions of race and indigenous culture during the age of empire. Her most recent project examines the anthropological work of missionaries in the nineteenth-century South Pacific.

Dr Samson's talk, entitled “Bothersome Bishops: Race, gender and the myth of universality”, will take place at 12:30 p.m., M010, Basement of Founder's Hall, Augustana Campus in Camrose.

## Faith-Based Schools: Revisiting the Ideological and Political Debate

The Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life is launching a dialogue about the role of religion in schools with a symposium on Saturday, 17 October 2009, in Edmonton. Participants will examine the establishment of faith-based programs in the public schools of Alberta, a unique situation among political jurisdictions in North America. Our hope is that the conversation that is begun on that day will be a prelude to a deeper and richer discussion of issues related to faith and public education.

While most Canadian provinces have restricted or eliminated religious education and religious exercises in public schools, Alberta has expanded the opportunities for faith-based education within the public school system. Like some other provinces, Alberta provides full funding for separate Roman Catholic schools; it offers partial funding to all independent, including faith-based, schools. Since 1988, however, faith based alternative programs (and schools) have also been allowed in the public school system. This makes Alberta unique among all the provinces in rejecting the notion that the best strategy for coping with an increasingly multicultural and multi-faith population is to create a public school system that banishes religion from the classroom.

Since Edmonton Public Schools introduced the nondenominational Christian program, Logos, in 1993, fifteen public school boards in Alberta have offered religious alternative programs or schools. In 2008, there were 42 faith-based schools or programs within schools, educating about 8000 Alberta students. Most are non-denominational Christian programs, but there are also Jewish programs, Muslim schools and schools grounded in aboriginal spirituality. All are fully-funded, faith-based, alternative programs of choice in public school districts.

Participants in this symposium will examine the establishment, development and implementation of faith-based alternative programs in

### *Speakers at the Symposium*

9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Faith-based Education in Alberta:  
The Debate

Amy von Heyking, University of Lethbridge

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Logos and the Calgary Public School Board  
(1980s): Personal reflections

Sandra Anderson, Logos Calgary

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Logos and the Edmonton Public School Board  
(1990s): Personal reflections

Leif Stolee and Dr Bruce Wilkinson,  
co-founders of the Logos program

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Bringing Edmonton Christian School into  
Edmonton Public Schools: Personal reflections  
Alyce Oosterhuis, Edmonton Christian Schools

3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Where are we now? Examining the place of  
religion in public education

Lance Grigg, University of Lethbridge

*The Symposium is co-sponsored by  
The University of Lethbridge,  
the Chester Ronning Centre, and  
The King's University College*

Saturday, 17 October, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
Atrium, The King's University College,  
9125 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Edmonton

*Continued on Page 12*

*Continued from Page 11*

the public school systems of Alberta. They will explore how faith-based alternative programs and schools came to be integrated into the public school systems. They will trace the political, economic, philosophical, theological and ideological arguments for and against these faith-based programs. They will address the extent to which education for religious commitment was seen to be consistent with the requirement of public schools to prepare students for citizenship in a pluralist democracy.

Speakers include Dr Amy von Heyking and Dr Lance Grigg, both professors in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge, who are currently involved in a research study of citizenship education in a faith-based public school in southern Alberta. Other featured speakers have been involved in unsuccessful and successful attempts to integrate faith-based programs and schools into public school districts in the province.

This symposium will launch an ongoing dialogue about the teaching of and about religion in our liberal, democratic, pluralist society. This will provide opportunities to address how the faith commitment of faith-based programs and schools, public and private, are lived out within the context of the school culture, the curriculum and classroom practice. We will explore how the religious grounding of these programs and schools informs their approach to education, and the extent to which these programs and schools enrich our notion of “public” education. The continued dialogue will also allow us to consider if there are features of some faith-based programs that are in tension with democratic education and how faith-based education prepares students to engage with others who hold different values and beliefs.

-Amy von Heyking

## Poverty as a Religious Issue in the Fourth Century

There's nothing new about the concern for poverty in church and state, as Jeremy Siemens will show in the first of this season's Ronning Seminars. His topic is “Poverty, Philanthropy, and the Quest to Shape an Empire: Gregory Nazianzene and the Emperor Julian ‘the Apostate’”.

Julian and Gregory had much in common: they studied philosophy and rhetoric in Athens, gained prime positions of leadership and recognized the importance of philanthropy in their mutual desire to influence Greek culture. Julian tried to stem the growing influence of Christianity, pushed for the revival of pagan Hellenism and admonished his pagan priests to be of better character and more philanthropic. Gregory attempted to steer the culture in a more Christian direction, often criticized the state of the episcopate and preached on behalf of the poor and the lepers. Both recognized the importance of authority authenticated by action and integrity, for they knew that power alone could not shape an Empire.

Jeremy Siemens works with the homeless as a Career Development Facilitator at the Mustard Seed Street Ministry in Calgary. He completed his MA at the University of St Michael's College in the University of Toronto. His thesis compared pagan and early Christian approaches to poverty and philanthropy in the Roman Empire.

He will speak on 14 October, Wednesday, 12:30–2:00 p.m., M010 in the basement of Founders' Hall, Augustana Campus in Camrose.



*Jeremy Siemens*

## Islamic Traditions and Poetic Inspiration

The spiritual and mystical tradition of Islam is a living tradition of poetry. It provides sources for the human quest for meaning, a fruitful life of service and a compelling relationship to Allah. Shamas Nanji stands in a rich and compelling tradition drawing on the work of some of the greatest poets in human culture and gives his voice in service to an ancient song that is ever new.

He will explore the subject “Spirituality and Poetry: Personal Searches of Muslims Past and Present” at a Ronning Consultation on Monday, 30 November, 7:00–8:30 p.m. in C014, Basement of Classroom Building, Augustana Campus, Camrose.

Poet and writer Shamas Nanji lives in Edmonton. Last year he published his third volume of poetry, *Meditations on Abraham*. He holds postgraduate degrees from London and McGill. In verse and in prose he draws deeply on the spiritual sources of Islam and its mystical traditions, enlarging our appreciation of Islamic spirituality and civilization.



*Suzette Phillips*

## Multiple Perspectives on the Human Pilgrimage

Each person is a pilgrim on the journey of life and in the process of becoming. But becoming what?

On Wednesday, 25 November, Suzette Phillips will explore what it means to be truly human from an anthropological, spiritual, psychological, and relational perspective. She earned her doctorate at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, in Theology — Eastern Christian Studies, with a dissertation focused on the spiritual classic, *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

Dr Phillips is now a sessional lecturer for Newman Theological College in Edmonton, and an Occupational Therapist working in the area of mental health. Her talk will take place on the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta, beginning at 7 p.m. in C014, Basement of the Classroom Building.



Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

## EARLIER PUBLICATIONS STILL AVAILABLE

2006 Augustana Distinguished Lectures—  
Booklet or MP3 CD

**The Root of War is Fear/  
Love Your Enemies as Yourself**  
*Jim Forest*

2006 Ronning Centre Conference—MP3 CD

**Climate of Fear/Commitment to Peace**  
*Donald Grayston, Dittmar Mündel, Hannah Goa,  
Bitupu-Mufuta Felicien, Ross Labrie,  
Archbishop Lazar Puhalo,  
Sean Wiebe and Mark Daley,  
Zohra Husaini, Virindra Lamba,  
Ron Dart*

2006 Consultation—MP3 CD

**Buddhist Wisdom for Inner and Outer Peace**  
*Kelsang Phuntsog*

2006 Seminar—MP3 CD

**Is Political Friendship Possible  
in the Modern Age?**  
*John von Heyking*

2006 Study Circle—MP3 CD

**Thy Word Giveth Life:  
The Bible in Orthodox Tradition**  
*Archbishop Lazar Puhalo and David Goa*

2005 Ronning Centre Conference—  
MP3 CD

**Faith & Health Care**  
*Nuala Kenny, David Swann, Stephen Allen,  
Greer Black, David Pfimmer,  
and panel discussion*

2005 Consultations—one MP3 CD each

**Thy Kingdom Come:  
A Reformed and Lutheran Conversation**  
*Setri Nvomi, Tom Oosterhuis, and  
Dittmar Mündel*

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**Thy Kingdom Come:  
Orthodox Tradition and Public Life**  
*Archbishop Lazar Puhalo*

*Booklets or CDs are available for \$12.00 + GST unless otherwise marked.*

*Call Community Education at 1-800-590-9984, or locally 780-679-1198*

## Philosophers' Cafés to Feature Deep Subjects, Lively Discussion

A series of Philosophers' Cafés planned by the Chester Ronning Centre for the autumn of 2009 will aim to create a space for thought between the metaphysical visions of the monotheistic religions on the one hand and those of the sciences on the other. Metaphysical visions try to develop a framework into which all serious efforts to understand reality should fit. Monotheism usually envisages in its framework a divine, personal creator of all reality other than Himself who has purposes that generally fit in with moral values which we are more or less familiar with. Science often advocates a reductionist framework in which a particular limited set of concepts, like those of physics, is deemed sufficient to describe all that is real.

No doubt there is more to religious faith than its metaphysical vision; no doubt there is more to science. But suppose we put both these visions aside. What then are we left with? What alternatives are there? What are the implications for how to live our lives? Can religious insights in some form survive without the metaphysics? Can science?

If you are not entirely satisfied with either the metaphysics of faith or the metaphysics of science, or are from the start very sceptical about metaphysical visions, or are just curious about what else there might be to reflect on, you are invited to join us and participate in these cafés. Each will be opened by a short presentation by someone who has thought more deeply than most about some issue that doesn't seem to be treated very well by either sort of metaphysics. But most of the time in each session will be turned over to discussion by all the participants. So come prepared to be actively engaged and both to challenge and to be challenged by the ideas of others.

Co-hosts for the series are **David J. Goa**, Director of the Chester Ronning Centre, and **Martin M. Tweedale**, professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Alberta. Martin Tweedale received his PhD in philosophy from UCLA and subsequently taught at the University of Pittsburgh, UCLA, the University of Auckland and the University of Alberta. He has specialized in medieval and ancient philosophy as well as metaphysics and the philosophy of language, and in recent years has hosted

Philosophers' Cafés for the University's Faculty of Arts.

*A full listing of the times and places of these cafés will be found in the "Calendar of Events" in this Newsletter.*

The first one, entitled "**Beyond Science Versus Faith**", on Saturday, 19 September, constitutes an introduction to the series and to the overall theme. Science and faith, as we usually conceive them, are in inevitable opposition because of their opposed metaphysical visions. Both need to be superseded by (or transformed into) a philosophy which does justice to what is permanently of value in both, while not being either. This conversation will be introduced and animated by Martin Tweedale.

"**The Trouble with Intelligent Design**" is the title for 10 October. The trouble with the theory of evolution by intelligent design is not so much that it is "unscientific" or conflicts with what we now know, but that it forces our concept of the development of life into the anthropomorphic and constricting metaphor of the workings of a craftsman toward a predefined goal. This conversation will be introduced and animated by **Paul Vinitz**, Professor of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge.

"**The Trouble with Reductionism**" follows on 24 and 26 October. The trouble with reductionism (and hence with a considerable amount of science) is not so much that it sees everything complex as composed of what is relatively simple, but that it will not face the fact that there are features of complex things which are real but not explicable using the limited concepts that are required to describe what is simple. This conversation will be introduced and animated by **Dittmar Mündel**, professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy, University of Alberta, Augustana Campus.

*Continued on Page 16*



# Christianity, Islam, and Modernity

## Nostalgia for the Absolute and the Dream of Freedom

*A University of Alberta course  
open to the general public  
offered by the Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life*

Christianity and Islam contribute to the development of modern culture, struggle against it, seek to transform it and survive, through each of its historical epochs. Questions of tradition and authority, commitment and freedom will shape our exploration of how women and men engage with these two great traditions in the search for meaning, the longing for community, and the need for liberty.

**Instructors:** Dittmar Mündel and David Goa

**Time:** Monday evenings, 14 September to 23 November, 6:30—8:30 p.m.  
(No class on Thanksgiving Monday, 12 October)

**Place:** Room C014, Classroom Building, Augustana Campus, University of Alberta, 4901 - 46th Avenue, Camrose, Alberta

**Cost** to members of the public: \$150 (+GST) plus course materials

*For inquiries or to register, call  
Community Education  
780.679.1198 or 1.800.590.9984  
or e-mail [commed@augustana.ca](mailto:commed@augustana.ca)*

## *Philosophers' Cafés, Cont'd. from Page 15*

Most of our current talk about God (including saying that God is a god) tries to make this entity something we can understand with familiar concepts like “mind”, “will”, “father”, “just”, “merciful”, etc. If God is simply the source of the existence and development of the world, it is more honest to rid ourselves of these metaphors and resort to apophatic theology. These issues will be dealt with in a conversation on “**Mystery and Theology**”, introduced and animated by David J. Goa on 2 and 7 November.

**Bob McKeon**, of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Alberta, will introduce and animate a conversation on “**An Ethic of Respect**” on 21 November. The ethic of utilitarianism (valid as it is in certain contexts) needs to be constrained by an ethic of respect for what demands appreciation apart from its utility. This leads to the reinstatement of the sacred as a category in ethics, and prohibitions against the defilement of the sacred that are not justifiable on utilitarian grounds.

Finally, on 4 and 5 December, **Archbishop Lazar Puhalo** (Abbot, Monastery of All Saints of North America and Civil Liaison, Canadian Orthodox Archdiocese), and **Tim Parker** (University of Alberta, Augustana Campus) will together present the topic “**Prayer and Mental Sanity**”. Regular periods of solitary reflection on matters of great significance to oneself help keep the mind open to appreciating the new and surprising in both oneself and the world. We will explore how recent studies on the nature and formation and reformation of the brain and the mind open a dialogue with some traditional understandings of the purpose of prayer and its gifts as a spiritual discipline.

## Calendar of Coming Events - Fall 2009

*For up-to-date information where details are not complete please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1198*

### SEPTEMBER

#### When Rights Collide

*A Ronning Centre Seminar with Alex Fielding*  
Wednesday, 9 September, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.  
 M010, Basement of Founder's Hall  
 Augustana Campus, Camrose

#### Beyond Science Versus Faith

*A Religion and Public Life Café*  
*introduced and animated by Martin Tweedale*  
*(Professor Emeritus of Philosophy,*  
*University of Alberta)*  
Saturday, 19 September, 1:00–3:30 p.m.  
 Steeps, the Urban Tea House  
 11116 Whyte (82<sup>nd</sup>) Avenue  
 (College Plaza), Edmonton

#### Judaism, A Dynamic Interaction

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with David Kunin*  
*(Rabbi, Beth Shalom Congregation, Edmonton)*  
Thursday, 24 September, 5:30–7 p.m.  
 Chapel, Faith & Life Centre  
 Augustana Campus, Camrose

### OCTOBER

#### The Future of Political Islam and the West

*Distinguished Visiting Fellows Dr Mustafa Abu-Sway*  
*(Professor, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem), speaking on the*  
*Islamic Movement in Palestine; Dr Hassan Hanafi*  
*(Professor of Philosophy at Cairo University), speaking on*  
*the Islamic movement in the Arab world; and Professor*  
*Roger Van Zwanenberg, Pluto Press, Publishing about Po-*  
*litical Islam*  
Monday, 5 October, 4:30–9:30 p.m.  
 (there will be three sessions, with a light supper  
 served after the first session)  
 Room C167 4:30–6:30 p.m.  
 Room C014, 6:30–9:30 p.m.  
 Classroom Building  
 Augustana Campus, Camrose

#### Human Rights and Religious Associations:

#### Case Study of the *Heintz v. Christian Horizons* Decision?

*A Ronning Forum presented by Iain Benson,*  
*Barrister & Solicitor (Research Fellow, Faculty of Law,*  
*University of the Free State)*  
Wednesday, 7 October, 7:00–8:30 p.m.  
 Atrium, The King's University College  
 9125 - 50th Street, Edmonton

#### The Trouble with Intelligent Design

*A Religion and Public Life Café*  
*introduced and animated by Paul Viminiz*  
*(Professor of Philosophy, University of Lethbridge)*  
Saturday, 10 October, 1:00–3:30 p.m.  
 Steeps, the Urban Tea House  
 11116 - Whyte (82<sup>nd</sup>) Avenue  
 (College Plaza), Edmonton

#### Poverty, Philanthropy, and the Quest to Shape an Empire: Gregory Nazianzen and Emperor Julian 'the Apostate'

*A Ronning Centre Seminar with Jeremy Siemens*  
*(Mustard Seed Ministry, Calgary)*  
Wednesday, 14 October, 12:30–2:00 p.m.  
 M010, Basement of Founder's Hall  
 Augustana Campus, Camrose

#### Faith-Based Schools: Revisiting the Ideological and Political Debate

*A Symposium co-sponsored by The University of Lethbridge,*  
*The King's University College, and*  
*The Chester Ronning Centre, with*  
*Amy von Heyking (University of Lethbridge).*  
*Sandra Anderson (The Logos School, Calgary).*  
*Leif Stolee and Bruce Wilkinson (Co-founders, Logos*  
*Program, Edmonton),*  
*Alyce Oosterhuis (Edmonton Christian Schools), and*  
*Lance Grigg (University of Lethbridge)*  
Saturday, 17 October, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.  
 Atrium, The King's University College,  
 9125 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Edmonton

*Continued on Page 18*

## Calendar of Coming Events - Fall 2009

*For up-to-date information where details are not complete please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1198*

*The Augustana Distinguished Lectures, 2009*  
with F. Volker Greifenhagen (Luther College,  
University of Regina).

### **“Little Mosque on the Prairie” and Modern *Convivencia***

Monday, 19 October, 7:00–8:30 p.m.  
C014, Basement of Classroom Building  
Augustana Campus, Camrose

Wednesday, 21 October, 3:30–5:00 p.m.  
The King’s University College  
9125 - 50th Street, Edmonton

### **Isaac Reads (with) Ishmael:**

#### **The Bible and the Qur’an**

Tuesday, 20 October, 12:30–2:00 p.m.

Messiah Lutheran Church  
4810 - 50 Street, Camrose

Tuesday, 20 October, 7:00 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church  
10014 81 Avenue NW, Edmonton

### **Muslim and Christian Relations in Syria**

*A Consultation co-sponsored by ECMC Chair of Islamic  
Studies, The King’s University College, and the Ronning  
Centre, with Abdul Fattah al-Bizem (Mufti of Damascus)  
and Shaykh Hussam al-Din Farfour (Vice Rector of  
Al-Fatih Islamic Institute and Lecturer at  
the Great Umayyad Mosque, Damascus)  
Sufi chanting by Shaykh Farfour*

Wednesday, 21 October, 7:00–8:30 p.m.  
Atrium, The King’s University College  
9125 - 50th Street, Edmonton

Thursday, 22 October, 7:00–8:30 p.m.  
Chapel, Faith & Life Centre  
Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **The Trouble with Reductionism**

*A Religion and Public Life Café*

*introduced and animated by Dittmar Mündel (Professor,  
Religious Studies and Philosophy, University of Alberta,  
Augustana Campus)*

Saturday, October 24, 1:00–3:30 p.m.

Steeps, the Urban Tea House  
11116 Whyte (82<sup>nd</sup>) Avenue

(College Plaza), Edmonton

Monday, 26 October, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

Merchants Tea & Coffee House  
4857 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Camrose

### **Bothersome Bishops: Race, gender, and the myth of universality**

*A Ronning Centre Seminar with Jane Samson  
(Professor of History, University of Alberta)*

Wednesday, 28 October, 12:30–2:00 p.m.

M010, Basement of Founders’ Hall  
Augustana Campus, Camrose

## NOVEMBER

### **Mystery and Theology**

*A Religion and Public Life Café*

*introduced and animated by David J. Goa  
(Director, Chester Ronning Centre for  
the Study of Religion and Public Life)*

Monday, 2 November, 8:30–10 a.m.

Merchants Tea & Coffee House  
4857 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Camrose

Saturday, 7 November, 1:00–3:30 p.m.

Steeps, the Urban Tea House  
11116 Whyte (82<sup>nd</sup>) Avenue  
(College Plaza), Edmonton

## Calendar of Coming Events - Fall 2009

*For up-to-date information where details are not complete please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1198*

### **Dialogue: Boundary, Barricade and Bastion - Religion, State & the Challenge of Pluralism**

*Distinguished Visiting Fellows James Payton, Jr (ARIHE Lecturer on the Occasion of the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of John Calvin, Professor of History, Redeemer University College);*

*Archbishop Lazar Puhalo (Abbot, Monastery of All Saints of North America and Civil Liaison, Canadian Orthodox Archdiocese); and Ibrahim Abu-Rabi', ECMC Professor in Islamic Studies, University of Alberta*

Tuesday, 3 November, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Room TBA, The King's University College  
9125 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Edmonton

### **Land as Formational**

*Distinguished Visiting Fellow  
at the Chester Ronning Centre*

*Tim Lilburn (University of Victoria)*

Wednesday, 4 November, 7:00 p.m.

C014, Basement of Classroom Building  
Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **The Projects of Canadian Poetry**

*Distinguished Visiting Fellow  
at the Chester Ronning Centre*

*Tim Lilburn (University of Victoria)*

Thursday, 5 November, 7:00 p.m.

Greenwoods' Bookshoppe  
7925 104 Street, Edmonton

### **An Ethic of Respect**

*A Religion and Public Life Café*

*introduced and animated by Bob McKeon*

*(Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Alberta)*

Saturday, 21 November, 1:00–3:30 p.m.

Steeps, the Urban Tea House

11116 Whyte (82<sup>nd</sup>) Avenue

(College Plaza), Edmonton

### **The Pilgrim's Way:**

**A Journey Towards True Humanness**

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with*

*Suzette Phillips (Newman Theological College)*

Wednesday, 25 November, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

C014, Basement of Classroom Building

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **From Stone to Flesh: The European Encounter with the Buddha**

*Distinguished Visiting Professor, Religious Studies,*

*University of Alberta, Donald Lopez (Arthur E. Link*

*Distinguished University Professor of Buddhist and*

*Tibetan Studies, University of Michigan)*

*Co-sponsored by the Religious Studies Program at the*

*University of Alberta and the Chester Ronning Centre*

Monday, 30 November, 12:30–2:00 p.m.

C014, Basement of Classroom Building

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **Spirituality and Poetry:**

**Personal Searches of Muslims Past and Present**

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with*

*Shamas Nanji (poet and writer)*

Monday, 30 November, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

C014, Basement of Classroom Building

*Continued on Page 20*

## **Coming in Winter 2010**

Study Circle series on Pietism with David Goa, Eugene Boe, and Cam Harder

Islam in Modern Turkey

The Dalit Liberation Struggle in India

## Calendar of Coming Events--Fall 2009

*For up-to-date information where details are not complete please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1198*

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### DECEMBER

#### Christian Orthodoxy and

#### Modern Science: Complementarity?

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with Archbishop Lazar Puhalo (Abbot, Monastery of All Saints of North America and Civil Liaison, Canadian Orthodox Archdiocese)*

Thursday, 3 December, 3:30–5:00 p.m.

Atrium, The King's University College  
9125 - 50th Street, Edmonton

#### Prayer and Mental Sanity

*A Religion and Public Life Café introduced and animated by Archbishop Lazar Puhalo (Abbot, Monastery of All Saints of North America and Civil Liaison, Canadian Orthodox Archdiocese), and Tim Parker (Professor of Psychology, University of Alberta, Augustana Campus).*

Friday, 4 December, 8:30–10:00 a.m.

Merchants Tea & Coffee House  
4857 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Camrose

Saturday, 5 December, 1:00–3:30 p.m.

Steeps, the Urban Tea House  
11116 Whyte (82<sup>nd</sup>) Avenue  
(College Plaza), Edmonton

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## Friends of the Ronning Centre

Mr Norman and Mrs Margaret Olson  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Ms Muriel Anderson  
Ms Cristina Anton  
Dr Calin-Doru Anton  
Drs David & Carol Cass  
Mr Paul Childs  
Mr Edward & Mrs Anna Elford  
Reverend Dr George O Evenson  
Ms Renita Falkenstein  
Dr Karsten Mündel & Dr Deena Hinshaw  
Mr John & Mrs Nancy Howard  
Dr Larry Judge  
Mr Sushil K Kalia  
Rev Roger Kett  
Mr David & Mrs Clare King  
Mr & Mrs Walter Lotz  
Mrs Helga Madsen  
Mr Craig Wentland & Dr Paula Marentette  
Dr Cecily Mills  
Mr Joseph & Mrs Barbara Stolee  
Dr Nicholas Wickenden  
Reverend Vernon R & Mrs Johanna Wishart  
Taylor University College & Seminary  
Peace Lutheran Congregation

Lutheran Church of the Cross  
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Dr Roger Epp & Ms Rhonda Harder Epp  
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Dr Garry & Mrs Dorothy Gibson  
Mrs Joyce Hendrickson  
Dr James & Mrs Sonja Hendrickson  
Pastor Gordon P & Mrs Grace Hendrickson  
Mr James and Mrs Agnes Hoveland  
Mr Michael A Manning  
Dr Orlando Olson & Ms Faye Oswald  
Mr Verlyn & Mrs Mardell Olson  
Pastor Kevin Ree  
Mr David Ridley  
Mr Kevin & Mrs Nola Sharp  
Rev Bob Smith  
Ms Katherine E Ward  
Edmonton Community Foundation

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*We have endeavoured to make this list as accurate as possible to 28 July 2009. Please accept our apologies if your name has been omitted or misspelled and please let us know so we may correct our records.*

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## Chester Ronning Centre

for the Study of Religion and Public Life

focuses its work on a set of issues and themes that demand our attention whether or not we are religious. In their day, many of the founders of Augustana engaged similar issues and themes that daily flash across every news broadcast and galvanize the attention of today's scholars. The demand is for a more complex attention to be paid to

**Our Purpose** is to cultivate a deep understanding of issues and themes at the intersection of religion, faith and public life and to do so in the public sphere and in religious spheres.

**Our Goals** are to focus the work of scholars on issues and themes where religion, faith and public life intersect and to nurture the public conversation as well as religious understanding of these issues and themes through:

- interdisciplinary research and publications shaping a new community of scholars and public intellectuals;
- thoughtful and ethical reflections which draw on religious sources associated with human rights, our care for the life of the world and our understanding of difference;
- expanding and communicating an understanding of the vital role of religious perspectives and their complex sources as they are brought to bear on public discourse in our communities;
- deepening the understanding within religious communities of the fragile and complex nature of the public sphere in a pluralistic society.

**Our Mission** is to nurture a hospitable context that brings forward the finest thinking of women and men of faith and the depth and texture of their traditions in conversation with public intellectuals and various secular ideologies on the nature and shape of public life in our age of pluralism.

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The following suite of activities shapes the work of the Centre and engages students, scholars, public intellectuals and activists in the following ways:

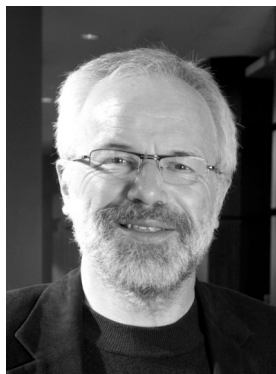
- the annual Chester Ronning Centre Forum on Religion and Public Life;
- Augustana Distinguished Lectures – an annual event funded by the Hendrickson endowment;
- cafés, study circles, seminars consultations and conferences;
- ongoing research and Ronning Centre publications.

For more information please see  
<[www.augustana.ca/ronning](http://www.augustana.ca/ronning)>

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALBERTA**  
AUGUSTANA CAMPUS



## A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

*Over the past year our campus has been at the centre of an “explosion” of community-based learning and research. The Chester Ronning Centre has been a big part of that activity. I appreciate the ways in which, under David Goa’s leadership, the Centre has welcomed remarkable numbers of people to our campus and nurtured thoughtful and interactive conversations in communities locally, regionally, and nationally.*

*Much of the work in the past year was supported by annual gifts to the Centre and through gifts to the Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows and Professors Endowment. It is heartening to know that as a result of the continuing commitment and generosity of Jim and Sonja Hendrickson and others in our community who have taken them up on their challenge of matching gifts, we were, a year ahead of schedule, able to use resources generated by this fund. Augustana was delighted to welcome Roger Hutchinson, professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, to campus last September as the first Distinguished Visiting Fellow.*

*The programming in this next academic year promises to be topical, diverse and, as always, thought-provoking. I invite you to continue to participate in the conversation and ask that you might also consider investing in the future work of the Centre with a gift to the Chester Ronning Centre Annual Fund or the Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows and Professors Endowment in this next year.*

— Roger Epp  
Dean of the Augustana Faculty

## THE RONNING CENTRE ENDOWMENT FOR DISTINGUISHED VISITING FELLOWS

This endowment provides the Centre with a nimble way of bringing creative thinking on current issues and themes into its work. The fellowships will attract scholars as well as public intellectuals with a demonstrated capacity to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the discussion of the complex themes at the contemporary intersection of religion and public life.

Following an initial gift to this endowment and as part of their ongoing commitment, James and Sonja Hendrickson in a challenge to our community, continue their pledge to match gifts to this endowment.

*“It is our hope that others will value the work of the Centre and join us in this effort so the endowment can grow to its full potential.”*

— James & Sonja Hendrickson





## Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre

The *Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life* focuses its work on a set of issues and themes that demand our attention whether or not we are religious. We invite you to become a *Friend of the Centre* and join the table of hospitality that brings depth and texture to many of the compelling issues of our time where religion, faith and public life intersect.

*Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre* will receive: Invitations to our conferences, seminars, lectures, forums, cafés, study circles and symposiums — our regular newsletter — notification of our publications, research and public forums — invitations to conversations with public intellectuals and scholars that go beyond the news stories of the day — opportunities to influence and support fruitful research and religious and public conversation on many of the most compelling issues of our day.



**I would like to become a Friend of the Chester Ronning Centre and support the ongoing work of the Centre**  
*Ronning Centre annual membership fee of \$15.00 will be deducted from your charitable gift*

### 1. Gift option:

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**For more information on giving opportunities to the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public life please call 780.679.1558**

#### CHESTER RONNING CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE

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*The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment* supports a program of distinguished visiting fellows to the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life. It provides the Centre with a nimble way of working on current issues and themes into its work in the University community, the public square, and religious communities. These fellowships will attract leading scholars from across academic disciplines, as well as leading public intellectuals with a demonstrated capacity to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the discussion of the complex themes at the contemporary intersection of religion and public life.

*The Ronning Centre Student Internships* provide opportunities for Augustana students to work directly with Centre staff on research projects and program development, expanding their knowledge and understanding while developing the sensitive skill set needed by the next generation of scholars and public intellectuals to engage in the many demanding issues of religion and public life in restorative ways.

*The Ronning Centre Annual Fund and Friends publications* enhance the ongoing work of the Centre making it possible for many to learn and contribute to the understanding of religious perspectives on public life and public understanding of religious perspectives.

To find out how you can be a part of this visionary endowment and for information on matching funding please contact:

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*Photo of Chester Ronning with a young Queen Elizabeth, courtesy of the Noel and Wendy Cassidy Collection.*