

The Chester Ronning  
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The Chester Ronning Centre  
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*Newsletter*

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*From the Director's Desk...*

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## Clear-Cutting the Mind and Heart

Over the last decade and a half stories and news reports have emerged on young men who have engaged in planning or implementing acts of terror in Canada and other liberal democratic countries. Some have been arrested prior to implementing their plans. Others have been hunted down following their destructive acts. Others have died in the process. In the last few months Canadian journalists have identified a number of Canadians who have left family and home and gone to Syria or Iraq to join in one militant group or another. The journalistic accounts of the rapid spread of ISIS and its virulent destructive acts and deliberately ritualized executions sweep through the internet and garner increasing attention in the media. “Jihadis” we call them. Jihad is an honourable word in the spiritual tradition of Islam, a word identifying the struggle in every heart and mind to be free of the passions that deprive one of God’s mercy. Is it now a concept reframed and polluted, polluted beyond repair?

Virtually every Muslim leader around the world including Egypt’s Grand Mufti Shawqi Allam has condemned ISIS and said it poses a danger to Islam. Some local leaders within Muslim communities are organizing conferences to try and figure out how to inoculate their young people against this spiritual disease. While most of the young who have been identified as fighting with ISIS and other groups are cradle Muslims a striking number are recent converts. If that were all, it would be troubling enough. We could let the matter rest with the leadership within Muslim communities. What is most striking to me is how virtually all of them have attended and graduated from our public universities.

The twentieth century architects of militant movements that claim the banner of Islam, including Said Qutb (1906–1966), best known for his influence on Osama bin Laden (1957–2011), all were educated in the West, in France, Germany, England and the United States. Now we have a new generation we have educated. What have we been teaching? What have they been learning? Many are trained in the science and engineering faculties that set the tone for our universities and take pride in the sophisticated skills of their graduates. Some come through the humanities.

—Continued on page 2

## Respecting the Land: Transition to a New Economy

Following “Responsibility for the Land: conversations about fracking in Alberta” and “Spirit of the Land: toward building a community land ethic”, the third conference in the trilogy is “Respecting the Land: Transition to a New Economy”. The focus will be on practical and local examples of how we respect the land by how we produce and consume food in a way that cares for the soil, water, and air, by our reducing our dependence on hydrocarbon energy through energy efficiency and using alternative energies, by buying locally first, and by creating vibrant, mixed-use, healthy communities. A central feature of this conference will be round table discussions with 16 plus local experts in sustainable food production, energy efficiency, local businesses, and those who work on building a genuine sense of community among people in their neighbourhoods.

The transition to a new economy which takes the limits and gifts of nature seriously and acknowledges climate change and the end of easily accessible hydrocarbon fuels is already under way. Transition towns are springing up in many parts of the world. Organic food production is on the rise. And alternative energy has become a financially viable option. For example, Germany covered over

50 percent of its energy needs from wind, solar and biomass at various points this summer (and they have way less sun than Alberta.)

While practical, external transitions are necessary; this won't happen unless there is also an inner, spiritual change in our understanding of what the real wealth of life is. As long as we believe that endless economic growth will lead to happiness (which in fact has proven to be false over the last decades), we will not search for ways to reconnect to people, communities, and the land in our ways of managing our households. Those who have a rich spiritual life will live more lightly on the land. Religious communities can play a significant role in our transition to a new economy.

The conference begins on Friday 7 November at 7pm in the Faith and Life Building at the Augustana campus and goes from 9am to 5pm on Saturday 8 November 2014.

For updates on the conference and registration go to <[www.spiritoftheland.ca](http://www.spiritoftheland.ca)>.

—Dittmar Mündel

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*Continued from page 1*

Have critical skills as taught in both of the “two solitudes”, the liberal arts and the sciences, been well learned? Have we succeeded only in orientating students to our critique of the West and its diseases, to reducing the religious culture that largely shaped the West to the superstition and nonsense associated with its extreme parties? I wonder if the pedagogical goals that have largely shaped university education for several decades are analogous to the training of a surgeon? We may need the surgeon's skills to remove the tumour so we can live to see another day. But one would not go to a surgeon to learn what con-

stitutes health. Similarly in our university curriculum one needs critical theory. But if that is all a student is given, their knowledge and regard for the genius of Western civilization and culture will be thin indeed.

As I follow the various tragic stories bubbling forth daily on young men who have found something to die for I wonder just how much our public education contributes to the “homeless mind” and, as a consequence, to an appetite for meaning so voracious that sacrifice and death and death-dealing come to be seen as a divine path. Are we furnishing the mind and heart or clear-cutting it?

—David J. Goa

## Chinese Consul General Honours Chester Ronning

When Calgary-based Chinese Consul General Wang Xinping visited Camrose on Friday, June 27, he had two goals. He wished to learn more about the community, and to pay his respects to a figure who still remains prominent in Chinese-Canadian history: Chester Ronning. Travelling with Consuls Gao Hong and Wang Xiaoqing, the Consul General met with Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Verlyn Olson, Camrose Mayor Norm Mayer, and Augustana Dean Allen Berger at the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life. Ronning Centre Director David Goa and Brian Evans, author of *The Remarkable Chester Ronning: Proud Son of China*, welcomed the guests.

“It is our pleasure to be here at the Centre,” said the Consul General. “To physically be here, seeing and observing and learning of things connected to this great person. And to remember his contribution not only to the Chinese and Canadian relations but also to Canada. He made so many contributions to the country. The honours he got from the various levels and governments embody the greatness of the person and his contribution to his country and to other countries too. He gave his opinion and understanding to Canadian leaders.”

“I think Chester Ronning really contributed a lot to Canadian-Chinese relations and he has done numerous good things as Brian Evans and David Goa recount,” he continued. “He was a true internationalist – with his passion, his intelligence, his curiosity, and his humour, he was a person naturally born to lead.”

The Consul General presented a certificate of appreciation to Brian Evans for his work in celebrating the China-born former Camrose Lutheran College President, MLA, and Ambassador to China. David Goa received a beautiful painting of plum blossoms for the wall of the Centre. In return, the Consul received gifts, copies of Evans’s book, and a traditional



*Chinese Consul General (centre) and guests at the grave of Chester Ronning.*

Norwegian toast with aquavit and herring. “Chester Ronning would have done this Norwegian tradition in a very particular way,” explained Goa as he poured out the aquavit – the “Water of Life”. “It is customary to have a little bit of herring – from the sea, beloved by both Norwegians and Chinese, who is the mother of us all. And then, when we are ready, we would look into each other’s eyes – into the heart.”

“Ganbei!” said Wang, combining the Chinese toast of “empty cup” to the Norwegian tradition. “Let us drink to the remarkable Chester Ronning.”

Before the Ronning Centre visit, Augustana administrators talked with the Consul General about Augustana’s relationships with universities in China, growing international enrolment and expanding faculty exchanges. After the meeting, the Consul General visited Ronning’s gravesite to lay flowers. He followed up his visit with tours of the Camrose Recreation Centre, Chester Ronning School, and the site of the Cargill Canola Crushing Plant.

— Christopher Thrall (Augustana Campus)

*My appreciation for the natural environment is directly related to the sacramental dimension of life and the world. I have always regarded the natural environment from the perspective of Orthodox spirituality. I have respected it as a place of encounter and communion with the Creator. As a young boy, accompanying the priest of my local village to services in remote chapels on my native island of Imvros, I connected the beauty of the mountainside to the splendour of the liturgy. The natural environment seems to provide me with a broader, panoramic vision of the world. I believe that in general nature's beauty leads us to a more open view of life and the created world, somewhat resembling a wide-angle focus from a camera, which ultimately prevents us human beings from selfishly using or even abusing its natural resources. It is through the spiritual lens of Orthodox theology that I can better appreciate the broader aspects of such problems as the threat to ocean fisheries, the disappearance of wetlands, the damage to coral reefs, or the destruction of plant and animal life.*

His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, "The Wonder of Creation", in *Encountering the Mystery: Understanding Orthodox Christianity Today* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), p. 89.

May 25, 2014 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic Jerusalem meeting of Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, and witnessed their successors, Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis, meeting again in that holy and contested city.

The next day, after the fanfare of politicians, joint declarations, photo-ops, and the hubbub of journalistic crowds with their flashbulbs, the "Green Patriarch", as he is often called for his commitment to ecology, planted an olive tree at the Grove of Nations on Mt Herzel in Jerusalem. Removing his black *klobuk* and donning a green baseball cap, Bartholomew lowered the sapling into the earth, shovelled the soil to fill in the hole, and watered the new plant, taking root in what he referred to later as "the holy land".

## Life in the Desert To Be Revealed

That the Patriarch's use of the common term "the holy land" at just this point was intentional, designed to convey a two-fold meaning. It was holy both in the sense of its sacredness to the three great monotheistic religions cradled there, but also in its essence as *land*, earth, soil — imbued with holiness not only due to its tumultuous, sacred history, but simply because it is the handiwork of the Creator. It is often said that probably no Christian leader has done more to reorientate the Church to the urgency of "creation care" than Patriarch Bartholomew. Other organizations, such as *A Rocha*, have taken up this mantle — diligently raising ecological awareness among Evangelicals and other Christian communities.

One of the Patriarch's closest co-workers in this task, however, is the Australian-born and Oxford-educated Dr John Chryssavgis, an Archdeacon in the Orthodox Church and professor of theology. Fr Chryssavgis has dedicated much of his distinguished academic life to studying the Christian spiritual traditions which emerged from the ancient deserts, writing books such as *In the Footsteps of Christ: Abba Isaiah of Scetis* (SLG Press, Oxford, 2001), *The Reflections of Abba Zosimas* (SLG Press, Oxford, 2006), and *In the Heart of the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (World Wisdom Books, 2nd revised edn, 2008).

Should it be surprising that life is often discovered amidst the arid and solitary spaces of the desert? The Christian scriptures begin in a garden and culminate in a life-giving urban environment. In between, the Biblical narrative and the Christian tradition are influenced significantly by the experience of life in the desert: drought-stricken Egypt, the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel, the preaching of John the Baptist, Christ's temptations — not to mention heroic saints like Anthony and Mary of Egypt. Yet out of this seemingly barren context, amazing vitality bursts forth. As the American farmer-poet Wendell Berry once said, "There are no sacred and non-sacred places; there

## in Augustana Distinguished Lectures

are only sacred ones and *de*-sacrated ones.” The difference has everything to do with the choices we human beings make.

Rev. Dr Chrysavgis’s work emphasizes the mutuality between the spirituality of the desert, and the vocation of the Christian church — “on behalf of all, and for all”, to steward and renew creation and the *cosmos*. He, along with Patriarch Bartholomew, calls to remembrance the Orthodox conviction that there is a dynamic relationship between the spiritual life of believers and the well-being of the natural environment we call home. This is lovingly enacted in both the liturgical life of the Church, and in the words of Father Zosima in Dostoyevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*:

*Love all of God’s creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things.*

It is precisely from this perspective that people of faith take on such a radical action as planting trees in what is, essentially, a desert. While acknowledging the current reality of degradation and pollution as tantamount to “global suicide”, the “Green Patriarch” relentlessly believes that

*It is not too late. God’s world has incredible healing powers. Within a single generation, we could steer the earth toward our children’s future. Let that generation start now, with God’s help and blessing.*

At the end of October 2014, the Chester Ronning Centre will be bringing Rev. Dr Chrysavgis to Camrose and Edmonton for a series of lectures addressing both the spirituality of the desert, and its counterpoint in creation-care. We shall be able to hear the prayerful voices of the ancient Fathers and Mothers of the deserts, and perhaps also to consider together what the mind of the Tradition



has to say regarding contemporary resource ecology and environmental issues that are close to home to many concerned Canadians: oilsands development, controversial pipelines, hydraulic fracturing. The issues are complex and multidimensional. In a very real way, spirituality and conservation ethics are not discrete and separated topics, but rather, from an Orthodox Christian perspective, they are symbiotic dimensions of a holistic worldview. I, for one, am grateful to the Ronning Centre (as well as the co-sponsors: Kings University and St. George’s Greek Orthodox Church) for the opportunity to have Fr Chrysavgis here with us in Alberta this Fall, and to learn about his work with His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew. I only regret that it may be a little too late in Alberta to plant a tree!

— Fr Matthew Francis  
(Priest, St Nikolai of Zica Orthodox Mission,  
Whitehorse, Yukon)

Coming 29–31 October  
See calendar on page 19 for details.



## Partners Join to Bring Salim Munayer to Camrose

The Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life, the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, and the college ministry of Resurrection Lutheran Brethren Church will be hosting a series of events this coming fall dealing with Christian Zionism and its effect on Palestinian Christians. Guest speaker at the events will be Dr Salim J. Munayer, director and founder of Musalaha Ministry of Reconciliation, an outreach organization that has been bringing Israelis and Palestinians together since 1990 by creating a forum for constructive encounters.

A number of the planned events will be open to the public, including:

A talk at CLBI at 6:30 pm on Thursday, November 13, entitled “*Waging Peace When the Context is War*”.

During this talk, Dr Munayer will share strategies used by Musalaha in which Israelis and Palestinians encounter each other in an environment aimed at destroying stereotypes and misperceptions that perpetuate hostility. Musalaha (which means “reconciliation” in Arabic) has been successful in creating a variety of encounter situations that include camel excursions, women’s forums, and teen and youth camps. All are carefully designed to guide participants in increasing levels of understanding that help build friendship and healing.

For more information on this event, contact CLBI at (780) 672-4454.

A forum at Augustana on Monday, 17 November, at 7:00 pm, entitled, “*Who Owns the Land?*” in which the issue of Christian Zionism will be explored by a panel of representatives from varying perspectives.

Christian Zionism proposes that the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948 is the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy related to the Sec-

ond Coming of Christ. Proponents of Christian Zionism typically believe that lands promised to Israel in the Old Testament are to be restored as part of prophecy fulfilment to modern Israel, and that Christians have an obligation to support modern Israel as a condition of the promised blessing that was stated in Genesis 12:3, *I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse*. This view necessitates a displacement of the indigenous peoples who are not Jewish or who do not want to align with the Jewish state.

Plans are also in the works to bring together area clergy and other interested parties for a mid-morning RSVP gathering on Saturday, November 15, to receive a report on the state of the Christian church in Israel and Palestine, with a Q&A with Salim. Details for this event will be sent to area clergy via the ecumenical ministry groups in Camrose. For more information, call 780-672-0909. *Note:* you do not have to be clergy to attend this gathering, but must RSVP.

As a Palestinian-Israeli born in Lod, Israel, Dr Munayer is uniquely qualified to address the topics planned for this event. He received his BA from Tel Aviv University in History and Geography, an MA from Fuller Theological Seminary, did graduate studies in New Testament from Pepperdine University (California, US) and received his PhD from Oxford Centre of Mission Studies in the UK. He has published a number of books on Reconciliation, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, and Christians in Israel and the Palestinian Authority. He is past academic dean of Bethlehem Bible College (1989–2008). Salim is married to Kay, and has four sons, Jack, Daniel, John, and Sam.

*Coordinators and contacts for this event include: David J. Goa, Director, Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life, University of Alberta (Augustana Campus, Camrose); Jeremy Osterwalder, Program Director, Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute (Camrose); Greg Pietz, Pastor, Resurrection Lutheran Brethren Church (Camrose).*

## Peace and Justice Theme of Ali Shomali Visit

This fall, the Ronning Centre is pleased to partner with the Mennonite Central Committee to host Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali, a graduate of the Islamic Seminaries of Qum, holding a BA and MA in Western Philosophy from the University of Tehran, as well as a Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Manchester. He is the author of several publications, including *Self-Knowledge* (1996 & 2006); *Ethical Relativism: An Analysis of the Foundations of Morality* (2001); *Shi'a Islam: Origins, Faith & Practices* (2003 & 2010); and *Principles of Jurisprudence: An Introduction to Methodology of Fiqh* (2006). He is a co-editor of *Catholics & Shi'a in Dialogue: Studies in Theology & Spirituality* (2004); *Catholic-Shi'a Engagement: Reason & Faith in Theory and Practice* (2006); and *A Catholic-Shi'a Dialogue: Ethics in Today's Society* (2008).

A few years ago, Dr Shomali was one of a group of Iranian Shi'a Muslim scholars who engaged in closed-door discussions with Mennonite scholars hosted by Canadian Mennonite University. In her article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* from June 11, 2011, Brenda Suderman notes: "These formal theological dialogues began after Iranian religious leaders were curious about the Mennonites who offered aid and relief supplies through Mennonite Central Committee after the devastating 1990 earthquake in Iran. MCC went on to organize an exchange of scholars, which grew into a biennial dialogue that alternates between Iran and Canada."

These exchanges exemplify the hope of the Ronning Centre to nurture spaces for hospitable dialogue across traditions. We are pleased that Dr Shomali will be in Alberta for additional conversations. As Director of the International Institute of Islamic Studies, Qom, Iran, and Director of the Islamic Centre in London, Dr Shomali believes "dialogue begins with tolerance and then goes on to respect and understanding. The more I understand you, the more I respect you. This should lead to co-operation. . . . We can do a lot if we do it together. My dream is to have a joint Muslim and Christian organization that works for peace and justice. We would work together, shoulder to



Photo credit <themuslimgroup.org>

shoulder, to establish peace and justice all over the world." (Quoted from Gladys Terichow, "Ongoing conversation seeks to tear down walls, build relationships", a press release published by the Mennonite Central Committee, June 23, 2011.)

Ronning Centre director David Goa believes these kinds of conversations are important and is pleased to welcome Dr Shomali to Edmonton. "Given the enormous geo-political issues facing our fragile world the work of Shi'a Muslims and Mennonites to deepen the pathways of peace is of singular importance for faithful people and those who seek what is life-giving in the midst of the terror of history."

Dr Shomali will give several talks during his visit:

### **Shi'a and Mennonites on Peace: A Ten-Year Conversation**

Thursday, 6 November, 7:00–8:30pm

Epp Conference Room 2-004, Augustana Campus, Camrose

Saturday, 8 November, 10:00–11:30am

King's University College, Edmonton

### **Muslim-Christian Dialogue: More Important Now Than Ever**

Friday, 7 November, 8:30–10:00am

Ronning House, 4606 – 49<sup>th</sup> Street, Camrose

—Rebecca Warren

*The Convocation Address at Vancouver School of Theology Given by David J. Goa  
on 5 May 2014 at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, British Columbia*

*Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in Him were all things created, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or authorities. All things. All things through Him and to Him have been created. And He is before all things, and in Him all things have come into existence. And He is the head of the body, the Church, Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might come to hold first place. For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him; and through him to reconcile all things to Him, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, through Him, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.*

■ The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Colossians  
1:15–20

*Thomas saith to Him, "Lord, we know not where Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus saith to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh to the Father, except by Me. If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also. And from now ye know Him, and have seen Him." Philip saith to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it suf-*

*ficeth us." Jesus saith to him, "Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known Me, Philip? The one who hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, 'Show us the Father'?"*

*"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words which I speak to you I speak not from Myself; but the Father Who abideth in Me, He doeth the works. Keep on believing Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me; otherwise keep on believing Me on account of the works themselves.*

*"Verily, verily, I say to you, the one who believeth in Me, the works which I do shall that one do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, this will I do, that the Father might be glorified in the Son.*

*"If ye should ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of the truth, Whom the world is not able to receive because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He abideth by you, and shall be in you."*

■ The Gospel of John 14:5–17



Image by Shona Dion



## Entering into the Beauty of Holiness

The Reverend Doctor Richard Topping and the distinguished faculty and staff of Vancouver School of Theology —

Recipients of the honorary degree [*degree honoris causa*]: the distinguished Chief Robert Joseph and distinguished Professor Doug Hall —

Honoured guests —

And, you graduates, who come today to be clothed in the garment of VST, called as part of the body of Christ, called to the life of our fragile world, the high calling for which you have been preparing yourselves:

We join together to bless each of you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Today we sit in the presence of women and men who have a sharpened sense of vocation.

It is not a new vocation and has little to do with credential or career. Rather, the vocation each of you received in baptism has been honed through your work at VST.

For the ancients, baptism was the hallmark of the Christian faith. And what does it tell us both about our being as bearers of the divine image and about our vocation in service to the life of the world? Several years ago, I was in Cappadocia, the troglodyte world of tuff and caves so important to the early formation of the Christian tradition: cave churches, cave monasteries, cave cities.

Toward the end of my visit, I found the ancient church of my old friend Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30–390/91), the great poet of the Church, an aristocrat who cultivated roses contrary to the monastic manual's requirement to grow only turnips; Gregory, who gave his best thinking to nurture our understanding of the Trinity. His church is located on a narrow flat piece of land, a few acres at best, surrounded by caves carved out of the mountains that come up to its edge.

I walked around to the front of the enclosed compound, to the main entrance in the wall. There, a few metres from the stair leading to the door, was

an elderly woman, head covered, hoeing her garden of turnips surrounded by roses. I opened the large beautiful hand-carved door. The stone pathway to the church beckoned. On both sides of the pathway were blooming roses—descendants, I thought, of those planted in the fourth century by my old friend.

The church became a mosque following the tragic population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923. The Imam greeted me with warmth and grace. He knew a little about the saint who had built the church and wanted to know more. Just before entering the church, I noticed a small octagonal building, perhaps five-and-a-half-feet high, off to the right—a baptistery, I thought. “Ayazma Suyu” (“Sacred Spring Water”) was written on the wall.

After our time in the church (the mosque), we lingered in the courtyard talking about the gift of faith. I asked him about the little building and he said it was the place of water and asked if I would like to see it. He unlocked the door and opened it. “Be careful,” he said, “the steps are worn and steep and you will have to bend your head.” And steep they were, a sharp descent down forty-seven steps in all, down into the midst of the earth. At the bottom, it opened into a domed pool perhaps five feet across. Two niches were carved in the wall, one for candles and the other, I expect, for the icon of the baptism of our Lord. The round pool had a ledge a foot-and-a-half wide, and water from deep within the earth continued to lap the edge. I knelt and took the water in my hand pouring it over my head, and slowly, in a reserved way, found myself chanting quietly the tropar for baptism:

*As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!*

*As many as have been baptized into Christ's death have put on Christ. Alleluia!*

An echo down through the centuries. Women, men, children, babes in arms, a great cloud of witnesses. All who had descended. All our descendants. All from the midst of the earth.

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All baptized into our Lord's death, and thus, able to stand in liberty, not captured by the fray of the world. Here I stood in remembrance with them.

After a time, I turned toward the thin beam of light that barely reached down to the pool in the midst of the earth. Slowly, remembering all those who had worn the steps, I ascended up out of the tomb. Like them, I came into the brightness of a new day, out of the womb of our second birth. The resurrection of Our Lord opens for us when we are baptized into His death. The Incarnation of Our Lord is given us, when, the tomb becomes a womb. He is our teacher and model. In Him is all reconciled, even our finitude, our dying. Descended into the water in the midst of the earth, and ascended into the light of a new day—a world seen as if for the first time. Baptism: descent and death, ascent and birth into a world made new in Christ, the incarnation, the second Adam, who frees us through his death to be mortal, to be who we were created to be.

The light of the world was blinding as I stepped into the church garden and I stumbled on the hose from the Ayazma Suyu watering the roses of Sharon. The Iman embraced me, kissing both cheeks and said, "Papa, Papa." He had heard my chanting and assumed I was a priest. "Why don't you bring someone and go with them down to the pool and use this holy place for what it was intended?"

Over the past few years, each of you have been honed by the two great gifts of Christian formation: study, which sharpens the mind through opening what has been handed down to us by tradition and deepens our understanding of the life of the world; and, *askesis* as the ancients called it, the disciplines of prayer and fasting that free us from the common habits of mind and heart, from our nostalgia and our utopian dreaming, from presumption and projection, from ambition and despair. May your spiritual disciplines daily free you from a world of your own making to be present along with Saint Gregory Nazianzus "to the wonder of it all".

To each of you who today pass through the gate of initiation that VST opened for you:

May your ways of learning continue to unfold as they have for all the spiritual mothers and fathers from the Apostle Paul and his friend Lydia through our ancestors, who descended and ascended from the midst of the earth to a new day in Cappadocia, to your teachers and now to you; may that descent and ascent and all that it means become your common path.

May you know the companionship of all those who have gone before and may they both teach and model a stance of faith free of fear and desire so both your mind and heart are attentive to the life of God's beloved world.

May each of you—in the way knit in you in your mother's womb—continue on the pathway to becoming theologians. As another of our spiritual companions, Evagrius Ponticus (346–399), said, "If you are a theologian, you will pray truly, and if you pray truly, you will be a theologian." Or, to put it another way, may you always be free from your own passions so you may care for the soul of others and know them in love and mercy.

And finally, may you continue to love the word about the Word of God and know ever more deeply Him who reconciles us "to our deepest distress," who turns enmity to empathy, so we can walk the world with the confidence befitting our being as the image of God and with the freedom befitting one for whom a vocation to give birth to God's love "in the midst of the earth" is commonplace.

The Imam at the baptistery in Cappadocia invited me to return with someone and use the baptistery as it was meant to be used. May you, each of you, come to all creation, enter into the life of the world as God gives it to us, the place of healing, restoration; the place of communion with the anointed one unto ages of ages.

Bless you.

—David J. Goa

## Ronning Interns on Wild Ride

A wonderful journey is underway at the Chester Ronning Centre. The “Responsibility for the Land” project, which began two years ago, continues to move forward with strong support from our community. We thank each of you for your diverse contributions of time, money, lodgings, fine conversations, and spirit that have made it possible for us to inform and engage meaningful dialogue about Alberta’s oil and gas economy.

In recent months, Hans and Alison have been joined in their research and filming efforts by Georgie and James, making for a hive of activity in the Ronning House where, as budding scholars, we sometimes annex the Director’s desk at ungodly hours of the night. However, by day the Team travels the province seeking conversation about Alberta’s oil and gas economy that fuels not only our cars but our universities too.

Navigating the complexities of resource development is taking us on a wild ride — up the Trans-Canada Pipelines Tower, down the forested banks of the Little Red Deer River, and through traditional berry picking grounds near Slave Lake. Each place, experience, and encounter is a small window of understanding looking in at the province and out to the world. From Rosebud and Hardisty to Cold Lake and across the province, we have been invited to stand by our neighbours and slowly open the blinds together.

The conversations have been fruitful, including a forum in Athabasca on “Water, Energy and Livelihoods” where Hans participated as a panelist in his hometown community. Back in Camrose, David Goa has been joining interns and guests for a series of seminars regarding some of the fundamental questions about our own participation in the fossil fuel dialogue. And not least, our conversations with members of the local community in Camrose have been thought provoking and often inspiring. In the spirit of continuing these conversations, on Monday, 15 September at 6:00pm, we invite you to join us in the Roger Epp Board Room



*Interns Hans Asfeldt, Georgie Nelson,  
and Alison Bortolon*

at Augustana for a potluck dinner and a discussion of our work in recent months.

In the meantime, we are pleased to officially launch [ResponsibilityForTheLand.org](http://ResponsibilityForTheLand.org) and to announce that new films will be published this fall on [AlbertaVoices.ca](http://AlbertaVoices.ca). Progress is also being made in the development of an online resource that consolidates research on hydraulic fracturing in Alberta; it has been rewarding to reach out to collaborators and practise the ethos of dialogue even in what might seem a preparatory phase. Indeed, education and dialogue go hand in hand.

Encouraged by tremendous support and enchanted by the ongoing process of learning and understanding, we are excited for what lies ahead. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us; we hope to see you on the 15th.

—*The Responsibility for the Land Team*  
Alison Bortolon, Georgie Nelson,  
James Gilbert, and Hans Asfeldt  
*And from behind the scenes – Rajan Rathnavalu*

## New Home

This past spring, the Ronning Centre moved to a historic and entirely fitting location just north of Augustana Campus: the Chester Ronning House. From 1928 to 1984, it was the home of Chester Ronning (1894–1984), the namesake of the Ronning Centre, and someone whose rich, active life exemplifies the hospitable public engagement that we hope to achieve through our work.

Centre director David Goa notes, “While Chester Ronning participated in and made a remarkable contribution to world historical events he lived in a very modest house in Camrose. Not only his diplomatic work but also his commitment to the local world he loved and his modest way of living constitute a model for those who knew him and for those generations who will remember him and to the ways of working of the Centre that bears his name.”

Chester Ronning was one of Canada’s most distinguished and respected statesmen. The child of Norwegian Lutheran missionary parents, Ronning was born and received his early education in China before the family settled in Alberta. He graduated from the University of Alberta in 1916. After teaching in China, he took up his position at Camrose Lutheran College as principal, teacher, and choir conductor from 1927 to 1942.

## *Latest Changes at the*

He was also active in provincial politics, before moving on to diplomatic posts as de facto ambassador to China, ambassador to Norway, high commissioner in India, and head of the delegation to the Geneva conference on Korea and Laos. Ronning was designated a Companion of the Order of Canada and was inducted into the Alberta Order of Excellence.

The Ronning House is rooted in a city and on a campus that had great significance in the life of this extraordinary Canadian, and here we are, nearly 100 years later, doing work that bears his name in the same institution he served as principal, now a campus of the University of Alberta.

The staff look forward to settling in to this new historic location, which has more office space for our research fellows and interns, as well as a small meeting room with kitchenette. This fall, our Camrose cafés “Meeting in the Agora” will be hosted in the Ronning House (see page 18 for details).

The Ronning House is located at 4606 - 49<sup>th</sup> Street in Camrose. If you’re in the neighbourhood, drop on by and say hi! We’ll leave the coffee on.

—Rebecca Warren

*Ronning House, seen from 49 Street*



*Inside the front door, main office area*





## Chester Ronning Centre

It's always a good idea to take a step back and look at where you've been and where you want to go. Since its inception in the fall of 2005 and its public launch in spring of 2006, the Ronning Centre has operated for nine years, most of those under the leadership of current director, David Goa. As part of the upcoming ten-year anniversary, the Centre has been engaged in a process of strategic planning for this past year as a means of reflecting on the past and visioning for the future.

The Strategic Planning committee consisted of: Augustana Dean Allen Berger, Roger Epp (University of Alberta Political Science), Alan Fielding (Camrose community), David Gay (University of Alberta English and Film Studies), Azim Jeraj (Ronning Centre Advisory Committee), Jeremy Mouat (Augustana History and Social Sciences), and Arlette Zinck (King's University College English Department), as well as staff members David Goa and Rebecca Warren.

The committee met five times with several tasks in mind. First, we conducted an environmental scan of similarly positioned Centres and

## New Plans

articulated the uniqueness of the Ronning Centre's position. Next, we prepared and reviewed a questionnaire that was sent to 150 key and diverse members of our constituency. This allowed us to look at strengths, areas for growth, and opportunities for the Centre in the coming years, and was a great affirmation of the work we are already doing—so much so that the strategic planning committee affirmed the existing mission and goal statements of the Ronning Centre.

Moving forward, we plan to compile the committee's work in a summary report that will serve as a record of the Centre's ways of working and a guide for the future. This report will inform readers about the uniqueness and significance of the Centre's work, its connection to the core mission of a distinctive public university campus, its many contributions at the intersection of religion and public life, and its roles—both recent and envisioned—in addressing some of the most demanding issues of our day, in deepening local and inter-faith dialogues, and in strengthening the fabric of civil life.

—Allen Berger, Dean, Augustana Campus

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*Meeting room empty, and the way we like it: full of great conversation with friends*



## Bestemor & Me—An Author's Journey

Throughout my career my research focussed on relationship. First, I studied women's experiences of becoming mothers, and then, together with a team of healthcare professionals and scholars, researched relational ethics in health care.

*Downstream: Bestemor & Me*, published by Hagios Press in May 2014, is my first foray into creative non-fiction. Again it is about relationship, this time personal. I began writing about *Bestemor* (Norwegian for grandmother) without really intending to. In a creative writing class it was suggested that we write about our grandmothers: birth, death, religion and work. When asked more about my grandmother's death—how did she die? what kind of fire?—I froze. Could I tell *that* story, that *secret* story encoded like a watermark on the paper of my life? Should I tell it?

Now I have done so.

*Downstream* tells of *Bestemor*'s move to Canada from Norway, and her tragic death (along with my two young aunts and grandfather) in the fall of 1929 in northern Saskatchewan. That was 10 years before my birth. Through personal research and writing I have come to know *Bestemor*—brought her back to life so to speak—and developed a relationship with her.

The Norwegian writer, Karl Ove Knausgaard (in his book *My Struggle*), says that "writing is drawing the essence of what we know out of the shadows". I began with what I knew and what I didn't know in writing about my family's shadow. Knausgaard also says that writers generally have one central story, which for him was the death of his father. For me, it was a family murder-suicide.

I write from my childhood membership in a deeply religious family with Norwegian Lutheran roots; from training for a marathon

on trails and roads by the river near my current home; and from my concern about missing women in my life, my province, and around the world.

*Downstream* is my story, my truth. Of course it is not just mine. Do I have a right to tell a story that affected my whole family? I believe that people carry secrets within their bodies from generation to generation without knowing, and I didn't want to leave my own unfinished business for my children and grandchildren to carry.

Telling the tough story will never ensure that traumatic experiences will never happen again but as I share my story I hope to open dialogue about family secrets, mental illness and its stigma, and generational shame. My goal in writing and in life is to help to create beauty in the world and to face life's sorrows in order to try to understand.

Some questions I ask myself as I launch *Downstream: Bestemor and Me* on September 25<sup>th</sup> and will do so again with participants during the workshop on September 27<sup>th</sup> are: What is truth? What is fiction? Whose story is it? What stories do we need/want to tell? How do we tell these stories?

### Suggested reading:

- Knausgaard, Karl Ove (2009, translated 2012). *My Struggle*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Toews, Miriam (2014). *All My Puny Sorrows*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.
- Wiebe, Rudy (1962). *Peace Shall Destroy Many*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Zingaro, Linde (2009). *Speaking Out: Storytelling for Social Change*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

—Vangie Bergum

## In Memoriam: Ali Shawwa (1940–2014)

In the early morning of 20 July, a special friend of the Ronning Centre passed away.

Ali Maher Shawwa was a dedicated Muslim who treasured the freedom to practise his religion which he found in Canada, but who never saw his faith as limiting his sympathies and friendships with individuals of all denominations.

He came from an eminent Palestinian family. His father, Rushdi Shawwa (1889–1965) had served with distinction as mayor of Gaza City from 1939 to 1952; he was the last mayor to have been elected under the British mandate, and was then pressed into service during the first difficult years of Egyptian dominance in Gaza. Ali's grandfather Sa'id had also held the office of mayor of Gaza. Historic photographs of his family and events in Gaza occupied a large proportion of the space on Ali's living room walls.

One of Rushdi's eight children – he had four brothers and three sisters – Ali was trained in engineering in London and for a time worked for the agency of General Motors in Kuwait, before his desire to help others less fortunate than himself led him to return to Gaza as director of a therapy centre.

Ali's son Fadi won a place to study at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, and as conditions in Gaza worsened Ali and his wife Naela followed Fadi to Canada in 1992. He was briefly in business in Victoria before taking up a front-line position working with adults with developmental disabilities, as well as doing volunteer work along with his wife at senior homes in Victoria.

In December 1998 Ali and Naela moved along with Fadi to Edmonton, where Ali, nominally retired, devoted himself to volunteer work. The shelves of his living room had to be sturdy



to hold all the trophies presented to him in acknowledgement of his services to charity.

His wife passed away in 2002, but he made many friends in Edmonton – the gatherings at his home were legendary – and kept up contact with his relatives throughout the succession of tragic events in the Middle East.

No one could have spoken with greater warmth in appreciation of the reception he found in Canada, or made a more wholehearted contribution to Canadian society. His memory will be treasured by all who knew him.

—Nicholas Wickenden



## *A Garden Refuge for Philosophers*

One of the signs that the work of the Ronning Centre is successful is when people from many walks of life gather together and engage in animated conversation around important issues. Our café series in both Edmonton and Camrose are marked by a loyal group of attendees who not only have continued to attend year after year for these events, but also enjoy gathering outside of regularly planned events to relax and converse together as friends.

Martin Tweedale, professor emeritus of philosophy, hosted such a gathering this past spring at his home; he described the event this way: “Not since Epicurus has a garden been the venue for such a diverse collection of philosophers and such a ferment of wild and woolly ideas.” About thirty philosophers attended and not only enjoyed the delicious food from grill and garden, but also the stimulating conversation we have come to expect from this group of thoughtful citizens.

The gathering also included a variety of signs attempting to identify the various “species” of philosophers that might be present. See if you can find yourself in this list conserved in Epicurus’ Garden Refuge for Highly Endangered Species of Philosophers:

Obsolete Marxist-Leninists—Still just as revolting as ever.

Cartesians—Keep your pets away from them. They are known to be very nasty to animals.

Stoics—Nothing you do to them will bother them at all.

Beware of Barking Cynics—They have no manners!

Kantians—Don’t do anything to them unless you’re willing to see everyone do it to them.

Highly Logical Positivists—Don’t say anything to them unless you know how science might verify it.



*How many philosophers does it take to flip a burger?  
Only one if the philosopher is Martin Tweedale.*

Turgid Neo-Hegelians—Exposure to their talk for more than 2 minutes can do serious brain damage.

Greek Orthodox Mystics—Step out of their way; they don’t pay attention to the world.

Sleep-Inducing Idealists—Beware of boring banalities smothered in rosy rhetoric.

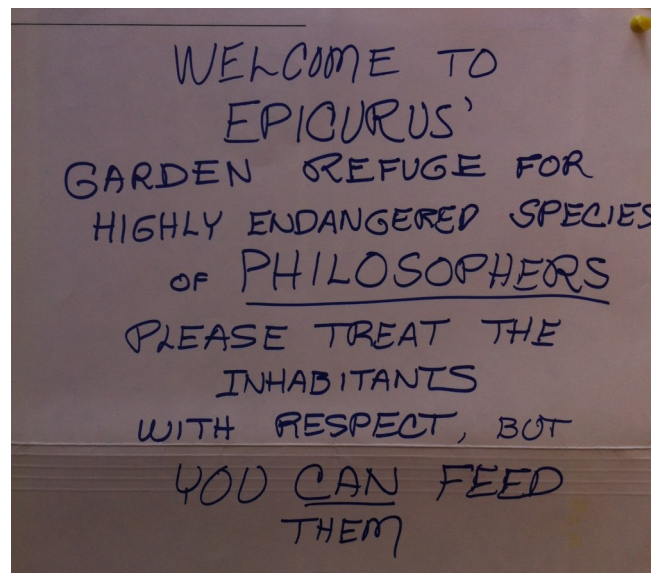
Watch out for the rarely seen Scholastic Logic-Chopper—Who slices opponents to ribbons with his (Ockham’s) razor-sharp distinctions

Beware the cleverly camouflaged Socratic Elenchus—The only species known to devour pompous pundits

If you’re feeling left out, don’t worry: you can join this lovely group of people this fall, as our cafés begin in Edmonton on 20 September, 1:00–3:30pm at Steeps on Whyte Ave. This fall’s theme will be “The City and Its Possibilities”. For details, see the calendar on page 18.

— Rebecca Warren





*Philospohers enjoying the garden refuge.*

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## Wab Kinew to Speak on Reconciliation

Wab Kinew will be our guest at the Augustana Campus and at the North Campus from November 26 to 29 to discuss the topic of reconciliation, which he argues is not only a matter of justice for the victims of residential schools, but also the biggest social issue confronting Canada. He describes reconciliation as a political and economic necessity, which can open more opportunities for indigenous youth to contribute to a richer public life and create a more vibrant economy for the whole country, but also as a spiritual matter having to do with the obligations we have as human beings toward each other.

Wab Kinew is from the Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation in Treaty 3 territory in Ontario, located near the border with Manitoba. He is the University of Winnipeg's first Director of Indigenous Inclusion, as well as a decorated journalist who hosted the CBC Television series "8th Fire" in 2012, a series that can still be watched online at <http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire>. His record, *Live By the Drum*, won the Aboriginal People's Choice Music Award for Best Rap/Hip Hop CD in 2009, and his powerful song "Last Word" was nominated for best song in 2010; they can be heard on his blog at <http://wabkinew.ca/music/>.

He is currently writing a memoir, due for publication in 2015 by Penguin Canada, "about family reconciliation and spiritual rebirth" based on his relationship with his father, who experienced attendance at a residential school.

—Jerôme Melançon



*Image credit: wabkinew.ca*

# Calendar of Coming Events - Fall 2014

For up-to-date information where details are not complete, please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1146

## Ronning Centre Cafés

### Edmonton

The theme for the Edmonton cafés will be “The City and Its Possibilities.” The series begins on **Saturday, 20 September**, and all sessions will be held at Steeps, 11116—82 Ave, Edmonton.

All café dates and a shortened list of topics are listed below—full details are in the calendar:

September 20—“A Sense of Place”  
 October 4—“The Other Side of the City”  
 October 18—“Who Governs? Who Cares?”  
 November 1—“Outside the City Wall”  
 November 15—“Caring for the Land”  
 November 29—“Art for the Halibut”  
 December 13—“An Urban Talkabout”

### Camrose

The Camrose gatherings will be held around the theme “Conversations in the Agora”; we will discuss breaking news stories related to religion and public life. All sessions to be held at the Ronning House, 4606—49 Street, Camrose.

All dates and a shortened list of topics are listed below—full details are in the calendar:

September 22—“Radicalization, Canadian Culture, and University Education”  
 October 17—“Catholics Rethink the Family”  
 November 7—“Muslim-Christian Conversation”  
 November 10—“Religious Freedom and the Reach of the State” (tentative)  
 November 14—“Engaging Christian Zionism”  
 November 28—“Prostitution in Canadian Law and Culture”

## SEPTEMBER

### Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 8 September, 3:15–5:15 pm

Monday, 15 September, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

### Jesus and Muhammad: A Sufi Perspective

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Distinguished Visiting Fellow Bilal Kuspinar and David Goa*

Thursday, 18 September, 9:25–10:40 am

H070, Augustana Campus, Camrose

### Pathways to the Heart: Sufi and Orthodox Perspectives

*A Ronning Centre Seminar with Distinguished Visiting Fellow Bilal Kuspinar, Director of the International Rumi Centre and David Goa, Director of the Ronning Centre*

Thursday, 18 September, 2:00–5:00 pm

Home of Kevin and Nola Sharp  
 4201—52 Street, Camrose

### A Sense of Place

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Charles Schweger, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta*

Saturday, 20 September, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116—82 Ave, Edmonton

### Radicalization, Canadian Culture, and University Education

*Conversations in the Agora on Religion and Public Life with David Goa & Natasha Martel*

Monday, 22 September, 12:00–2:00 pm

Ronning House, 4606—49 Street, Camrose

### Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 22 September, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

### Downstream: Bestemor and Me: Vangie Bergum

*Co-sponsored by the Association for Life-wide Living (ALL), the Battle River Writing Centre, and the Ronning Centre*

Thursday, 25 September, 7:00 pm

Epp Conference Room 2-004

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### Memoir Writing Workshop with Vangie Bergum

*Co-sponsored by the Association for Life-wide Living (ALL), the Battle River Writing Centre, and the Ronning Centre*

Saturday, 27 September, 10:00 am–4:00 pm

Cost \$75 (includes lunch). To register, contact ALL at 780-672-9315 or source21@telus.net

Camrose County Meeting Room, Camrose

# Calendar of Coming Events - Fall 2014

For up-to-date information where details are not complete, please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1146

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 29 September, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## OCTOBER

### The Other Side of the City: Urban Institutions That Harm and Help

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Milton Friesen, Director, Social Cities, Cardus*

Saturday, 4 October, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82 Ave, Edmonton

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 6 October, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Confessions of an Artist: Enough is Enough

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Betty Spackman*

Wednesday, 8 October, 11:00 am

Atrium, King's University (Chapel Hour)

9125 – 50 Street, Edmonton

## Intelligent Humility: Christianity and the Arts

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Betty Spackman*

Wednesday, 8 October, 7:30 pm

Atrium, King's University, Edmonton

## “Found Wanting: A Multimedia Installation Regarding Grief and Gratitude”—Process and Collaboration

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Betty Spackman*

Thursday, 9 October, 7:30 pm

Atrium, King's University, Edmonton

## Confessions of an Artist: The Importance of Process

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Betty Spackman*

Friday, 10 October, 2:00–5:00 pm

F105 Art Studio, King's University, Edmonton

## Instrumentum Laboris: Catholics Rethink the Family

*Conversations in the Agora with David Goa*

Friday, 17 October, 12:00–2:00 pm

Ronning House, 4606 – 49 Street, Camrose

## Who Governs? Who Cares? Democracy and Power in Edmonton

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Judy Garber,*

*University of Alberta, Political Science*

Saturday, 18 October, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82 Ave, Edmonton

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 20 October, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Conversations with Tradition

*A Conference co-sponsored by the Ronning Centre and Modern Horizons*

Saturday, 25 October, 10:00 am–5:00 pm

Room N101, Kings University, Edmonton

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 27 October, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## In the Heart of the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers

*The Augustana Distinguished Lecture with the Rev Dr John Chrysavgis, Archdeacon of the Ecumenical Patriarchate*

Wednesday, 29 October, 7:00 pm

St George's Greek Orthodox Church

10831 – 124 Street, Edmonton

## Peace and Justice: Spiritual Reflections on the Beatitudes

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with the Rev Dr John Chrysavgis*

Thursday, 30 October, 10:50 am–12:05 pm

A024, Lower Level Auxiliary Building,

Augustana Campus, Camrose

## On Earth as in Heaven: Transforming Perspectives and Practices

*The Augustana Distinguished Lecture with the Rev Dr John Chrysavgis*

Thursday, 30 October, 5:00 pm

*A light soup supper will be served.*

Epp Conference Room, Augustana Campus

Friday 31 October, 9:30–11:00 am

King's University, Edmonton

## NOVEMBER

### Outside the City Wall

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Hannah Goa, MSc in Human Ecology, University of Alberta*

Saturday, 1 November, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82 Ave, Edmonton

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 3 November, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

# Calendar of Coming Events - Fall 2014

For up-to-date information where details are not complete, please check the Ronning Centre website or call 780 679 1146

## Shia and Mennonites on Peace: A Ten Year Conversation

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali, Director, International Institute Islamic Studies, Qom, Iran, and Director, Islamic Centre, London and Dr Harry Huebner, MCC*  
Co-sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee

Thursday, 6 November, 7:00–8:30 pm

Epp Conference Room, Augustana Campus, Camrose

Friday, 7 November, 7:30 pm

Islamic Shia Ithna-Ashari Association of Edmonton (ISIA)  
4307 – 33 Ave, Edmonton

## Muslim-Christian Conversation: More Important Now Than Ever

*Conversations in the Agora with Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali*

Friday, 7 November, 8:30–10:00 am

Ronning House, 4606 – 49 Street, Camrose

## Respecting the Land

*A Ronning Centre Conference*

Friday, 7 November to Saturday, 8 November

Augustana Campus, Camrose

See <spiritoftheland.ca> for details.

## Shia and Mennonites on Peace: A Ten Year Conversation

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali and Dr Huebner*

Friday, 7 November, 9:30 am–1:00 pm

Room N101, Kings University

9125 – 50 St, Edmonton

Saturday, 8 November, 7:30–9:30 pm

First Mennonite Church, 3650 – 91 St, Edmonton

## Building Peace Through Interfaith Dialogue

*A Consultation with Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali and Dr Huebner*

Sunday, 9 November, 10:00–11:00 am

Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church

11210 – 59 Ave, Edmonton

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 10 November, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Waging Peace When the Context is War

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Salim Munayer*

Thursday, 13 November, 6:30 pm

Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, Camrose

## Engaging Christian Zionism

*Conversations in the Agora on Religion and Public Life with Salim Munayer*

Friday, 14 November, 2:00–3:30 pm

Ronning House, 4606 – 49 Street, Camrose

## Shaking the Hands and Caring for the Land That Feeds Us

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Monique Nutter, Community Development Consultant*

Saturday, 15 November, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82 Ave, Edmonton

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David Goa*

Monday, 17 November, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Who Owns the Land: Israel/Palestine

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with Salim Munayer*

Monday, 17 November, 7:00 pm

Epp Conference Room, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Who Owns the Land: Israel/Palestine

*A Ronning Centre Consultation with Salim Munayer*

Tuesday, 18 November (time TBA)

Concordia University College, Edmonton

Check our website for final details.

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with David J. Goa*

Monday, 24 November, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Prostitution and Canadian Law and Culture

*Conversations in the Agora on Religion and Public Life with Kate Quinn*

Friday, 28 November, 12:00–2:00pm

Ronning House, 4606 – 49 Street, Camrose

## Art for the Halibut

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Karyn Stirling, Owner, Expressionz Café*

Saturday, 29 November, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82 Ave, Edmonton

## DECEMBER

## Ultimate Questions in a Post-Christian Age

*A Ronning Centre Course with David J. Goa*

Monday, 1 December, 3:15–5:15 pm

Library 2-102, Augustana Campus, Camrose

## An Urban Talkabout

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Martin Tweedale, Professor Emeritus and Don Carmichael, Political Science, University of Alberta*

Saturday, 13 December, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82 Ave, Edmonton



## Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre

Dr Anthony Almeida	Ms Audrey D Lett
Dr Anna Altmann	Mr Leon Lohner
Mrs Doris Anderson	Mr Robert & Mrs Lanis McClarty
Mr Kenneth and Mrs Bonnie Anderson	Ms Nancy McLeod
Ms Muriel Anderson	Mrs Brenda Mantie
Dr Calin-Doru & Ms Cristina Anton	Dr Cecily Mills
Rev Bonnie Arends	Dr Jeremy Mouat
Mr D'Arcy & Mrs Jane Arial	Dr Karsten Mündel & Dr Deena Hinshaw
Dr J V & Mrs Janeen Asfeldt	Ms Patricia Mader Mundel
Mr Michael Barr & Ms Laurie Moffitt Barr	Mr Brian & Mrs Colleen Nelson
Mrs Marion Bennett	Ms Ina Nielsen
Mr Raymond & Mrs Norma Blacklock	Dr John O & Mrs Treva Olson
Mr John Bruneau	The Hon Verlyn & Mrs Mardell Olson
Dr Joseph & Mrs Rosanne Buijs	Mr Edward Paproski
Rev Raymond A. Christenson	Dr Timothy & Mrs Ellen Parker
Mr Takota Coen	Mr John & Mrs Carmen Person
Crooked Creek Conservancy Society	Mr Lawrence & Mrs Margaret Rathnavalu
Mr Lawrence & Mrs Denise Dufresne	Ms Maya Rathnavalu
Mr Edward & Mrs Anna Elford	Mr Rajan Rathnavalu
Dr Brian L Evans	Mr Donald & Mrs Christina Rebus
Mr Arthur Fadum	Dr Linda Reutter
Ms Janice L Fehr	Dr David Ridley
Mr Alan & Mrs Valerie Fielding	Dr Morley & Mrs Mary Duane Riske
Mr & Mrs Alan & Ruth Ford	Dr Jack & Dr Jane Ross
Ms Irene Fraser	Mrs Sheilagh Ross
The Hon Harry D & Mrs Margery Gaede	Ms Carol Roy
Dr David B Gay & Ms J Anne Smith	Mr Telmor & Mrs Adelene Sartison
Ms Linda Gervais	Ms Kyla Sawden
Dr Garry & Mrs Dorothy Gibson	Mr Kevin & Mrs Debbie Schielke
Mrs Sharon & Mr Milton Gilbertson	Mr Bill Sears
Mr Bryan Graff & Mrs Kathryn Knudsen-Graff	Rev Allen & Mrs Mary Severson
Mr F Volker Greifenhagen	Mr Kevin & Mrs Nola Sharp
Mr Luther & Dr Bonnie Haave	Dr Peter W Sinnema & Dr Janet Wesselius
Dr William W Hackborn	Rev Bob Smith
Mr Julien Hammond	Mr Bruce & Mrs Glenys Smith
Mr Howard & Mrs Nielle Hawkwood	Ms J. Anne Smith
Dr J Frank & Dr Ruth Henderson	Mr Leon & Mrs Deanna Specht
Ms Joyce Hendrickson	Dr Aruna Srivastava
Dr James & Mrs Sonja Hendrickson	Mrs Joan E Stavne
Pastor Gordon P & Mrs Grace Hendrickson	Mr David & Mrs Gail Stolee
Mr Ronald & Ms Arlene Hendrickson	Mr Joseph & Mrs Barbara Stolee
Mr James and Mrs Agnes Hoveland	Ms Kathrine Stolee
Ms Lobna Hussain	Mr David & Mrs Elaine Taylor
Ms Sharon Jacobs	Mr Nicolas Tyszka & Ms Pauline Evans
Dr Ronna Jevne	Mr Barry Vall & Mrs Dawn Kilarski
Ms Shenaz & Mr Azim Jeraj	Ms Coby Veeken
Dr Martin Katz	Monsieur Matthew T Wangler
Dr Dianne & Dr Thomas Kieren	Ms Katherine E Ward
Mr David & Mrs Clare King	Rev Kenn Ward
Mr Wolf and Ms Marie Edenloff Kirchmeir	Rev Craig Wentland & Dr Paula Marentette
Mr Robert Klappstein	Dr Nicholas Wickenden
Mrs Roseann La Place	Ms Lois Wightman
Ms Fiona Lauridsen	Reverend Vernon R & Mrs Johanna Wishart
Rev Dave Lefsrud & Rev Karen Lefsrud-Johnson	Mr Daniel Yang

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*We have endeavoured to make this list as accurate as possible.*

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

University of Alberta, Augustana Campus | 4901 46 Ave Camrose AB T4V 2R3 | 780.679.1558

[www.augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning](http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning)

**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 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.

**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.



OVER ➡

With your gift to the *Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life*, you become an honoured member of the **Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre**, connecting you to information and updates about the centre.

PLEASE CHECK HERE IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO BE A MEMBER. ☐

### 1 WHERE TO GIVE

- ☐ The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment
- ☐ The Ronning Centre Fellowships Initiative
- ☐ The Ronning Centre Annual Fund
- ☐ The Ronning Centre Alberta Voices Student Project

### 2 WHAT TO GIVE

One Time Gift:

- ☐ \$1000 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly Gift Pledge:

- ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ / month  
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### 3 HOW TO GIVE

- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Cheque (Payable to the *University of Alberta*)
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OVER ➡



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 the discussion of vital questions on points where religion, faith and public life intersect.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Gifts to the Ronning Centre have direct impact on the depth and breadth of the program we are able to offer each year. Gifts pledged over time help to stabilize our funding and plan into the future by providing us with the security we need to engage speakers, support research and publications and to expand our reach into the communities we seek to inform.

### Sample Payment Schedule Based on a 3 Year Pay Period and 20% Initial Gift

* A gift of:	20% Initial gift	Monthly (36 payments)	Annually (3 payments)
\$2,000	\$400	\$44	\$533
\$4,000	\$800	\$89	\$1,067
\$6,000	\$1,200	\$133	\$1,600
\$8,000	\$1,600	\$178	\$2,133
\$10,000	\$2,000	\$222	\$2,667

\* If you work for a company that matches charitable giving, you can maximize the value of your contribution by following your employer's matching gift procedures. Please contact your human resources office for further information.



## 5 DONOR INFORMATION

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- ☐ Please notify the honorees that a gift has been made in their honor. (*Gift amount will not be included*).

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**THANK YOU** FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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 **UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
AUGUSTANA CAMPUS



Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

## BUILDING TOWARD THE FUTURE

**The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows 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 to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the discussion of the complex themes. 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

**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:

Bonita Anderson  
Director of Development  
University of Alberta  
Augustana Campus  
1-800-590-9992 ext. 1183  
or 780-679-1183  
bonita.anderson@ualberta.ca



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