

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

# Newsletter

Volume 4

Issue 1

Winter 2009

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*From the Director's Desk...*

## The Challenge of Human Rights

One of the first public events hosted by the Ronning Centre was a lecture by Professor Benjamin Berger, now in the law faculty at the University of Victoria. Berger probed the challenge that increasingly arises when religious values, deeply rooted in the culture of a community, and our particular way of articulating human rights, increasingly central to civil society, collide. How do we understand these two spheres of meaning which shape our life together? How can we negotiate between them if and when negotiation is possible? When negotiation is exhausted, in which sphere, religion or law, do we place the trump card? Iain Benson joined us for a Ronning Forum on Religion and Public Life two years ago and continued exploring this theme. He pointed to the danger of the state's intervening too deeply in the sphere of religious communities and practice. Both Berger and Benson continue working on these issues, Berger in his teaching and research on Canadian law and culture, and Benson in his legal representations before the Canadian courts. Benson is also engaged in an intriguing project to draft a charter of religious rights and freedoms for South Africa, a project that arises out of the struggles of apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The role of religion and civil values in the history of South Africa may provide all of us with more than one significant lesson on how to shape our life together.

In the winter term I will join Dittmar Mündel in teaching a course on the challenge of human rights in a pluralistic society. We will explore the religious and civil roots of human rights and investigate several recent and current case studies. We are pleased again to invite the public to join the students of Augustana in this course. We will also be joined this winter by several distinguished colleagues. Professor Don Carmichael, a political theorist, will explore the way liberal individualism and religious aspirations are at work in several key thinkers. Anne McTaggart, an Augustana graduate, will probe the deep cultural impulse to scapegoat those who are deemed different. Professor Stephen Martin whose book, *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, brings us to the heart of one of the most remarkable ways religion and human rights have been at work to transform a society, will also be with us. The schedule for these and the other Ronning Centre offerings is included in this Newsletter.

— David J. Goa



Cynthia Moe-Lobeda holds a doctoral degree in Christian Ethics from Union Theological Seminary, and master's degrees in social work and in theological studies. She is a faculty member of Seattle University's Department of Theology and Religious Studies, and graduate School of Theology and Ministry. Dr Moe-Lobeda is the author of Healing a Broken World: Globalization and God (2002), Public Church: For the Life of the World (2004), and numerous articles and chapters in books. She is a co-author of Saint Francis and the Foolishness of God (1993) and Say to This Mountain: Mark's Story of Discipleship (1996). She has recently served as theological consultant to the Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. She lives in Seattle, Washington, with her husband, Ron, a pastor in the ELCA, and two wonderful sons, Leif and Gabriel.

## Luther for the 21st Century

### Moe-Lobeda to Deliver Augustana Distinguished Lectures

Those of us at the Chester Ronning Centre are convinced that the more we understand the particularity and history of a religious tradition, the better we can uncover the richness it has to offer to all of us as we deal with public issues. When our religious and public discourse becomes anemic and disconnects from our own traditions and histories, we find ourselves incapable of naming, let alone transforming, the complex realities that face us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This reductionism of a tradition is seen, for example, in the frequently repeated clichés of the conservation movement that the Christian world-view which focuses on “having dominion over the earth”, is a prime cause for our present ecological crisis.

Wendell Berry in “Christianity and the Survival of Creation” acknowledges the complicity of many church folks in the exploitation of people around the world and in its concomitant ecological destruction. However, he argues that the anti-Christian environmentalists have not mastered “the first rule of the criticism of books: you have to read them before you criticize them”.

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda takes a similar approach to Luther. She is not blind to the problems that the Lutheran church and some thoughts of Luther have contributed to the deep moral crises that we are facing today in our relation to creation and in our relations between peoples and nations around the globe. However she is convinced, that a careful reading of the thoughts of Luther reveals many theological gems that could become very precious in our attempt to re-name, and then transform the ecological and social issues facing us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The traditional Lutheran way of framing the relation of church and public life in terms of “the two kingdoms of God” could be fruitful, if done properly. However it gets quickly reduced to a discussion of “church and state”. As a result, Dr. Moe-Lobeda relocates the discussion of how the church engages the world “in the incarnation of Christ as seen in cross, resurrection, and living presence”. (*Public Church: For the Life of the World* 2004). In this reframing of the issue she finds that Luther in fact speaks from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> in surprisingly fresh ways.



## Augustana Distinguished Lectures with Dr Cynthia Moe-Lobeda

**The Church in Public Life:  
Luther for the 21st Century**  
Friday, 6 February, 7:30 p.m.

Messiah Lutheran Church, 4810-50 Street, Camrose

*We are called to bring the gifts of Christian traditions to the pan-human "great work" of our era: forging ways of being human that do not threaten Earth's capacity to sustain life and that build economically just relations with neighbours far and near. This lecture will explore insights and wisdom that Luther and the Lutheran heritage bring to that task.*

**Religious Claims in the Public Square:  
Lutheran Resources**  
A Workshop for Clergy & Church Workers  
Saturday, 7 February, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 noon  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
10014-81 Avenue, Edmonton  
A light lunch will be served  
Please call 780-679-1198 to register for lunch  
There is no fee to attend this event

*This workshop asks: What are criteria for appropriate, valid and effective use of religious claims, language, and symbols in deliberation and decision-making about public policy? What particular gifts do Lutheran traditions bring to shaping those criteria?*

### **Religion and Public Life: Selected Topics The Challenge of Human Rights & Multiculturalism**

A seminar course offered by  
the Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life  
Augustana Campus, University of Alberta

Every day our news broadcasts and papers are filled with stories of conflicting values and the historical struggles between peoples. Many of these stories centre on matters of faith and modern politics, religion and civil society, or on competing virtues. In some of these events, we witness an ongoing struggle between the sphere of religion and the sphere of civil life. Occasionally, they challenge us to think more deeply about the textured worlds of meaning represented by religious faith and the gifts and limitations of modern society including modern liberal democratic society.

In this discussion-based series, we will explore the religious roots of human rights, the contemporary shape and use of human rights legislation and how the next generation of human rights thinking is likely to handle religion and community aspirations. The concept of "reasonable accommodation" will also be explored with its gifts and challenges in the context of Canadian multicultural policy and the movement towards a deep pluralism in the context of liberal democratic society.

Instructors: Dittmar Mündel and David Goa  
Mondays, 12 January to 23 March 2009,  
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.  
Room F103, Augustana's Faith & Life Centre  
4901 - 46th Avenue, Camrose, Alberta  
Cost to General Public: \$150 + GST + materials

For enquiries or to register, call  
Augustana's Community Education  
at 780 679-1198  
or e-mail <commed@augustana.ca>

## Roger Hutchinson Gives Us Much Food for Thought

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### A Lifetime of Experience Shapes Augustana Lecture

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From growing up on a farm in Alberta to teaching theology and ethics at the University of Toronto and participating in United Nations committee work, Roger C. Hutchinson drew on a lifetime of experience in his Augustana Distinguished Lecture for 2008.

Dr Hutchinson, now Emeritus Professor of Church and Society at Emmanuel College, Toronto and the University of Toronto, chose “Doing Ethics in a Pluralistic World” as the theme for his lecture, delivered in Camrose and Edmonton on 8 and 9 September.

As a youngster Dr Hutchinson became aware that some of his friends had different Protestant beliefs from his family’s, while others were not Protestants at all but Catholics. The diversity he had to deal with in his academic career included adherents of many more religions, and of none.

When he became a teacher of ethics in the setting of a public university, he realized that his goal must be not to lay down one authoritative ethical position but instead to assist his students and colleagues to clarify their own ethical ideas and express them in terms that those with very different ideas could appreciate.

Not just “multicultural” but “intercultural” dialogue, in which the participants achieved genuine communication and sometimes even agreement across ideological divides, was the technique that Dr Hutchinson developed and described to his audiences.

The first Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Chester Ronning Centre, during his time in Alberta in September Dr Hutchinson spoke in a variety of lectures and forums. His experience as

an engineer in the oil industry, which preceded his career as a theologian and ethicist, gave added local relevance to his presentations.

“Doing Ethics in a Pluralistic World”, along with several of Dr Hutchinson’s other addresses, will be available in print from the Chester Ronning Centre early in the new year.

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### Ethics, Identity, and Mission Themes of Dialogues on Health Care Delivery

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Health care delivery in Alberta is undergoing the largest structural and organizational change since the mid 1990s, within Alberta Health Services as well as Catholic Health Services. The upheavals resulting from these changes give rise to uncertainties, questions, and challenges regarding how best to serve those in need of care. Health care is the major industry in the Camrose community, employing 1300–1500 people.

It was therefore timely and appropriate that eminent Canadian ethicist Dr Roger Hutchinson, the Chester Ronning Centre’s first Distinguished Visiting Fellow, undertook during his time at the Centre to conduct dialogues on the subject of “Ethics, Identity, and Mission in Health Care Delivery”. Four occasions for discussion with Dr Hutchinson were scheduled: one at Edgeworth Centre, and three at St Mary’s Hospital, Camrose.

The purpose of these events was to provide opportunities for people from all levels of health care to raise questions and share ideas about how to support each other in enhancing health care delivery through interdisciplinary collaboration.

Participants included providers from several disciplines and levels of health care, representing front line staff, physicians and nurses, middle and upper management, educators, and pastoral care and mental health specialists. Also actively participating were people with the viewpoint of

consumers and members of municipal and provincial political bodies. “Dialogue, rather than brief consultations, is central to any ethical analysis of public issues. Dialogue begins with everyone present telling their own stories and sharing how they understand,” as Dittmar Mündel observed in our Fall Newsletter, and dialogue was actively pursued at these sessions on health care.

Several recurring themes and questions emerged from these dialogues. Top of the list was the age-old, ongoing need for improved communication within and between all sectors. Often there is uncertainty about what questions to ask, how to communicate shared needs and then engage each discipline within the health care community in meeting these needs.

Given the increasing pressures and stresses arising out of the huge changes as well as current human resource constraints, particularly a shortage of physicians and nurses, a central question was: How can care issues be reframed to encourage strategies that meet needs more effectively by using up-to-date methods or approaches? What worked before does not necessarily work today. Also highlighted was an increasing need for patient, family, and provider advocacy. Their stories need to be shared and heard.

Dr Hutchinson skilfully guided the conversations, encouraging continued thoughtful discussion, challenging us to examine our beliefs and how they translate into shared public meaning. What then are the next steps if dialogue is to be beneficial and productive? Are we ethically obliged to be politically active and engaged? Can continued dialogue be with a view to action? Who will be at the table? How best can the whole community be enlisted to identify needs and effect change?

Questioning, listening, and dialogue in a collaborative environment are pivotal to developing sustainable strategies to address the escalating needs and consequent anxieties in health care delivery within our communities.

-Agnes Hoveland

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## “Responsibility to Protect” the Focus of Ronning Seminar in Winnipeg

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The activities of the Ronning Centre for the first time extended to Winnipeg on the last Sunday in September, as an invited circle of scholars and practitioners met at the University of Winnipeg with Roger Hutchinson, the Centre’s 2008 Distinguished Visiting Fellow. Their goal: to explore the implications of the United Nations proposals for a “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P), an innovative and controversial principle in international law and diplomacy.

Everyone studied in advance the paper that Dr Hutchinson had delivered one week earlier at the Ronning Centre in Camrose. The group included political scientists, lawyers, and sociologists from the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, the General Secretary of the Mennonite Church in Canada, and the President of the Canadian Council of Churches, as well as a graduate student from Myanmar/Burma who helped the group stay focussed on how R2P might apply in the case of that country. Moira Hutchinson, a member of the Board of Project Ploughshares, added a valuable perspective to the proceedings.

There was general agreement that support for R2P might lead to military intervention but that it is a mistake to suppose that it would do so automatically. No one saw R2P as a panacea for the ills of a planet afflicted with wars, collapsed states, and states hostile to their own citizens, but all agreed that it could be a constructive step forward in the theory and practice of international law. Among the barriers to implementation is the lack of trust between military forces tasked with ensuring security and NGOs aiming to rebuild a peaceful society. The tensions arise from the contrasting nature of their respective cultures, but the necessity for co-operation between the two groups is clear.

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## The Growth Idolatry

The biggest losses on the stock market since the Great Depression have created, and will create, serious economic hardships for many. World leaders rush to save the economic system or to redesign the global financial structures that we have lived with – more or less – since the Bretton Woods agreements were signed in July 1944 and implemented after World War II. The biggest change came in March 1973 when the US dollar gave up its anchor in the gold standard and became a floating currency.

Listening to Cross Country Check-up on CBC and to endless “experts” reflecting on the problem and what to do about it, one voice one doesn’t hear very often is a call to a deeper re-examination of a growth economy as a form of idolatry. Idolatry is making anything limited, any human creation or system absolute and devoting ourselves to it as if our life depended on it. To paraphrase the Hebrew prophet Isaiah: we create human artifacts and then bow down and worship them; we have to carry them, and yet expect them to save us. How do we save the economy so it can save us? A former provincial finance minister summed it up well: we need to keep up our confidence [in the economy] and keep on spending. The biggest sin, that is, “loss of faith”, is not to consume at the accustomed levels.

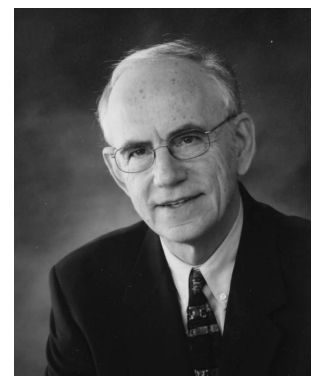
If we are willing to view the global growth economy – which, we are told, requires a minimum 3% growth per year to be healthy – as a mortal, human creation and not as a god with saving powers, we can more readily identify some of its inherent weaknesses or fatal flaws. As limited creatures within a limited planet, there is an inherent limit to growth. It is amazing to me that corporations and governments are not willing to put two and two together: the increased speed of climate change with its destructive consequences on the basics for living and the increased speed of production and consumption post World War II. This growth in the economy is at a scale never

before imagined in human history. For example from the 1950’s to the 1980’s our production and consumption increased five-fold. We are living on a limited planet as limited creatures. Any economic model which does not put a limit, a box if you will, around a model of extracting resources, manufacturing them, consuming them, and returning both manufacturing and consumption waste back into the land and air and water is a dangerous model. The economist Herman Daly, after 8 years of working with the World Bank, resigned, because they refused to change their economic model to show that all of our activity is *within* the planet. He is a strong advocate of the “ethics of limits”. David Korten in *When Corporations Rule the World* uses an apt metaphor for our growth economy. We are living like cowboys (with endless frontiers before us) on spaceship earth (where everything is interrelated and confined). The earth is full of our stuff and activities. Even renewable resources cannot renew themselves fast enough for our exploitation of them. And the “sink function”, the air, land, water that cleans our industrial and consumer waste, is overwhelmed.

The false promise of this idolatry is that it is part of “the pursuit of happiness”. However, those who since World War II have polled the “happiness index” of people, discovered that in the US, around 1956 was the highest point of people feeling

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





## Point & Counterpoint

— David J. Goa

# The Simplest of Communion

In the fourth century, in Constantinople and under the watchful eye of the Byzantine emperor, John Chrysostom (c. 347-407), later to be canonized by the church, regularly preached sermons on wealth and poverty that sent a shudder through the great city. He was the bishop appointed to the great church just next door to the Byzantine palace, and the imperial family and the first families of the great city as well as the poor regularly crowded into the church to hear one of the greatest rhetors in Christian culture. On one occasion he quoted Basil, called “the great” (c.330-379), who had said “if you have two pairs of shoes, one pair belongs to the poor” and then went on to say “and the poor have the right to come and get their pair of shoes.” On that particular day there was no rioting in the city although later, when Chrysostom was arrested and exiled, at least in part for his fiery rhetoric on behalf of the disinherited, there was a sustained riot and period of unrest until the emperor relented and brought him back to continue serving at the imperial church.

On another occasion when the emperor, troubled by the number of street people in the great city, decided to banish everyone who did not have a permanent address beyond the walls of the city Chrysostom spoke again. This time it was a haunting plea to those who, like himself, claimed to be Christian. The emperor had issued the new law to banish street people with his right hand and with his left granted licenses to the bishops of the city to open hostels for street people. He also provided public funds for the bishops to acquire, maintain, and staff the hostels. Some scholars see this as the first example of faith-based initiatives funded by the state. The issues associated with this seem always to be with us.

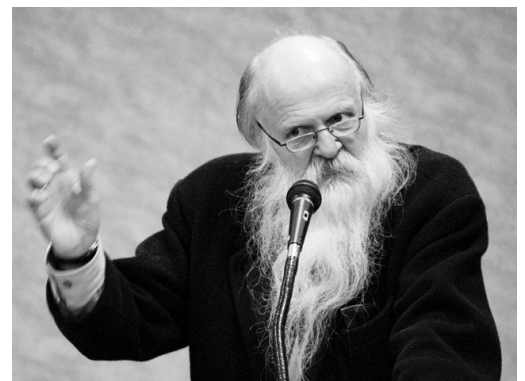
In the Sunday sermon following the emperor’s announcement of public funding for the church to do works of charity Chrysostom turned away from the imperial family and toward the bishops and church leaders. He asked why the bishops

would accept such largess when its clear result would destroy the Christian family. The Christian family, he said, only exists where there is a bedroll, a candle and a loaf of bread standing in the corner awaiting the arrival of the unseen guest, the arrival of Christ. You will meet Christ on the street, perhaps in rags and desolate, on your way home from work or from the market or from attending divine services. Or perhaps Christ will knock at your door seeking a crust of bread in order to make it to the next day. If the emperor is successful and all the bishops adopt his plan to institutionalize poverty it will become all too easy for those who claim to be Christian to send the hungry Christ down to the hostel to have his or her physical needs met.

The tragedy, and Chrysostom viewed it as a tragedy, was the net result for our life together in the world. No longer would it be normal to go to one’s neighbour’s home or have them come to one’s own and find the stranger at the table. Only the like-minded would be welcome, those who shared one’s career path, standard of living, or values. No longer was every Christian home the “house of bread”, Bethlehem, welcoming the person, man, woman or child, who had no place to lay their head. No longer was the surprising story that seeks to be told out of every human heart likely to be heard in the midst of

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







Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

## PUBLICATIONS

2008 Ronning Forum—Booklet

**Jesus for President  
Reclaiming Culture for Christ**

Two Lectures  
*Molly Worthen*

2008 Augustana Distinguished Lecture  
Booklet

**Doing Ethics in a Pluralistic World**  
*Roger Hutchinson*

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*

**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*

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*

**Thy Kingdom Come:**

**Orthodox Tradition and Public Life**

*Archbishop Lazar Puhalo*

*Augustana Lecture booklets or CDs are available for \$15.00 + GST, other CDs for \$12.00 + GST  
by calling Community Education at 1-800-590-9984, or locally 780-679-1198*



*Point & Counterpoint — Dittmar Mündel - Continued from page 6*

content. Our more than five-fold growth of consumption since that time has not increased the subjective well-being of the majority of US citizens. (I don't have the Canadian statistics.) What an irony! But, no surprise to anyone growing up in a religious culture or using religious capital in a secular mode. In no religious tradition is having, or having more, the path to being at peace with yourself, your world, or your neighbours. My experiences with Mexican campesinos or Ghanaian villagers would confirm this. They have as much joy and grief as we with our backpacks full of stuff.

A first step for assessing what human techniques and artifacts in the economic realm serve us well and which ones damage us and the planet is to wake up to reality, to free us from ideological and idolatrous group think. The central issue is not captured in the tedious mantras of "central planning" versus "the free market". At issue is an industrially driven economy that needs ongoing growth to survive. In short: we have to make people and the planet sick, so the economy can stay healthy. This is the end result of all idolatry. I like Wendell Berry's repeated prayer in his latest novel *Remembering*: "Lord, preserve us from the logical consequences of our folly."

*Point & Counterpoint — David Goa - Continued from page 7*

an evening meal hastily prepared for a late arrival. Mexican campesinos or Ghanaian villagers or those who lived in the great city in the fourth century have and had as much joy and grief as the rest of us. But, I suppose this is Chrysostom's point, we do not know that, nor are we touched by it, nor do we see the deep solidarity of the human family when our world is so complex that we are insulated from the simplest of human communions. Clement of

Alexandria (c. 150-c.215), about whom we know so little other than he had studied philosophy in Athens and served as a theologian in the wealthy city of Alexandria, is the first post-Apostolic Christian to write about wealth in his sermon, "Can a Rich Man Enter Heaven?" For him, as well, the issue was not to idolatry poverty or wealth, both common temptations in our world, but rather to seek always the simplest of communions.

*Hutchinson Food for Thought—Continued from page 5*

Although the seminar in Winnipeg was small and participation was by invitation only, its significance was apparent in the seriousness with which those involved prepared for the discussion. Some of these were active participants in the following month of October in related R2P forums, including the annual general meeting of the World Federalists and a two-day workshop to develop

a manual for field operations in General Roméo Dallaire's Child Soldiers Initiative. The arrangements made by the Ronning Centre to bring together scholars and practitioners from across disciplines to meet with Dr Hutchinson, who was on his way home to Toronto from his visit to the Centre, were greatly appreciated by all concerned.

- Tom Faulkner  
<tfaulkner@uwinnipeg.ca>

**Coming on 6 and 7 February — the Augustana Distinguished Lectures, 2009**

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda: "The Church in Public Life: Luther for the 21st Century"

Full details on pages 2 and 3.

## Jesus for President? US Faith and Politics Demystified at Ronning Forum

Unravelling the mysterious events south of the Canadian-US border while they were actually happening was Molly Worthen's accomplishment at Ronning Centre lecture/forums on 3 and 4 November, coinciding with the American election.

"Jesus for President" sums up the combined religious-political ideal analysed by Ms Worthen, a journalist and scholar now doing doctoral research at Yale University on American religious life.

She traced the roots of this ideal back to the earliest days of the Thirteen Colonies in America, when John Winthrop envisaged Massachusetts as "a city on a hill", a shining example of a godly society that Englishmen could admire and imitate.

Not all the colonists were Puritans, however, and the framers of the American Constitution deliberately refused to establish a state church. Their refusal actually made it possible for all kinds of religious tendencies from Deism to Evangelicalism to find themselves at home in the new nation.

Ms Worthen identified the American Civil War as decisive in creating a national religious consciousness, and also in differentiating the US from Canada. Up to this time there had been much in common between religious developments on either side of the border, though Catholicism, seen as an enemy by many US Protestants, was an integral part of the Canadian religious scene.

Canada, however, experienced nothing like the deadly civil conflict that led Lincoln and his successors to invoke a new national religious allegiance to mend the painful fractures in US society. In comparative isolation from European religious developments, but stimulated by the 20th-century clash with Soviet Communism, his national religious sentiment gave rise to the present day "Religious Right".

Ms Worthen's wide-ranging and animated presentation was complemented by her account of new trends in US fundamentalism in her second

lecture, "Reclaiming Culture for Christ". Where fundamentalists have often been accused of backwardness and ignorance, many of them now, as she explained, seek to appropriate the whole heritage of Western high culture, with consequences that only the future can reveal.

Ms Worthen's two vivid, thought-provoking lectures will soon be issued in booklet form by the Chester Ronning Centre.

## Turkey, Syria Destinations of Interfaith Study Tour

An interfaith study tour, organized by the Edmonton Council of Muslim Communities, will visit Turkey and Syria during two weeks in late April and early May.

Leaders of the tour will be Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi', holder of the ECMC Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Alberta, and David Goa, Director of Chester Ronning Centre.

Objectives of the study tour, as announced by the ECMC, are "to foster dialogue amongst members of diverse religious communities; to meet with Muslim and Christian leaders in both countries. and to learn as much as possible about Turkey and Syria, their religious institutions and leadership, their economy, politics, and society".

In addition, the study tour will visit some major archaeological sites in these countries and a number of important places of worship. The tour will take place between 25 April and 10 May and the basic cost is \$3900.

Anyone interested in participating in the tour should contact Ms Zahra Kasamali, 55 Garipey Crescent, Edmonton, AB, T6M 1B5; telephone 780-235-1241, e-mail <zahra@ualberta.ca>.

Deadline to register is 31 December, 2008.

## Calendar of Coming Events--Winter 2009

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

### **Between Creed and Constitution:**

#### **Freedom of Religion in Germany**

*A Ronning Seminar with Karola Radler*

Tuesday, 13 January, 12:30–2 p.m.

F104, Faith & Life Centre,

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **Democracy Today and the Challenge of Religious-Spiritual Aspiration**

*A Ronning Seminar with Don Carmichael*

Monday, 19 January, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

F103, Faith & Life Centre,

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **After Ten Years: The South African Churches and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

*A Ronning Forum with Stephen Martin*

Monday, 26 January, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

F103, Faith & Life Centre,

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **The Church in Public Life:**

#### **Luther for the 21st Century**

*The Augustana Distinguished Lecture, 2009*

*with Cynthia Moe-Lobeda*

Friday, 6 February, 7:30 p.m.

Messiah Lutheran Church

4810 - 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Camrose

### **Religious Claims in the Public Square: Lutheran Resources**

*A Workshop for Clergy & Church Workers*

*with Cynthia Moe-Lobeda*

Saturday, 7 February, 9:30 a.m.–12 noon

Trinity Lutheran Church

10014 - 81<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Edmonton

A light lunch will be served. Please call 780-679-1198 to register. There is no fee to attend this event.

### **Shame, Guilt, and Sacrifice in René Girard's Mimetic Theory**

*A Ronning Seminar with Anne McTaggart*

Monday, 9 February, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

F103, Faith & Life Centre,

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **There is No Holiness but Social Holiness**

*A Ronning Consultation with Matthew Francis*

Tuesday, 10 February, 7–8:30 p.m.

The Camrose Church of God

4722 – 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Camrose

### **Child Soldiers: Rehabilitation in the Midst of Desolation**

*A Ronning Forum with Tom Faulkner*

Thursday, 12 February, 7–8:30 p.m.

C014 (Basement of Classroom Building)

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **Hildegard of Bingen in Her Time and Now**

*A Ronning Consultation with Ingrid Cramer-Doerschel*

Saturday, 21 February, 10 a.m.–noon with lunch

Trinity Lutheran Church

10014 - 81<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Edmonton

A light lunch will be served. Please call 780-679-1198 to register. There is no fee to attend this event.

### **Does Religion Poison Everything? A Critical Response to the New Atheism**

*A Ronning Seminar with Joseph A. Buijs*

Thursday, 26 February, 12:30–2 p.m.

F104, Faith & Life Centre

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **Science as Salvation?**

#### **Religion, Science, and Myths**

*A Ronning Seminar with Janet Wesseliuss*

Tuesday, 3 March, 12:30–2 p.m.

F104, Faith & Life Centre

Augustana Campus, Camrose

### **The Wor(l)d of Wendell Berry**

*A Ronning Seminar with David Ridley*

Tuesday, 17 March, 9:25–10:40 a.m.

F103, Faith & Life Centre,

Augustana Campus, Camrose

## Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre

Ms Anna Altmann  
Mrs Doris Anderson  
Ms Muriel Anderson  
Ms Cristina Anton  
Dr Calin-Doru Anton  
Drs David & Carol Cass  
Mr Paul Childs  
Rev Raymond A. Christenson  
Edmonton Community Foundation  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada  
Reverend George O. Evenson  
Mr Alan & Mrs Ruth Ford  
Dr Berdie Fowler  
Hon Mr Justice & Mrs Harry D. Gaede  
Mr Martin Garber-Conrad  
Mr Dale Gibson & Ms Sandra Anderson  
Mr Luther & Dr Bonnie Haave  
Dr Joseph Henderson  
Ms Joyce Hendrickson  
Dr James & Mrs Sonja Hendrickson  
Mr Bryan Hillis  
Dr Karsten & Dr Deena Hinshaw  
Dr Larry Judge  
Mr Sushil Kalia  
Dr Martin Katz  
Dr Henriette Kelker  
Rev Roger Kett

Rev Dr Brian Krushel  
Mrs Sonya Kunkel  
Mr Craig Lee  
Mr & Mrs Walter Lotz  
Rev Craig Wentland & Dr Paula Marentette  
Dr Cecily Mills  
Mr Michael & Mrs Brenda Mucz  
Ms Debra Olafson  
Mr Verlyn & Mrs Mardell Olson  
Mr Norman & Mrs Margaret Olson  
Mr Edward Paproski  
Peace Lutheran Congregation  
Mr Clifford & Mrs Susan Pedersen  
Marius J. Pedersen  
Mr Alver & Mrs Arlene Person  
Mrs Margaret Rathnavalu  
Mr & Ms Shawn Robinson  
Rev Telmor & Mrs T. Adelene Sartison  
Mr Irvin & Mrs Eleanor Servold  
Rev Bob Smith  
Mr Carl Sorensen  
Mr Joseph & Mrs Barbara Stolee  
Ms Katherine E. Ward  
Ms Bernice Westlein  
Rev Vernon R. & Mrs Johanna Wishart

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*We have endeavoured to make this list as accurate as possible to 30 November 2008. 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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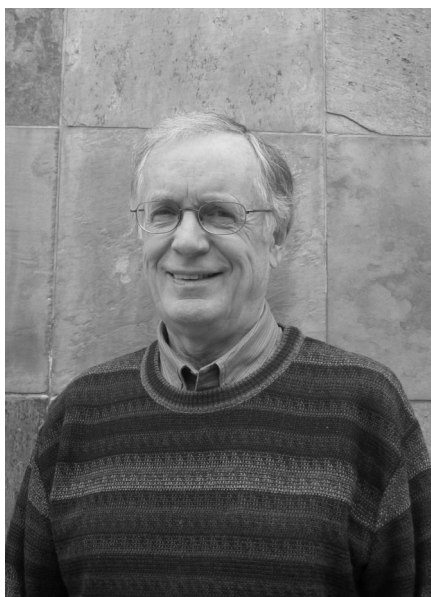
## The Chester Ronning Centre--New Publications

The Fall 2008 Ronning Forum  
*Jesus For President:  
Faith, Politics, and Why Americans Can't  
Keep Them Apart &  
Reclaiming Culture For Christ:  
Intellectual Renewal and American  
Evangelicalism, 1947-2008*

by Molly Worthen

available by the end of  
January in either booklet or CD form  
for \$15.00 + GST

For a complete listing of all  
audio and text resources available  
from the Chester Ronning Centre  
please see page 8 of this Newsletter



Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellow  
Dr Roger Hutchinson joined us in September 2008.

His work was made possible by the  
Chester Ronning Centre Endowment  
for Distinguished Visiting Fellows, and his  
Augustana Distinguished Lectures will be  
available for purchase in late Spring 2009.

We invite you to join us in supporting  
The Ronning Centre Endowment for Distinguished  
Visiting Fellow Endowment.

Please see details on the back cover.



## 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 these issues, an attention that is both inclusive and critical.

**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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## We invite you to consider supporting the Centre:

***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.



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## 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:

- ☐ The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment
- ☐ The Ronning Centre Student Internships
- ☐ The Ronning Centre Annual Fund

### 2. Decide what to give:

#### ONE TIME GIFT:

- ☐ \$ 50
- ☐ \$250
- ☐ \$500
- ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### MONTHLY GIFT:

- ☐ \$ 50/month
- ☐ \$250/month } Number of months \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \$500/month
- ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_/month

#### YEARLY GIFT:

- ☐ \$ 500/year
- ☐ \$2500/year } Number of years \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ \$5000/year
- ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_/year

### 3. Payment method:

- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Cheque: Payable to the University of Alberta
- ☐ Direct debit: Please enclose a void cheque
- Credit card:** ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Credit card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

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*The personal information requested on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for the purposes of updating and maintaining faculty/donor records. Questions concerning the collection, use, or disposal of this information should be directed to the Development Office, Augustana Campus, University of Alberta*

**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

University of Alberta, Augustana Campus  
4901 – 46 Avenue, Camrose, AB T4V 2R3  
[www.augustana.ca/ronning](http://www.augustana.ca/ronning)



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## 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.

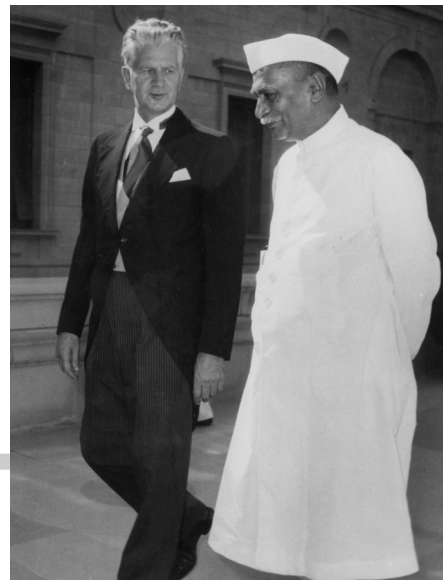
Following an initial gift to this endowment and as part of their ongoing commitment, James and Sonja Hendrickson in a challenge to our community, have offered to match any additional gifts to this endowment (to a maximum of \$100,000) made prior to December 31, 2008.

*"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**

**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



*Photo of Chester Ronning with an  
Indian diplomat, courtesy of the  
Noel and Wendy Cassady Collection.*