

The Chester Ronning
Centre Newsletter
is published
twice a year

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

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Volume 8

Issue 1

Winter 2013

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From the Director's Desk...

A Disposition toward the Future

Hope. Thomas Aquinas argued that hope was a disposition towards the future. A stance in anticipation, no matter what, that the circumstances emerging in our life and the life of human communities may be engaged in a way that draws life from death, order from chaos, meaning from anomie. He also makes the case that along with charity and faith, hope is a kind of gift inherent in human nature, part of our being. He saw this as the normal human condition. In winter-like times of life I am reminded how he framed this and let it temper the ease with which darkness seeks to capture how we see the future. What to make of the Arab Spring? What to make of the situation faced by our friends in Syria, Muslims and Christians and others, of their delicate and demanding challenge to survive and navigate what may only appear to be chaos and disintegration? What to do about the fear of Muslims and Christians alike in so many parts of the world including our own neighbourhoods? And, also, here in our home, how to speak to and engage the opportunities placed before us by the natural resources of our own province and the judgement and care needed to be good stewards of these resources and our life together both now and for the future? Together we make political judgements in the face of what, more often than we may wish to consider, are grave, complex, and demanding matters in which choice between competing virtues is hidden behind our desire for absolutes or easy answers. Does the arch of history really bend toward justice? Aquinas invites us to remember “the hope which is given us”, not to become utopian dreamers but to be alert to any and every opportunity to speak a life-giving word and act in ways that are not confined by our own fears and self-interest.

My colleagues Dittmar Mündel and Rajan Rathnavalu shaped a Ronning Centre conference on Alberta's resources and our communities that you may read about in this newsletter. They invited us to remember this stance of hope. The eminent environmentalist Bill McKibben engaged the public and the students at Augustana in ways that modelled such hope. Whether you agree with McKibben's conclusions or not it is a very good thing to see students released from their fear about whether or not they have a future to an understanding that we are all going to make that future together and they are central to how we do that. We also had the singular pleasure of welcoming Reza Shah-Kazemi in the late fall and listening to him unfold a new way Muslims can rethink central narratives of the Christian revelation.

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Bill McKibben Speaks at Augustana

Toward a “Theology of Relinquishment”

Bill McKibben is the author of a dozen books about the environment, beginning with *The End of Nature* in 1989, which is regarded as the first book for a general readership on climate change. He is the founder, together with seven undergraduate students from Middlebury College in Vermont, of 350.org, an organization that has worked in almost 200 countries to raise awareness and demand policy actions to curb the ongoing damage to the environment.

Bill is also a devout Christian, who speaks freely of Jesus, of his work as a Methodist Sunday School teacher, and as a religious author who has published *The Comforting Whirlwind: God, Job, and the Scale of Creation*. It is about the Book of Job and the environment.

Over 500 people filled the Augustana chapel on October 23rd to hear Bill McKibben paint the current picture of climate damage as well as show the range of actions of people around the world who are “connecting the dots” between rising sea levels, severe flash droughts, unexpected and frequent hurricanes, desertification, loss of potable water with the increased levels of carbon in the atmosphere.

For millennia the atmosphere had around 285 parts per million and with it human civilizations flourished. In the fossil-fuel age, which started in the early 18th century, this increased to the current level of 392 parts per million. However,

already at 350 the global temperature had risen by 1 degree, to which plants, animals and humans can—sort of—adjust. With this one degree we have lost 40% of the polar icecap and have created the unstable climate we are experiencing now. If we go up, as we are currently on the path to doing, by 4 to 5 degrees, then the global climate will become so unstable that the earth will not be able to feed humanity, and plants and animals will not be able to adapt fast enough to these changes in climate.

What are we to do? While Bill himself lives in a net-zero house (which produces as much energy as it consumes), eats locally, and drives a hybrid car, he argues that it is long beyond the time when simply individual actions are enough.

We have to change our government policies rapidly to curb our green house gas emissions. We need to reduce immediately the amount of carbon we put into the atmosphere both by a change of our own lifestyles and by using such policy tools as a carbon tax and creating policies on energy efficiency for vehicles, houses, and industries. We need to be willing to leave a lot of the unconventional oil and gas in the ground.

Moreover we need a theology of relinquishment, as a friend of mine puts it. We cannot be passive! We too have to “connect the dots” as people around the world are doing, since our actions or inactions affect people from the Maldives to Haiti.

Director's Desk

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He has made a remarkable contribution to Muslim and Christian relations and mutual understanding. New pathways have been opened both for Muslims and Christians, opened at a time, a grave time when we need to seek deeper forms of engage to push back the chaos, fear, and

harm born of the darker dimensions of human passion. Our colleague Nicholas Wickenden has written about Shah-Kazemi's lectures in this Newsletter and you may go to the Ronning Centre website and find the audio recordings of all these thoughtfully constructed and eloquently expressed offerings.

—David J. Goa

Bridging Fractured Perspectives

A Ronning Centre Conference Report

I first heard about hydraulic fracturing in the United States, while visiting friends at a retreat centre in upstate New York. On a wintry afternoon, a stone's throw away from a creek with clear running water, we sat down to watch *Gasland*, a documentary that had recently been released by a local filmmaker, Josh Fox.

Down the road, less than an hour away from where we were sitting, Josh had embarked on a journey to document a new gas extraction process called hydraulic fracturing, more commonly known as “fracking”. From his property in Pennsylvania, Fox travelled across the United States recording incident after incident of health and environmental concerns due to fracking.

The most iconic section of the film occurs in a family kitchen when a lighter is placed under a running tap and the water ignites into flames. It is a startling moment. Fox and many of the people interviewed are certain that hydraulic fracturing has transformed their drinking water aquifers into flammable, contaminated reservoirs. Perhaps even more troubling is the depiction of companies and lawmakers refusing to take responsibility or even acknowledge what is happening.

Perhaps fracking is so controversial because the process touches upon deep and primal elements of human experience. The process occurs deep underground. Natural gas is brought out of these depths as a magical, invisible elixir that heats our homes and gives our society energy. And, in some instances, fire and water are brought together in a strange alchemical union. Altogether, the images are more suitable for a tale out of *The Hobbit* than a modern documentary.

In stark contrast to the land of Tolkien, fracking is also presented as “game changing” technology that brings economic prosperity by harvesting environmentally friendly, clean-burning natural gas. Given the visions of fracking as either

economic saviour or environmental catastrophe, it is understandably hard to find common ground. In hopes of bridging such a “fractured” culture, the Ronning Centre sponsored a conference this past November. Entitled “Responsibility for the Land – Conversations on Fracking in Alberta,” the weekend asked, “How as a society can we use diversity of perspective – something that often divides us – to wisely map a path forward?”

The spirit of the conference was very positive. More than 180 people attended from across Alberta – as far south as Lethbridge and as far north as Peace River. To provide for broad understanding, guest speakers included representatives from industry, First Nations, government, farmers, academics, and the environmental movement.

Saturday's keynote speaker, Lorne Fitch, reminded us of the importance of these kinds of conversations, reminding us that one gets the future that one plans for. Fitch asked, “Do you want to lead the process, providing critical direction; do you want to follow it in the hope it meets your needs; or, do you want to be dragged into the result after all the decisions are made?”

The variety of speakers spoke to the complexity of this process, as attendees learned about well-bore integrity, gas migration, and the tension between environmental risk and our society's energy habits. This complexity further emphasized the need for interdisciplinary thinking and the number and variety of people in attendance set a positive foundation for this needed direction. However, the stories of farmers who have been adversely affected and subsequently ignored indicate that we still have some distance to go in linking our fractured perspectives.

— Rajan Rathnavalu

Presentations from the conference are now available online at: www.frackingab.wordpress.com. See page 10 for a continuing conversation this winter term with a talk by Andrew Nikiforuk.

In the 2012 Augustana Lectures

Shah-Kazemi Explores the Implications

In the Holy Qur'an (5:47, 50, 51) the Jewish Scriptures are described as "guidance and light" and the Gospel as "a guidance and an admonition to those who fear God", while the Qur'an itself is declared to be "confirming the Scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety".

Yet where the Qur'an narrates events that are also narrated in the Bible, there are often significant differences. A majority of Muslim scholars have concluded that the text of the Bible must have been distorted by those who transmitted it. A minority, however, have argued that the source of difficulty lies not in the text but rather in its interpretation.

Some of the vistas opened up by this alternative approach to the hermeneutics of Scripture were explored in the two Augustana Distinguished Lectures for 2012, delivered in Camrose and Edmonton respectively on October 29 and 30 by Reza Shah-Kazemi. Dr Shah-Kazemi is Managing Editor of the *Encyclopedia Islamica* and Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, England.

Central in Dr Shah-Kazemi's presentation is the interpretative principle that a statement empirically true may be metaphysically false. This principle can be seen exemplified in the Qur'anic line (at 4:17, relating to an action of the Prophet in an early conflict with unbelievers): "When thou threwest (a handful of dust) it was not thy act, but God's".

Dr Shah-Kazemi noted in passing the analogy with the Zen Buddhist koan, in which denial of a statement on a lower level makes possible receptivity to a truth on a higher level. In Islam such a pattern of interpretation can be recognized especially in the work of the scholar and mystic Muhyiddin ibn Arabi (AD 1165–1240).

Addressing in the first of his lectures the Muslim understanding of the Incarnation, Dr Shah-Kazemi

made reference to the verse (Qur'an 19:35) that states: "It is not befitting to the majesty of God that He should beget a son. Glory be to Him! When He determines a matter, He only says to it, 'Be', and it is." This was a direct contradiction of the Nicene Christian doctrine of the sonship of Jesus.

The birth of Jesus could thus be compared with the creation of Adam, even though he especially manifested the Spirit of God (a title given to him in the Qur'an). It would be wrong, however, according to Islamic theology, to suppose that the Spirit was confined in, and so limited to, Jesus. Ibn Arabi envisaged divinity as extending to all souls, indeed to all creation, but Spirit transcended all its manifestations, and so he could say that all creatures were "God and not God".

Christians could be regarded as concealing the reality of God within the human manifestation of Jesus. Although the Christian mystic Meister Eckhart might describe the universality of God in a way close to that of the Islamic theologians, and St Thomas Aquinas himself made the point that what was unique in Christ was the Logos as such and not any particular manifestation of it, there remained a difference between the Muslim sense of the universality of God in creation and the Christian emphasis on the particularity of the Incarnation.

In his second lecture Dr Shah-Kazemi turned to the subject of the Crucifixion of Christ Jesus. Here the Qur'an states that "they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them Nay, God raised him up unto Himself" (4:157, 158). This denial of the reality of the Crucifixion has generally been understood as negating one, albeit prominent, Christian theology of the Atonement.

Ibn Arabi, however, drawing on other verses of the Qur'an (2:154, 3:169), gives a rationale for this statement. Jesus was a martyr, and martyrs are

of Esoteric Muslim Views of Christianity

still alive; moreover Jesus as the “Spirit of God” could be thought dead but not actually killed. Christianity itself does not generally hold that the Christ, as the eternal manifestation of God, could be killed with the human Jesus.

Here is another instance of how what appeared to be an empirical denial could turn out to be a metaphysical affirmation. From this point of view, ibn Arabi’s disciple Abd al-Razzaq Kashani (d. AD 1330) described the Crucifixion as a “ruse” or “scheme”, commenting that “God is the best schemer”.

To elucidate further the Muslim understanding of the Crucifixion, Dr Shah-Kazemi presented an analysis of the teachings of Mansur al-Hallaj (c. AD 858–922), a Persian Sufi mystic, poet, and teacher, who, having been charged with heresy and many other crimes, himself was executed in a brutal and prolonged crucifixion.

Al-Hallaj inherited the spiritual legacy of Jesus as transmitted through the prophet Muhammad and Islamic teaching, and he was considered a “Christ-like” saint by ibn Arabi and his school. Among the points of resemblance is his prediction of his own execution.

Unlike other mystics of his time, he taught openly, not just to a select circle of disciples, and his success in extinguishing his sense of a human ego and identifying his will with that of God was such that he was impelled to speak in terms appropriate only to God. When he declared “I am the Truth”, his disciples could recognize that it was God speaking through him, but to common listeners his words seemed like blasphemy and formed a basis for the charges against him.

Like Jesus, al-Hallaj intended his death to serve for the salvation of all, by bearing witness to the spirit that was at the heart of the law. Again like Jesus, he explicitly forgave his executioners. He went so far as to say that they should be rewarded for what



they were doing, because they were acting out of obedience to the religious law. His conviction that he had taken on the attributes of the identity of the eternal Dr Shah-Kazemi found “enigmatic” but also such as to give his self-sacrifice significance in the context of both Islam and Christianity.

Dr Shah-Kazemi concluded his second lecture with an analysis of the symbolism of the Cross, which was meaningful for Muslims as well as Christians; indeed, the great Algerian scholar and statesman Abd el-Kader (1808–1883) claimed that “if the Christians have the sign of the Cross, we have the doctrine”.

In a now-lost work used by ibn Arabi, al-Hallaj likened the central point of the cross, where the horizontal and vertical arms intersect, to the point at which the world is transfixed by the Spirit from above, and the starting point for the individual’s mystical ascent to the state of oneness with God in which even the soul itself was eclipsed.

The horizontal arm with its breadth represented the obligatory element in worship. Al-Hallaj was an especially severe observer of religious law, particularly as it related to prayers which, though obligatory, were acts of love. The vertical arm with its height represented the voluntary element in worship, and symbolized the pathway of ascent to sanctity. Voluntary devotion was no substitute for what was obligatory but a dynamic that the

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obligatory rites set in motion. The saying of prayer was not lip service but a song to God; the movements of prayer were not a mechanical performance but, as Dr Shah-Kazemi put it, an “alchemical dance” (revealing transforming power).

The Cross as a whole thus reflected the intertwining of sanctity, love, prayer, and the Law. In its association with death it pointed to the need for extinction of the sense of ego through submission or surrender; but taking up the cross daily (as Jesus had enjoined), accepting the divine will through prayer, made death the ultimate entry to eternal life, and so pointed to resurrection.

The doctrine of the Resurrection was again an area of contact between Islam and Christianity, because the Second Coming of Jesus itself exemplified resurrection (Qur'an 4:158) and “knowledge of the hour” of Judgement (Qur'an 43:61); for al-Hallaj not just a sign but the actuality of it – he also referred to the Qur'an itself as “Resurrection”, and Jesus on his return would bring with him the book of the Law, with its life-giving spirit of love.

While the tendency of Dr Shah-Kazemi's analysis was markedly to reduce the areas of disagreement between esoteric Islam on the one hand and Christian spirituality on the other, he denied that the result should be a theological amalgam or syncretism; no religion, he stated, could be merged with any other. According to the Qur'an (5:48), God has provided a Law and a Way for each people, and will ultimately reveal the truth about matters on which there are different opinions. In the meantime, in his view, though conversion from one religion to another is possible, it is not called for; the relation between one faith and another should be expressed in “beautiful dialogue” (Qur'an 16:125).

David Goa, Director of the Ronning Centre, has commented on Dr Shah-Kazemi's singular contribution in opening a pathway for Muslims to reconsider the various layers of spiritual meaning in the Gospel birth narratives and those of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “In opening these new pathways for Muslims, he has provided

new pathways for Christians also in their endeavour to understand what Christians and Muslims may deeply share, as well as the distinct and particular dimensions of the divine revelation each tradition holds dear, and may hold dear without disparaging the insight and teaching of the other.”

* * *

Complete audio recordings of Dr Shah-Kazemi's lectures and the discussions that followed them are now available online on the Ronning Centre website. A revised text of the lectures is scheduled to appear in print in the Ronning Centre's series of publications. Dr Shah-Kazemi's newest book, The Spirit of Tolerance in Islam, has just been published by the Institute of Ismaili Studies (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

—Nicholas Wickenden

**World Mission Festival
Annual Conference
Alberta Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Canada**

Thinking About Islam in Canada

**A conversation with David Goa,
Director of the Chester Ronning Centre
for the Study of Religion and Public Life,
Augustana Campus, University of Alberta**

Saturday, April 13th, 9:30 AM
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
40 Holmes Street, Red Deer

All are welcome
Please register with
Sharon Villettard, Program Director, Synod of Alberta and the Territories, ELCIC
svillettard@elcic.ca
780.439.9836

*Many of us have Muslim neighbours and friends.
Islam is a growing influence in Canada.
You are invited to join in a conversation
about the place of Islam in Canada
and the various ways Muslims engage their faith
and the public life of Canada.
We will think together about the gifts and challenges
Christians may see in their relationship
to Muslims and to Islam
in the context of a changing Canada.*

Why Care about Understanding Religion?

David Goa Speaks in Vancouver

On Tuesday, 6 November 2012, David Goa was invited to give a talk to the University of Alberta President's Society in Vancouver. The President's Society was created to recognize individuals and organizations that play a leading role in supporting the university as donors. In his address, David restated the vision and prospects of the Chester Ronning Centre. Here we present his text:

Chairman Edwards, President Samarasekera, Dean Cormack, colleagues and distinguished guests:

I grew up in a home where the table conversation often focused on two central dimensions of human life: politics and religion. So it is lovely to bring these sometimes difficult and always remarkable themes to the table and think about them with you tonight. Perhaps I can give you a glimpse into why we need to care about understanding religion in the contemporary world and why those with a strong religion need to care about understanding the civil life.

Our university has taken a lead in Canada to enlarge the religious and civil conversation and our public understanding on many of the most contested and difficult issues and themes we face in Canada and throughout our fragile world. The University of Alberta established the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life when Augustana University College became part of the UofA. It was the first such centre in a public university in our country and remains the only such centre in a public university.

The Ronning Centre was a response to the grave need to bring scholars and public intellectuals together along with leaders in various religious communities. President Samarasekera has called the university community to consider our responsibility for students and for our society, to recalibrate our knowledge and sensibilities and do what we can to enliven citizenship in our pluralistic world. One thing we can do is connect communities that have often been on the margins

with what the world of learning can offer to ease tensions and deepen understanding across the boundary between the silo of religion and the silo of the civil. The humanities offer a deeper understanding of all traditions of meaning, deep enough to temper the ideological fashions spawned by the organized inadequacies of history.

We have shaped the Centre's work to draw together various disciplines and scholars from across the academic world, to engage the public and religious communities in learning and speaking together about the gifts and challenges associated with religious and civil perspectives on difficult and demanding matters of public interest. The Centre was named for Chester Ronning, Canada's diplomat to China in the wake of its revolution. Ronning's deeply hospitable way of working was something he often said he learned as a child growing up in China. He was a first citizen of Camrose where Augustana is located, and the Centre is proud to bear his name and continue the best of his work.

Consider the geopolitical events that splash across the pages of our newspapers. They remind us that the way the West has treasured

"distinctions between the private sphere and the public sphere and between belief and knowledge" does not hold for millions of people in our struggling world. It is no longer possible to ignore or marginalize those who understand the world through the lens of a strong religion. We consider them quaint or pre-modern at our peril. It is equally problematic when those with strong civil perspectives are dismissed by religious communities. They need not be enemies. We all now live in a world where these perspectives, religious and civil, are ever-present in public life and challenge and change both our



Salafists attacks Sufi shrines in Mali.

understanding of Canada and liberal democratic societies and our geopolitical relations.

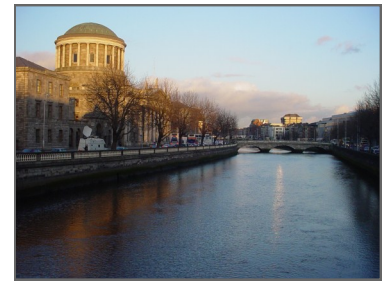
Let me sample the issues that come within the sphere of our concern and speak to why we should care about understanding religion and deepen our understanding of the capacity of the civil life:

- How can the fear of Islam and Muslims in Western countries be explained, and how can it be countered?
- How can the fear of the West and particularly of Christians in Muslim societies be explained, and how can it be countered?
- When blasphemy is directed against a religion, what are the appropriate responses?
- How can religious understandings of human nature, suffering, and death help in shaping public policies on the development and uses of the new genetic medical science? How can religious understandings help in decisions that must be made about the end of life in cases of terminal illness?
- When can doctrines and declarations of human rights be accepted as a civil gift, and when may they become instruments against culture and community?
- How can religious teachings and leadership enlarge our moral imagination so as to promote alternatives to war?
- How can religious teachings enhance humanity's capacity for the stewardship of the natural world and for living together on this fragile planet?
- How can the religious life moderate human appetite inspire people to set meaningful limits to growth, and encourage a sharing of resources?

I was asked by the Publisher of the *Edmonton Journal* to come and engage his staff on the intersection of religion and public life, an intersection that often leads to accidents and tragedy and death, and think with them about how the Ronning Centre may be of help to those charged with reporting on such events.

It was hard to tell how many journalists would come, perhaps seven or eight, and I would have to be quick to make my point since they all had deadlines and would likely only give twenty or thirty minutes to our time together. Thirty-five came. I was brief and then the conversation erupted: questions, queries, comments – all deeply sober and spoken out of a concern we seldom see in journalism. They stayed for close to an hour and a half, ignoring the impulse to get back and meet the deadline for their daily copy.

In thinking about why they were so engaged it occurred to me that each one of them had become acutely aware of the gravity of issues of religion and public life; acutely aware of how difficult it is to write about such issues and get beyond



spokespersons

Abortion debate divides Dublin.

drawn from the silo of strong religion and from a silo of strong civil ideology. From their comments it was clear they needed easy and quick access to public intellectuals who could move speak readily and with deep knowledge of the landscape of both the religious and civil perspectives at play. Such public intellectuals are rare and hard to find, especially when your copy is required before the end of the day. This is the reason so much reporting in this area often fuels the enmity in both quarters. This is why reporters come to be considered paladins on behalf of one side or the other.

Each of my interlocutors that day knew journalists, or knew them at one remove, who had been caught up in the violence of such newsworthy events. Let me give you a haunting set of statistics:

- Second World War: 2 journalists killed
- From 1970 to 2010: 600 journalists killed
- In 2011: 107 journalists killed
- In the first half of 2012: 70 killed; 151 imprisoned

The cost in life and talent of journalists around the world has been enormous; and with their demise the cost to public understanding is beyond measure. The thirty-five journalists who came and stayed for our conversation that day were well aware of their need for an enlarged understanding of religion and skills to speak about these issues in ways that eased enmity instead of inflaming it.

Let me give you a story and then a final comment on what the Ronning Centre has initiated to address this issue. It is told by the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

When Stalin was ruling from the Kremlin and Hitler's armies were pushing eastward in 1944, Yevtushenko's mother took him from Siberia to Moscow. He was ten years old. They were in a huge crowd that witnessed a procession of twenty thousand German prisoners of war being marched across Red Square. Yevtushenko recalls in his autobiography:

"The pavements swarmed with onlookers, condoned off by soldiers and police. The crowd was mostly women – Russian women with hands roughened by hard work, lips untouched by lipstick, and with thin hunched shoulders which had borne half of the burden of the war. Every one of them must have had a father or a husband, a brother or a son killed by the Germans. They gazed with hatred in the direction from which the column was to appear. At last we saw it. The generals marched at the head, massive chins stuck out; lips folded disdainfully, their whole demeanor meant to show superiority over their plebeian victors. "They smell of perfume, the bastards," someone in the crowd said with hatred. The women were clenching their fists. The soldiers and policemen had all they could do to hold them back.

"All at once something happened to them. They saw German soldiers, thin, unshaven, wearing dirty blood-stained bandages, hobbling on crutches or leaning on the shoulders of their comrades; the soldiers walked with their heads down. The street became dead silent – the only sound was the

shuffling of boots and the thumping of crutches.

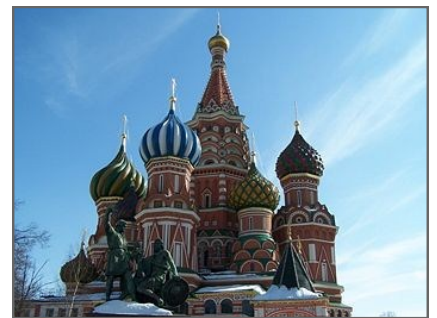
"Then I saw an elderly woman in broken-down boots push herself forward and touch a policeman's shoulder, saying, "Let me through." There must have been something about her which made him step aside. She went up to the column, took from inside her coat something wrapped in a coloured handkerchief and unfolded it. It was a crust of black bread. She pushed it awkwardly into the pocket of a soldier, so exhausted that he was tottering on his feet. And now from every side women were running toward the soldiers, pushing into their hands bread, cigarettes, whatever they had. The soldiers were no longer enemies. They were people."

One of my great teachers, Hannah Arendt, said: "Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover."

Every day the media gives us a glimpse into struggles on the margins of religion and public life. Often all we see or read reflects the expansion of enmity, the deepening of violence, the triumph of hatred.

And the reports give us little or no sense of where the life-giving wellsprings may be. Strong religious perspectives and strong civil perspectives, each confined to its own silo, pitching, if we are lucky, worn-out ideas toward the other. Heavy weapons often follow.

A major initiative of the Chester Ronning Centre is the establishment of Senior Fellowships to support the work of a select body of scholars and public intellectuals able to engage constructively and profoundly with the challenges posed to and by religion in the life of the world today.



Blasphemy condemned in Moscow.

Senior Fellows will participate in public forums nurturing a hospitable interchange across boundaries of interest and ideology

Accessibility through a religion and public life portal will give journalists immediate access to our Senior Fellows and their expertise enlarging the moral imagination on what is behind breaking stories

Briefing papers by Fellows will insert the best thinking from the depth of the study of the humanities on what is behind a

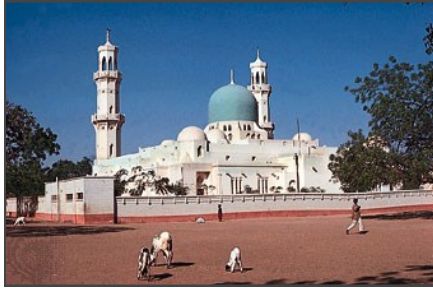
breaking story and be available to journalists within 24 hours of the story surfacing. Virulent perspectives will be tempered by the knowledge and sensibilities of hospitable public intellectuals.

We will undertake to organize briefing seminars for the media within 24 hours of a news story breaking, seminars available internationally through webcasts and anchored by our Senior Fellows

We would also host and provide stipends for selected journalist to attend symposia where the Senior Fellows would deepen and broaden their understanding of emerging issues in religion and public life.

A National Conversation on Religion and Public Life will bring together our political leaders from time to time. This will be done across party and ideological lines for conversation with our Senior Fellows on the issues of religion and public life on which they are expected to legislate.

Joining in Interfaith Conversation on Emerging Issues, we will build on our current partnerships with religious institution in the Muslim world and beyond to explore the finest thinking within our various religious traditions on emerging issues that challenge the global community.



Nigeria: deadly Christian-Muslim clashes.

If we learn anything from the rich study of the humanities, and we learn much, it is that religious and civil traditions transcend all ideological claims made in the heat of debate and struggle. Public intellectuals who are hospitable to these religious and civil traditions can draw on what is best in them to pour the oil of gladness on the wounds of the past and the struggles of the present. While we may not be able to change people's minds on strongly held perspectives we may change their hearts and stance towards each other. The other will no longer be the enemy. They will be people struggling with difficult issues. This is our public service as we go beyond the walls of the academy and into the public square and into the precincts of religious communities. The University of Alberta through the Ronning Centre and other initiatives is recovering this part of what has been one of the universities' historic but often forgotten gifts to our common life in a fragile world.



Alberta: are our politics religious?

The Ronning Centre continues its public dialogue on

*Responsibility for the Land:
Conversations about Fracking in Alberta*

with **Andrew Nikiforuk** speaking
at the Augustana Campus:

Friday 1 March, 11:30 am

**"A Bridge to Where?
Fracking Tight Oil and Shale Gas"**
C167, Classroom Building

Friday, 1 March, 7:00 pm

**"An Extreme Servitude:
Fracking in a Petro State"**
2-004 Epp Conference Room

For the Healing of the Whole Person

While the relationship between spirituality and medicine has been long-standing, the last number of centuries has seen an increasing separation between the two disciplines [Koenig, *Handbook of Religion and Health* (2012), p. 604]. Studies in spirituality by theologians and various spiritual authorities have followed one trajectory (often disengaged from studies in the human sciences), while health care professionals and researchers have developed their own definitions and understandings of spirituality (largely uninformed by the spiritual traditions). Hopeful signs, however, have emerged in recent years, suggesting that the gap between these two traditions may be closing. It appears that the time is ripe for a necessary and instructive dialogue to occur between these twin healing traditions.

Health care providers, researchers, academics, and spiritual authorities from various spiritual traditions have independently considered the impact of Spirituality/Religion (S/R) research. This has led to a tripling of publications in the area of evidence-based S/R literature over the last 10 years to 3700. A large number of these studies have found a significant positive relationship between S/R involvement and mental or physical health; that S/R people experience more positive emotions (well-being, happiness, life satisfaction) and fewer emotional disorders (depression, anxiety, suicide, substance abuse); and that S/R people generally are physically healthier (fewer cardiovascular diseases, better immune and endocrine functions, perhaps less cancer and better prognosis and greater longevity) [Koenig, *Handbook of Religion and Health* (2012), pp. 15-34, 600-602]. This has strong societal implications, particularly given the rise in incidence of both mental health conditions and chronic illness, and an aging population [with 78 per cent of Canadians over age 70 indicating that religion is of moderate to high importance to them [Statistics Canada, *Ethnic Diversity Survey* (2002) – values adjusted to 2012 percentages]. With diminishing human resources and increasing fiscal constraints, any strategies that can reduce the toll of illness – economic and otherwise – are desirable. Resources and practices available within the spiritual traditions, in combination with medical interventions, hold much promise.

While the number of evidence-based S/R and health research publications has increased significantly, this research has advanced largely apart from dialogue with the spiritual traditions. If it were to continue on this trajectory, the wisdom of the spiritual traditions may become completely overlooked or dismissed, and knowledge confined only to that recorded in the scientific, peer-reviewed journals of the last 5 to 10 years – a far cry from that which has been amassed and retained by the spiritual traditions over several millennia. Therefore, the importance of engaging in fruitful dialogue and collaboration cannot be overstated.

In response to this reality, a group of researchers, academics, health care practitioners, clinicians, and spirituality authorities have begun to meet to discuss ways to facilitate both the exchange of ideas between these traditions, and identify and collaborate around a program of research. This project has involved a partnership between faculty members of the Department of Occupational Therapy, the Ronning Centre, and St Joseph's College, University of Alberta, and is under the lead of Assistant Professor Suzette Brémault-Phillips. Collaborators from various universities and health care provider groups are supportive of and key contributors to this project.

As a result of this initiative, it is anticipated that there will be ongoing collaboration between S/R traditions and medicine. Clinicians will have knowledge of S/R practices, and be equipped to integrate S/R tools into health care service provision. Clients will experience S/R as an integral, rather than ancillary, aspect of health care. They will feel more comfortable utilizing and speaking about S/R practices they employ to support health, and manage those aspects of health that medicine is unable to address (such as chronic pain). This will improve quality of life; facilitate greater health promotion, illness prevention, and disease management in the areas of both mental and physical health; and reduce escalating health care costs. In addition, research examining the impact of various spiritual disciplines/practices on health outcomes will be conducted, and interventions developed that will help clients and caregivers alike more confidently utilize S/R resources associated with positive health outcomes.



From the Noel and Wendy Cassady Collection

A Life of Achievement

Brian Evans, author of the forthcoming biography of Chester Ronning, explains the significance of Ronning's life and work.

Chester Alvin Ronning passed away on 31 December 1984. During his ninety years he touched many lives and accomplished great things. He received numerous honours, including the Alberta Order of Excellence, the highest accolade given by his home province, and the Companion of the Order of Canada, the highest civilian award given by his country. In 1983 the Government of China held a dinner in his honour at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. From the day of his birth, December 13, 1894, at Fancheng, Hubei province, Ronning's life was entwined with

the history of modern China. He invariably measured his life by its key events.

Ronning became a teacher and a political leader, but China was his passion. In 1945 he received a diplomatic posting to the land of his birth, where he observed firsthand the revolution that brought the Chinese Communists to power in 1949. During those years he forged a lifelong friendship with Zhou Enlai, the first Premier of the People's Republic of China. Ronning went on to represent Canada as its first Ambassador to Norway and as High Commissioner to India, where he became a confidant of Prime Minister Nehru. Ronning was called a "giant" during a period popularly known as the "golden age" of Canadian diplomacy.

A meeting with Ronning always featured laughter, and amazing stories of exotic places and extraordinary people. He was a natural at everything he attempted from sculpting to diplomacy. He was tall, slender, handsome, loquacious, interested in everyone and everything around him, gregarious, a talented public speaker, engaging, tri-lingual (at least), fearless, filled with the milk of human kindness, and funny. Ronning spoke Chinese as his first language, with Norwegian, the language of his parents, and English, the language of his parents' adopted country, the United States, as later acquisitions. Throughout his life he used languages to great effect, communicating easily with people. His intelligence, impish sense of humour, and innate curiosity made him a natural teacher, politician, and diplomat. After Canada, Ronning identified with China and Norway, and latterly with the United States. Thus he was a proud Canadian with Chinese sensibility, Norwegian calm practicality, and American drive. By any measure, Chester Alvin Ronning was a remarkable person, who led a remarkable life.



From the Noel and Wendy Cassady Collection

To Be Published June 2013

The Remarkable Chester Ronning, Proud Son of China

BRIAN L. EVANS

Scholar and diplomat Brian L. Evans gives us the first English-language biography of Chester A. Ronning (1894–1984): diplomat, politician, educator, and one of Canada's major public figures. This fascinating book tells the story of Ronning, a man who won many honours, and deepens its readers' knowledge of Canada's post-Second World War diplomacy and Canada–China relations. Ronning was an extraordinary Canadian who combined Chinese sensibility with Norwegian calm practicality and American drive. His life journey was entwined with the history of China over many decades. Based on published materials, archival documents, and many hours of interviews with Ronning and his friends and fellow politicians, *The Remarkable Chester Ronning* offers both a thorough and entertaining biography and a lens through which to view international politics.

Brian L. Evans, CM, studied Chinese and Chinese history at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies and later served with the Canadian Embassy in Beijing. He was Professor of Chinese History at the University of Alberta (1961–1996). He lives in Edmonton.

352 pages • 50 B&W photographs, 2 maps, preface, notes, bibliography, index
Co-published by the University of Alberta Press and
the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life

ISBN 978-0-88864-663-7 9780888646637
978-0-88864-720-7 • \$27.99 (T) EPUB

978-0-88864-663-7 • 6" x 9" • \$34.95 (T) paper
978-0-88864-721-4 • \$27.99 (T) Kindle

Public Life and the Mennonite Anabaptist Tradition

In March 2011, the Ronning Centre hosted the Religious Perspectives on Civil Life Symposium, with scholars discussing Islam, neo-Calvinism, and Lutheranism. We continue the conversation this term with a talk on Anabaptist perspectives by former Augustana Dean and current professor of Political Science, Roger Epp. The talk will take place Wednesday, 27 February, at 7 pm at First Mennonite in Edmonton (3650-91 Street).

This talk will explore the deep ambivalence or wariness about public life that is characteristic of the Mennonite-Anabaptist inheritance. While particular Mennonite communities in North America might be identified variously with peace-and-justice activism, quietism and conservative-evangelical politics, each of these tendencies borrows a great deal – not always well – from other formulations. Whatever value Mennonites have placed, say, on mutual aid and service to others, they may have little to contribute to the

idea of public life. This talk will suggest, however, that a thoughtful ambivalence, informed by the rough historical experience of civic exclusion and official violence on this and other continents, can serve a greater good in its own way. It ought to be attentive to the outsider; able to build (inclusive) institutions of a common life with or without state sponsorship; watchful for the militarization of the public realm; and willing to stand outside and against it when the time comes to do so.

Roger Epp is professor of political science at the University of Alberta, where he served from 2004 to 2011 as founding dean of the Augustana Campus in Camrose. His research interests include such diverse subjects as the rural West, settler-aboriginal relations, higher education, and, from a critical position, theory and ethics in international politics. His published work includes We Are All Treaty People: Prairie Essays (2008). He has been a visiting research professor at universities in the UK and the US.

Doniger to Address Religious Studies Symposium

Noted authority on world religions, Prof. Wendy Doniger of the University of Chicago will be the keynote speaker at a Religious Studies Symposium at the University of Alberta in late April.

The theme of the symposium will be “Religion and Masculinities”. It is jointly sponsored by the Program in Religious Studies at the University of Alberta and the Chester Ronning Centre.

Prof. Doniger is Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago; also in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations, the Committee on Social Thought, and the College.

In addition to Prof. Doniger’s talk, sessions at the Symposium are envisaged on the subjects of missions and missionaries, on questions surrounding marriage and sexual morality and

behaviour, on polygamy, and on gendered religious behaviour.

The Symposium, an annual event with a different theme each year, takes place this year on April 26th and 27th. It is open to the public.

Scholarly papers that address masculinity/ies in religious contexts or from religious perspectives will be presented; with experts from many different disciplines participating.

Graduate students as well as established scholars are welcome to contribute; anyone wishing to do so should contact the organizers at the University of Alberta: Sarah Carter (History & Classics); Andrew Gow (Director of Religious Studies, and Professor, History & Classics); Felice Lifshitz (Women’s and Gender Studies; Religious Studies); and Jane Samson (History & Classics)

Further details will be posted on the Ronning Centre website as they become available.

Welcome and Farewell: Advisory Committee Changes

This past December, the Ronning Centre Advisory Committee has seen a lot of changes. We have welcomed ten new members and said goodbye to seven long-term members. These retiring members will continue to be involved in the work of the Centre through their participation in roundtables, which will be forums for gathering professionals and colleagues to discuss current issues of religion and public life. We are grateful for the contributions of all our retiring members and thank them for their years of service:

**Merrill Distad, Paul Harland,
Agnes Hoveland, Richard Masson,
Shayda Nanji, Telmor Sartison,
Janet Wesselius**

We look forward to continuing the conversation with you in other forums!

We also are pleased to welcome ten new members to the Advisory Committee. These members will serve a three-year term and will fulfil a vital role as supporters of the Centre, shaping the programming, constituting a resource for Centre staff, and acting as liaison for the work of the Centre in their contexts. We welcome the following new members:

John Bruneau is a long-time supporter of the Centre; he served as former dean and CEO of Gardner College and before that was pastor of First Baptist Church in Camrose.

Ingrid Cramer-Doerschel is pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Edmonton and has joined in hosting many CRC events.

Roger Epp is professor of political science at the University of Alberta and former dean of the Augustana campus. His foresight led to the forming of the Ronning Centre.

Azim Jeraj is a member of the Ismaili community. He owns a consulting business in Edmonton and has worked with the Ronning Centre in developing numerous events.

Natasha Martel is a student at the University of Alberta Augustana campus and will assist the Centre in its work with undergraduate students.

Jerôme Melançon teaches political philosophy and Canadian politics at the University of Alberta Augustana campus. As well as a scholar of note Jerome is also a fine poet.

Rajan Rathnavalu is just finishing up undergraduate studies at the Augustana campus; he was a leader of the recent “Responsibility for the Land” conference on fracking and plans to pursue graduate work.

Kevin Sharp is a long-time supporter of the Centre and a businessman in Camrose.

Jack Waschenfelder teaches religion at the University of Alberta Augustana campus and specializes in the study of Indian religion, regularly leading students in field trips to India.

Nicholas Wickenden is professor of history emeritus from the University of Alberta and has long served as the Centre’s publication editor with his expertise on design.

We are grateful to the new members for their willingness to serve and look forward to the unique gifts each one of you bring to the work we do. We could not do it without you!

RECONCILIATION BECOMING A NEW CREATION

Orthodox Perspectives on a Human Longing



Five Lectures by David J. Goa
July 8–12, 2013
Vancouver School of Theology



Is the struggle for personal holiness and social justice the same struggle? Is the journey towards personal salvation part and parcel of the unfolding of cosmic transformation? Why, in the Christian East's spiritual way, is a recovery of the body, of human relationships, and of the life of the world the existential trinity central to all its disciplines including its patterns of worship? Does Orthodoxy have anything to teach us about the pathways of reconciliation "to our deepest distress", to the healing of enmity and the recovery of empathy between people(s), and, finally, to the restoration of all creation? What has Orthodoxy made of the Apostle Paul's notion that in and through Jesus Christ "all things were made" and "are made new" despite brokenness and wounds? Why, within this tradition of the Christian Church, are historical, cultural, and personal wounds understood, in the end, as gifts and treasures and the sources of a new creation?

The five topics David Goa will address are:

- Scripture as revelation of estrangement, reconciliation, and restoration
- Human nature, friendship with God and a life of communion
- "Sin fractures the vision not the fact" (Auden)
- Salvation and the healing of the world
- Holiness and the restoration of all things

For more information, see the school website: www.vst.edu.

Ronning Centre Cafés for Winter 2013

At Edmonton

The winter Philosophers' Cafés in Edmonton will focus on the general theme of "Does imprisonment fit the crime?"

All sessions at Steeps, The Urban Tea House
11116 - 82 (Whyte) Ave, Edmonton

Do Prisons Actually Accomplish What We Expect Them To?

Farzard Bawani (John Howard Society)

26 January, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Can Our Justice System Be Genuinely "Restorative"?

Janet-Sue Hamilton (Retired Warden, Edmonton Institution for Women)

9 February, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Is a Meaningful Life Possible for Those in Prison?

Teresa Kellendonk (Archdiocese of Edmonton)

23 February, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Is Spirituality in Prisons Really Meaningful?

Ron Nikkel (President, Prison Fellowship International)

9 March, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Is Insanity a Demeaning Defence?

Annalise Acorn (Faculty of Law, University of Alberta)

23 March, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Is There Life after Prison?

Jonathan Nicolai-de Koning, Community Corrections Chaplain, Mustard Seed)

6 April, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

At Camrose

The winter Religion and Public Life Cafés in Camrose will focus on the theme "Finding Hope in Dark Times."

All sessions at Café Connections
at The Open Door, 4825 - 51 Street, Camrose

Beyond False Optimism and Passivity

Dittmar Mündel, Associate Director of the Ronning Centre

Friday, 25 January 8:30-10:00 a.m.

From Despair and Apathy to Hope

Rajan Rathnavalu, former Augustana student

Friday, 15 February, 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Hope within Our Communities

Carmelle Mohr, former Augustana student

Friday, 8 March, 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Doxology as Hope

David J. Goa, Director of the Ronning Centre

Friday, 5 April, 8:30-10:00 a.m.



Calendar of Coming Events - Winter 2013

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

JANUARY

Caring for the Faith of Others

by David Goa, Ronning Centre

Occasional Lecture Series

Thursday, 24 January, 7:00 pm

Advent Lutheran Church

11 Scenic Acres Gate, Calgary

Beyond False Optimism and Passivity

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by

Dittmar Mündel, Professor of Religious Studies,

Augustana Campus

Friday, 25 January, 8:30–10:00 am

Café Connections at The Open Door

4825 - 51 Street, Camrose

Do Prisons Actually Accomplish What We Expect Them To?

A Philosophers' Café animated by Farzad Bawani,

John Howard Society Board Director

Saturday, 26 January, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – Whyte (82nd) Avenue

Edmonton

Caring for All Creation

by Dittmar Mündel, Ronning Centre

Occasional Lecture Series

Tuesday, 29 January, 7:00 pm

Advent Lutheran Church

11 Scenic Acres Gate, Calgary

FEBRUARY

Can Our Justice System Be Genuinely “Restorative”?

A Philosophers' Café animated by Janet-Sue

Hamilton, Retired Warden,

Edmonton Institution for Women

Saturday, 9 February, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – Whyte (82nd) Avenue

Edmonton

Code-Switching in Rap Music

A Ronning Centre Seminar with Feisal Kirumira,

Instructor, Augustana Campus

13 February, 3:00 pm

Roger Epp Conference Room

Augustana Campus

From Despair and Apathy to Hope

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by

Rajan Rathnavalu, former Augustana student

Friday, 15 February, 8:30–10:00 am

Café Connections at The Open Door

4825 - 51 Street, Camrose

Is Meaningful Life Possible for Those in Prison?

A Philosophers' Café animated by Teresa Kellendonk,

Associate Director Pastoral Care,

Archdiocese of Edmonton

Saturday, 23 February, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – Whyte (82nd) Avenue

Edmonton

A Democratic Faith

A Ronning Centre Seminar with Jérôme Melançon,

Department of Political Studies

Tuesday, 26 February, 2:15–3:30 pm

F1-305, Augustana Campus, Camrose

Public Life and the Mennonite-Anabaptist Tradition

Distinguished Visiting Fellow Lecture with

Roger Epp, Political Science, University of Alberta

Wednesday, 27 February, 7:00 pm

First Mennonite Church

3650 – 91 Street NW, Edmonton

The Natural World and Development

by Dittmar Mündel, Ronning Centre

Occasional Lecture Series

Thursday, 28 February, 7:00 pm

Advent Lutheran Church

11 Scenic Acres Gate, Calgary

Calendar of Coming Events - Winter 2013

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

MARCH

A Bridge to Where? Fracking Tight Oil and Shale Gas

*Distinguished Visiting Fellow Lecture with
Andrew Nikiforuk, Journalist and Author
Friday, 1 March, 11:30 am
C167, Classroom Building, Augustana Campus*

An Extreme Servitude: Fracking in a Petro State

*Distinguished Visiting Fellow Lecture with
Andrew Nikiforuk, Journalist and Author
Friday 1 March, 7:00 pm
2-004, Epp Conference Room, Augustana Campus*

Do Our Justice Systems Really Do Justice?

*Distinguished Visiting Fellow Lecture with Ron Nikkel,
President of Prison Fellowship International
Thursday, 7 March, 3:00 pm
King's University College
9125 – 50 Street NW, Edmonton*

Hope within Our Communities

*A Religion and Public Life Café animated by
Carmelle Mohr, former Augustana student
Friday, 8 March, 8:30–10:00 am
Café Connections at The Open Door
4825 - 51 Street, Camrose*

Is Spirituality in Prisons Really Meaningful?

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Ron Nikkel,
President, Prison Fellowship International
Saturday, 9 March, 1:00–3:30 pm
Steeps, 11116 – Whyte (82nd) Avenue, Edmonton*

Do Our Justice Systems Really Do Justice?

*Distinguished Visiting Fellow Lecture with
Ron Nikkel, President, Prison Fellowship International
Tuesday, 11 March, 4:00 pm
Anderson Hall 117
University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive W., Lethbridge*

Is Insanity a Demeaning Defence?

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Annalise Acorn,
Lawlor Professor of Law and Ethics,
Faculty of Law, University of Alberta
Saturday, 23 March, 1:00–3:30 pm
Steeps, 11116 – Whyte (82nd) Avenue, Edmonton*

APRIL

Doxology as Hope

*A Religion and Public Life Café animated by
David Goa, Director of the Ronning Centre
Friday, 5 April, 8:30–10:00 am
Café Connections at The Open Door
4825 - 51 Street, Camrose*

Is There Life After Prison?

*A Philosophers' Café animated by
Jonathan Nicolai-de Koning, Community
Corrections Chaplain, Mustard Seed
Saturday, 9 April, 1:00–3:30 pm
Steeps, 11116 – Whyte (82nd) Avenue, Edmonton*

Evangelical and Orthodox Perspectives on the Environment

*by David Goa, Ronning Centre
Occasional Lecture Series
Thursday, 11 April, 7:00 pm
Advent Lutheran Church
11 Scenic Acres Gate, Calgary*

Thinking about Islam in Canada

*by David Goa at the Synod of Alberta & Territories
meeting of the ELCIC
Saturday, 13 April, 9:30 am
Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Red Deer
Please register with Sharon Villettard: svillettard@elcic.ca*

Distinguished Visiting Fellow

Wendy Doniger

*Friday 26 April, Saturday 27 April
Keynote talks at the Religion and Masculinities
Symposium, co-sponsored by the Ronning Centre*

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.

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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.



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

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.

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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.

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*Conference on Fracking at Augustana
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