

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

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From the Director's Desk...

The Joy of Statistics

I have never been one for statistics. I leave that to sociologists and demographers. The recent analysis of Statistics Canada data on the religious landscape of Canada, however, provides us with lots to think about. Let me pull forward a bit of it.

Two-thirds of Canadians identify either as Catholic or Protestant according to the 2011 census. In 1971 Protestants made up about 41% of the population, while Catholics garnered 47%. In 2011 the Protestant population dropped to 27% and the Catholic to 39%. While statistics tell us something, we can never be quite sure what it is they tell us. Consider these figures. While most Quebecers self-identify as Catholic, few attend liturgy, and some of those who do attend, by their own admission, do so for “cultural” reasons, not out of religious devotion.

While we see a decline in Protestant and Catholic numbers, those Canadians who belong to and claim other religions – including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Eastern Orthodox Christianity – is growing. In the last two decades this group has grown from 4% of the population to 11%, according to the 2011 census. At the same time the number of Canadians who do not affiliate with any religion has risen from 4% in 1971 to 24%, nearly a quarter of the population, in 2011.

About 20% of the Canadian population currently was born in some other country, while in our neighbour country to the south 13% (including unauthorized immigrants) falls into this category. Does this increase the percentage of those who affiliate with religion? Does it increase the percentage of those who are unaffiliated? A casual impression would suggest, for example, that the recent immigration from China has brought in both a substantial number of evangelical Christians and many who are religiously unaffiliated. We await further analysis.

Let's drill down a bit into the statistics on various religions, comparing their current affiliation with that of the 1991 census. The Roman Catholic population has remained relatively stable at upwards of 13 million. The United Church of Canada has dropped by more than a million adherents to 2,007,610.

—Continued on page 2

Ronning Centre Appoints First Junior Fellows

The Chester Ronning Centre is pleased to announce the award of our first two Junior Fellowships to Rajan Rathnavalu and Carmelle Mohr.

RAJAN RATHNAVALU is a recent Augustana graduate and has just begun a Master's in education at the University of Calgary. His area of research lies at the intersection between contemplation and community engagement. He has worked with the Ronning Centre to develop several projects including "Responsibility for the Land", "Alberta Voices", and "Spirit of the Land".

CARMELLE MOHR strives to deepen kinships between human-communities and the Natural World in response to global crises. Her experiences of community in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside led her to research Freirian Pedagogy and Eco-Theology at the Augustana Campus. She returns from some months working in Peru with a deeper understanding of Canadian extractivist culture and history as undercurrent to global suffering. In the new year, Carmelle begins studies at UBC Farms in Sustainable Agriculture.

Both were involved in planning and hosting "Responsibility for the Land: Conversations about Fracking in Alberta" (2012) and "Spirit of the Land: Building a Community Land Ethic" (2013) conferences. Raj is a leading team member of the "Alberta Voices" Project that seeks to give voice to the care for creation of landowners in the face of hydraulic fracturing; and Carmelle is spearheading a CRC co-sponsored series in Vancouver and Victoria on "Caring for all Creation: our common place".

The Junior Fellowships of the Ronning Centre are designed to engage recent graduates in our work. Senior Fellows will mentor the Junior Fellows, involving them in research and other appropriate aspects of their work on a regular basis. This initiative constitutes a way for the University of Alberta through the Ronning Centre to continue to host successive generations of scholars and nurture the skills and knowledge necessary to work well in the public square and with religious communities.

Continued from page 1

The Anglican communion had almost 2.2 million in 1991 and now stands at 1.6 million, while Lutherans moved from 636,205 to 478,185. Christian Orthodox affiliates numbered 387,395 in 1991, a figure that has now grown to 550,690.

In 1991 there were 253,265 Muslims of all stripes in Canada. That population has grown to 1.05 million, many, of course, born in Canada. Similarly the Hindu and Sikh populations have almost tripled during this period, to 497,960 and 454,965 respectively. The Buddhist population has more than doubled, while the Jewish population has risen to 329,500 from 318,185.

Back in the 1960s, a number of sociologists advanced the notion that within a few decades religion would become an artifact of history. It was a secularist theory and one that had been advanced somewhat earlier in various countries with a Marxist ideology. There may be something to this theo-

ry, but what? Today in Canada 67.3 % of the population continues to identify with Christianity. Many other religious communities are growing although they still make up only a small percentage of the Canadian population. And, as the above statistics note, almost a quarter of the population claims to be religiously unaffiliated. What that actually means for the religious life and likely for the civil life we will come to see over the next few of decades.

At the same time the place of religion as a geopolitical force is ubiquitous. Events with a religious aspect fill the daily news and occur in all quarters of our world, in Alberta and as far away as Indonesia. In the 1950s this was hardly so. What happened between 1960 and 2011 to consign secular theory to the dustbin of history? What do we make of the changing religious landscape of our country? What are its challenges and opportunities?

—David J. Goa

“Alberta Voices” Lays Out Ambitious Plans

The momentum of the Alberta Voices project is building! After only a few months of work sharing the stories of Albertans and contributing to the discussion of hydraulic fracturing in the province, we are hiring new staff from the Augustana student body to expand our efforts. With overwhelming support from various constituencies, we are encouraged to continue providing a way for Albertans to share their love for the land and communities of which they are a part.

While the debate around hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking”, remains contentious, we have already seen that the project has helped inform thousands of Albertans. In fact, with the help of *The Tyee* (an online newspaper), one story has reached over two million readers and others may soon follow suit. Slowly but surely, it is helping create a space for meaningful discussion of fossil fuel development in Alberta – an endeavour reflected in the many interesting conversations staff have had so far with people of all perspectives.

It is always an honour and privilege to work closely with people across the province and it is a delight to hear the kind words of Nielle Hawkwood, a landowner whose story you can hear on our website at www.albertavoices.ca,

This very brave and committed group of young people have been instrumental in helping Albertans understand the impacts of horizontal hydraulic fracturing. They have displayed a highly conscientious and professional approach and excellent reporting skills, along with remarkable sensitivity. I cannot recommend their work highly enough.

In the months so far, we have learned plenty about energy development and just as much if not more about the values that must be embodied in work of this kind: patience, understanding, friendship, and courage.

With a larger team of about eight students this coming summer, we plan to begin a second project alongside Alberta Voices. Through our conversations with Albertans, we have recognized that many landowners have spent years

learning about drilling and fracking processes, the regulatory framework, and environmental and health impacts.

With this in mind, we will develop a second website that will serve as a comprehensive and accessible online resource for all Albertans who want to learn about fracking. This will be an exclusive resource that will make it easier to become informed about the various aspects of fracking. While there is already lots of accessible information, there is no resource that centralizes the various areas of research in one place, tailors information to the Albertan context, and shares it in a navigable format.

We plan to carry out research in the following areas, among others: surface rights and leases, regulatory and legal recourse, potential impacts on water, air pollution and health. Our collaborative approach will unite various groups in Alberta and provide a forum for further discussion and the development of new ideas. A special feature this summer will be a weekly seminar with David Goa, director of the CRC focusing on dialogue. How do we respectfully listen to each other when we have different experiences and backgrounds without relativizing what is true and good and beautiful.

We are excited to be entering the next chapter of a journey that began as a small step into the discussion of fracking. We invite you to join the Ronning Centre and our other generous donors in Camrose to help make this project possible. We are ever grateful for your support. Tax-deductible donations can be made in the attached form to the “Alberta Voices” initiative.

To add your voice to this important discussion, send us an entry for our guest blog by emailing albertavoices@gmail.com. Together, our voices are bound to take us in new directions, and we are excited to find out what awaits us!

—The Alberta Voices Team:

Hans, Alison, Kerstyn, Kolby, James, Eagle, Geordie,
Natasha, Raj and Dittmar

Ronning Centre Presents Members of Parliament

A new venture for the Chester Ronning Centre is the launch on October 2 of what is expected to be a continuing series of "Current Briefings" dealing with immediate and controversial issues involving religion and society.

Arlette Zinck, Professor of English at The King's University College in Edmonton, is the author of "Love Knows No Bounds: A Christian Response to the Omar Khadr Story". It outlines the case of Omar Khadr, a young Canadian wounded and taken captive by United States forces as a child soldier in Afghanistan, held under abusive conditions in Guantanamo Bay, then returned, apparently against the wishes of members of the Canadian government, to this country to serve a sentence imposed after a trial of dubious legality.



Sketch by Amanda McRoberts, The Canadian Press

The Chester Ronning Centre has furnished a copy of this Current Briefing to all members of the House of Commons and the Senate in Ottawa. (It is also available to the public through the Centre.) The following covering letter was addressed to the members of Parliament by David Goa, Director of the Centre.



UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA

Augustana Campus

4 November 2013

Dear Honourable member of the House,

RE: Chester Ronning Centre Current Briefings, A Christian Response to Omar Khadr.

At the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life we have given considerable attention to what I sometimes suggest is the most demanding shift taking place in our world since the Second World War: the struggle in Muslim communities for how to position Islam in the face of modern life and with the gifts and challenges of liberal democratic societies. The emergence of various militant organizations seeking to justify their destructive acts in the name of Islam has proved a new and extremely difficult aspect of current geo-politics in Canada and many countries throughout the world.

with Current Briefing on Omar Khadr Case

A particular issue has prompted our publishing the enclosed essay and I would like to draw it to your attention. Muslim leaders in Canada and in Syria and Turkey where I have had the opportunity to do some work have spoken about a key challenge they face in their community. The young (along with everyone else) receive a regular diet of images associated with militant movements countered by virulent secularists. The militant movements seek to reduce faithfulness to Islam to acts of destruction. The West, democracies, Christians and others are symbol of what is wrong with the modern world. 9/11, of course, is the most dramatic example that has touched North America. Virulent secularists join them in reducing Islam to violence. They call for the destruction of Islam and all religion as the source of all that is wrong with human life. Both market fear and build their reputations on it and garner enormous media attention. The young, I have been told, see these two as normative and many think they need to choose between them as a way of shaping their identity.

Arlette Zinck in the enclosed essay breaks up these two ways of framing the demanding issues we all face. Those of us who seek to speak a life-giving word into this issue, a word spoken to the heart and mind of the young, Muslim, Christian and others, offer an alternative to reducing the flesh and blood of human beings and their struggles to symbols. Mr. Khadr has been reduced to such a symbol no matter what you consider the facts of the case.

Our country has an opportunity to ensure we do not continue to play into the hands of those who wish destruction instead of life. I am writing to ask your help. The public needs to understand what is happening, and you are uniquely positioned to assist with a reconciliatory perspective on this issue. I commend this essay to you in the hope that how we treat Mr. Khadr will become a redemptive and transformative part of our public life and speak a life-giving word to all, but especially Muslim young people, when our “perfect love casts out fear.”

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David J. Goa', with a stylized, cursive script.

David J. Goa

In the Augustana Lecture Series

David Pfrimmer Shares His Vision for

A new public theology for Canada, adapted to a fuller understanding of the “public commons” of the twenty-first century, was envisaged by David Pfrimmer in his Augustana Distinguished Lecture on October 31, 2013.

Rev. Dr Pfrimmer is currently Principal-Dean and Professor of Applied Christian Ethics at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in Ontario. His long and active career with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada has brought him into frequent contact, not only with the Canadian government in Ottawa, but with the United Nations in New York and Geneva.

His interactive presentation through the morning and afternoon was hosted by Trinity Lutheran Church in Edmonton.

The Public Context of the Church

At the outset Dr Pfrimmer laid down some parameters for discussing the role of Christian faith in public life. Christians must be aware of their own identity and of the context of government and society around them.

Often they would find themselves in opposition to the government; but they must be ready to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. He gave the example of the Lutheran Church in East Germany, which for decades had stood in opposition to the communist regime there; with the fall of the Berlin Wall it found itself called on to provide military chaplains for the army and religious instruction for the schools —and had to rethink its whole theological framework accordingly.

World conditions reflected on the Canadian scene included the trends to neo-liberalism in government (downsizing taxation and the state, and allowing free rein to markets) and “consumer monoculture” in the economy, reducing individuals to taxpayers and consumers (but “I am a citizen!”, declared Dr Pfrimmer), and a militarization of international relations, with not much reliance on diplomacy.

The “Canadian Revolution”

In Canada Dr Pfrimmer pointed to a loss of common cause with institutions, individuals moving “from deference to defiance”. This affected churches too, which now had to earn the authority they claimed.

In public, and particularly in the university, people of faith were often seen as superstitious, so that among church people, as a Roman Catholic commentator put it, there was a “discourse of loss”. The Roman Catholic Church was the one Canadian church that was growing in numbers, but only because of immigration; “congenital” church membership was on the wane.

In theology, optimism inherited from the Enlightenment had been shattered by the two World Wars. The “Social Gospel” movement had made an attempt to address the problems of urbanization, and “unity theology” the difficulties of denominational divisions. Liberation theology, most prominent in Latin America, affected Canada too; even Lutherans were moved to try to change social structures (as Luther himself had founded community chests). Feminist theology appeared also.

But was there a need to move from unification theology to something new? Young Canadians were still interested in religion (not necessarily in religious institutions). “Polarization” (among different churches), not “secularization”, was the main problem, according to Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge. Religion made a difference to society and addressed “life questions”, notably the need for *belonging*.

What is the general concern of our society? Theology must think critically about this. There is a need for a theology of belonging. How are we enhancing life and changing lives?

A New Geography of the Public Commons

The old dichotomies of church/state, or public/private, were not helpful because they were incomplete. In what Dr Pfrimmer preferred to term the “public commons” the space is shared by four groups:

a New Public Theology for Canada

- ♦ economic actors, whose role is the generation of wealth;
- ♦ government actors, providing order;
- ♦ churches and faith groups — theirs is the sector of meaning;
- ♦ civil society, the voluntary sector (though its members may not be volunteers but paid), representing a principle of collaboration.

Advocacy and Pushing Back

Advocacy, which Dr Pfrimmer described as leading to reform rather than revolution, enables the churches to provide leadership. Important goals are social stability; the provision of charity (which does not constitute social justice but could lead to it); and solidarity, being inclusive of all humanity.

Advocacy should create a sense of the common good. Churches should contribute to the common good to justify the privileges they enjoy. But they should not be dogmatic about what the common good is. Their role, though prophetic, is also pastoral. They may be critical of government, but should be very sympathetic to politicians, whose vocation is an honourable one, almost a ministry.

Advocacy is also about preserving the space of the public commons. What if economic interests dominate and the market is allowed to make the decisions? Public and private interests become confused as globalization moves to privatize everything. Advocacy must *push back*, defending human rights infringed in the process of economic development.

What if governments dominate the public commons, as under communism or in some Middle Eastern countries? Churches should push back against overreaching, where the government needs to ensure that certain things are done but not to do it themselves (for example health care, which is ensured by the government but carried out by non-profit organizations). Churches should also restore the vocation of government — an example being section 35 of the Canada Act, entrenching aboriginal rights, inserted in the Act as a result of pressure by the churches.

What of theocracy, where faith groups themselves dominate the public commons? We are not immune from the theocratic impulse. But faith groups should also be pushing back against those that would attempt to dominate.

There is no case of civil society attempting to dominate the public commons. But non-governmental organizations are becoming much more active and an economic force, and people must be equipped for the jobs that will in future come from these, rather than the economic sector.

Expectations of Politicians and Public

Should the churches be involved in public life? They do have expertise to offer. Politicians all say yes — not in a partisan way but as a function of faith citizenship. To do so church people must learn to speak not in theological code but in language that the politicians will understand.

Dr Pfrimmer distinguished four types of politician (not necessarily linked with the parties that bear their name), each with a different perspective:

- ♦ conservatives, who uphold traditional values, and look to the churches as custodians of morality;
- ♦ liberals, in the sense of liberating markets, who look for individuals who can be sources of good ideas;
- ♦ social democrats, interested in solidarity and making connections among people and groups;
- ♦ communitarians, concerned with building a sustainable, continuous community.

There are some similarities among these four groups; and there is a common life cycle of governments from initial, confident reform through a period of power and success to “corruption” of their agenda (like that of software) when policies simply don’t work as intended.

In the public commons, there are *many* publics, each brought together around some idea, and the churches must address multiple publics where they are. It is a messy, confusing situation. But our effort is worth it — and we are transformed in the process.

—Nicholas Wickenden

“Spirit of the Land” Course and Conference

Nothing so important as a land ethic was ever written ... it arises in the minds [and hearts] of a thinking community.

— Aldo Leopold

“Spirit of the Land” was a project co-sponsored by the Ronning Centre to deepen community understanding of the cultural and spiritual dimensions of our current ecological challenges. As part of this project, an interdisciplinary undergraduate class and conference were developed this fall to address these themes. The class had two unique elements: a contemplative spirit and a “living community” framework. The underlying idea was to foster university study as a living process that transforms ourselves and our community.

Each class included a contemplative inquiry that encouraged a deeper, inward focus and introspection. The idea here was twofold: first, that our outer environmental challenges are symptoms of deeper spiritual and cultural needs and, secondly, that to foster ecological change, we must first transform ourselves or, rather, that meaningful inner and outer change occur concurrently.

Members of the local community were invited to participate. The hope was to break down traditional classroom barriers and create a living, transformative community dialogue. Recognizing that any discussion of land and ecology would not be complete without including indigenous and rural voices, First Nations and farmers’ perspectives were key in shaping class content and discussion.

Thus, in addition to having community members as students, many of the classes were led by invited speakers from the local area. They shared personal experiences on diverse topics such as the decline of rural farm communities, Native residential schools, indigenous leadership, and the impact of Canadian mining companies in South America. Students were also invited on field trips that included a visit to an organic farm influenced by permaculture practices.

A sense of community was enhanced by sharing meals before each class, weekly on Thursdays, that were prepared by students and community members.



Seen as “Life-changing”

We also invited wider participation through a blog to which students and interested readers were invited to contribute spiritoftheland.ca. Classes were broadcast weekly on internet radio and on-line comments through Twitter or e-mail were encouraged.

The centrepiece of the class was a two-day conference which was again framed as a way of including wider community participation. The event was organized as a co-ordinated effort between undergraduate students and local community members with farmers, indigenous friends, artists, musicians and photographers donating their time and art to give the weekend and festive and diverse spirit.

Community discussions were also a key component of the conference. Participants sat at round tables and time was given after each speaker for comments and reflection. A contemplative approach again underlay our orientation, very much influencing how the discussions were framed and how the conference was led. As one goal of the event was to foster a deeper understanding of Native perspectives on land and ecology, the weekend began with a Pipe Ceremony and featured both indigenous and non-indigenous leaders and speakers.

Another key objective was to foster a collective common understanding of ourselves as “Treaty People”, which was facilitated by Sylvia McAdam, a co-founder of Idle No More, and Roger Epp, author of the book *We are All Treaty People*, along with among many other excellent presenters.

The event was an astonishing success. More than 200 people attended, including about 50 students from the Augustana and the Edmonton campuses. As one conference participant commented: “The whole event was really extraordinary and it was an honour to be involved. I think you hit it right on the head when you commented that it seemed like a world-class event. I completely agree. I have attended huge global fora and ‘important’ conferences — and your attendees and panelists and structure blew away anything I’ve seen before. The palpable sincerity and authenticity of the

voices and intentions and attention was remarkable; singular.”

Both the class and conference focused on developing a model for undergraduate studies that uses community involvement and contemplative inquiry to address contemporary issues. In connecting to this deeper “spirit” of education, the class and conference struck a profound and positive chord amongst participants.

“Spirit of the Land” developed through key support from the Ronning Centre, the U of A’s Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI), generous local donors and the tireless efforts of many students, professors, and community members. We are very grateful to have had so much support — in the end it was truly a community project.

Although the course ended in December, “Spirit of the Land” continues to have a lasting impact in our community and in the lives of those who participated. One example of its ongoing inspiration is Grass Roots Family Farm, initiated by Takota Coen, one of the community attendees who farms near Ferintosh with his family. Takota writes:

Taking part in the Sprit of the Land course with all of you has been a truly life changing experience for me. My sense of what community looks like was blown out of the water by all of the extraordinary people I have met in the past 5 months... As a result of this new found sense of community and the strength and hope you have all given me I, along with my parents have finally put out a website and started plans for our new idea of a farm.

Takota and his parents, Michael and Laura Coen, have begun using a “community supported agriculture” model for their farm, called Grass Roots Family Farm. They have a very inspiring vision for connecting community with land stewardship and sustainable agriculture at their website: www.grassrootsfamilyfarm.ca.

Further information can be found at spiritoftheland.ca and news.augustana.ualberta.ca/2013/11/spirit-of-the-land-conference-gives-hope/.

— Rajan Rathnavalu,
Ronning Centre Junior Fellow

Chester Ronning Commemorated

The Faith and Life Chapel on the Augustana Campus of the University was the setting on December 14, 2013, for a celebration of the life of Chester Ronning, for some years Principal of Camrose Lutheran College, Augustana's precursor institution, and inspiration for the Chester Ronning Centre, which sponsored the event.

The occasion was the publication of Brian Evans's biography of Ronning: *The Remarkable Chester Ronning, Proud Son of China* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press). This followed shortly upon the publication of a volume featuring the family history by Audrey Ronning Topping, Chester's daughter, under the title *China Mission* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press).

Dr Evans and (through a video link from New York) Mrs Topping presented introductions to their books, while Tom Radford, the filmmaker responsible for *China Mission: The Chester Ronning Story* made for the National Film Board of Canada in 1980, showed excerpts from his film and reminisced about his contacts with his subject.

Chester Ronning's long life (1894–1984) was indeed an unusual one. Born to Halvor and Hannah Ronning, a Norwegian-American missionary couple in Fancheng, China, his childhood, youth, and young manhood were divided between China and Canada, with briefer periods in Norway and the United States.

Thereafter he might be said to have had elements of a career in four different fields: as a teacher (in Edmonton 1919–1921, in China 1922–27, and as Principal of Camrose Lutheran College 1927–1942); in the military (briefly in 1918, then with the RCAF 1942–45); as a politician (an MLA with the United Farmers of Alberta 1932–35, and prominent in the early years of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)); and as a diplomat (in China 1945–51, Ambassador to Norway 1954–57, High Commissioner to India 1957–64).

These careers were not without vicissitudes. As Mrs Topping pointed out, members of the Ron-



From left to right: Augustana Dean Allen Berger, Ronning Centre Director David J. Goa, Filmmaker Tom Radford, and Author Brian Evans at the book launch event

ning family had been “kicked out of China six times”, though without losing their love for the country. With the UFA and the CCF, Chester was defeated in all but one of the elections he contested. As a diplomat he represented Canada at the Geneva Conferences on the Korean War in 1954 and on Laos in 1961–62, and on a secret mission to Hanoi in 1966; none of these turned out as he would have wished. He argued for Canadian recognition of the People's Republic in China from 1950 onwards; it did not happen until 1970 (and United States recognition did not follow until 1979).

Nevertheless his insight, dedication, and character earned him the unstinted admiration of generations of students and colleagues. His advice on Chinese affairs proved to have been right all along. He had a special gift for personal relationships, and Dr Evans can hardly mention a prominent Chinese without describing him as an “old friend”.

Brian Evans is the ideal biographer for Chester Ronning. His background as a Sinologist with the University of Alberta who had also spent time with the Canadian embassy in Beijing, combined with his personal friendship with Ronning, led early on to a series of recorded interviews, and

in Newly Published Books

these along with thorough research and balanced judgement have gone into the making of an illuminating and highly readable book.

Of special interest in connection with the Ronning Centre is Chester's remark when a banquet in honour of his work in the legislature was held in the Camrose Lutheran Church. The location was "quite fitting", said Ronning, "for the church as a whole, should be interested in the affairs of government and should take an active part in solving the problems of the day".

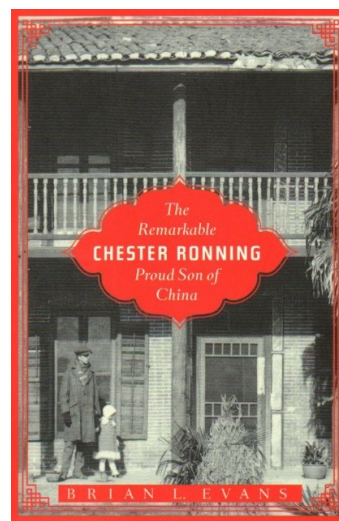
Audrey Topping's fascinating book complements Evans's in many ways. Its focus is wider, beginning with the narrative of Halvor and Hannah's lives, and carrying the story down to her own experiences as a photographer and writer dealing with China. She wins us over effortlessly with affectionate accounts of her dedicated, able, adventurous grandparents and the other members of her family connection, and we mourn with her the tragic early deaths of Hannah and Chester's elder brother Nelius.

The other subject of her book is China itself, and she brings home to us the misery suffered by so many Chinese people in the dying days of its superficially splendid empire. Missionary work may not be in fashion at the moment, but she reveals the clear insight of many missionaries into the troubled and violent Chinese situation (far more accurate than the blinkered views of the diplomatic corps), their success among their Chinese hearers (which too often led to martyrdom), and their practice of Christian compassion, a virtue scarce in old China, and who can say that it is not much needed to-day?

— Nicholas Wickenden

*A copy of author Brian Evans's talk,
a film clip by Tom Radford,
and news reports of the book launch event
can be found on the Ronning Centre website:*

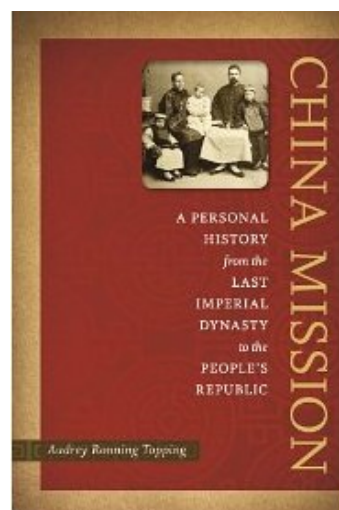
<augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning>



Brian L. Evans

*The Remarkable Chester Ronning,
Proud Son of China*

Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press
Camrose: The Chester Ronning Centre
for the Study of Religion and Public Life



Audrey Ronning Topping

*China Mission: A Personal History
from the Last Imperial Dynasty
to the People's Republic*

Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State
University Press

Dialogue without Diatribe

This term the Ronning Centre is hosting a “trialogue” series of forums with three speakers: atheist, Muslim, and Christian. Andy Bannister, lead apologist for Ravi Zacharias International, is participating in these events. Details can be found in the Calendar of Events on page 19.

A few weeks ago I was speaking at the University of Victoria, where I'd been asked to address the topic “Does Religion Poison Everything?” During the lecture, one particular student at the back of the lecture room gesticulated wildly every time I made a point with which he disagreed. At the end of the talk, there was a time of Q&A and the student was among the first to raise his hand. He began by self-identifying as an atheist and then proceeded to ask a series of increasingly complex questions about moral philosophy.

After the event was over, the student found his way to the front and continued his questions and we went to and fro for about half an hour across a range of issues—can you be good without God? Do you need God for moral values? What does

the good life look like? Finally the student shook my hand and said, “I've disagreed with almost everything you've said in the last 90 minutes. But this has been the most fascinating conversation I can remember and you've given me much to think about. Thank you.”

That comment made my day because it was a refreshing break from the norm, in that often when those who hold to wildly different worldviews — atheism and Christianity, for instance — engage with each other, the result can be more heat than light. Atheists engage in “argument by soundbite” whilst religious believers sometimes write off those who disbelieve in God as immoral pagans, and thus neither side actually take the time to listen to the other.

As Harry Lewis, the former Dean of Harvard College, once wrote, lamenting the fact that intelligent conversation about the deepest questions is now increasingly hard in universi-

Distinguished Scholar to Analyse Pakistan's Recent Experience

Mumtaz Ahmad is professor of Political Science and Vice President (Academic Affairs) at the International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan and Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA, USA. He is also a Distinguished Visiting Fellow of the Chester Ronning Centre.

He will present a first-hand account of the religious and political situation in Pakistan in two lectures in Edmonton at the end of January.

The first of his lectures is entitled “Politics and Theology of Blasphemy: The Pakistan Experience”. From Salman Rushdie to Danish Cartoons to the Prophet Muhammad Movie strip, the reaction in Pakistan, as elsewhere in Muslim societies, has been swift and often violent. Dr Ahmed will address the question: How much this reaction was motivated by domestic and internation-

al politics and how much it had roots in Islamic theology?

After thirteen years presence and dubious achievement of its original mission, the United States will be withdrawing the bulk of its troops from Afghanistan at the end of 2014. The probable consequences of this decision and the indeterminate post-withdrawal political dispensation in Afghanistan have caused considerable nervousness among the regional powers, especially the fear of another, and possibly more violent, civil war in Afghanistan and the consequent strengthening of militant groups in both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In his second lecture Dr Ahmed will deal with “The Afghanistan End-Game and the Future of Militancy in southwest Asia”.

Full details of Dr Ahmad's two lectures may be found in the Calendar of Events on pages 19–20.

ties (and his point might apply to the media and the marketplace, too):

What used to be the big question of humanistic learning — what does it mean to be human? — now has little place in the academy because there is no way to tell whether the question has been answered correctly or not.

It might encourage Harry to learn that one of things I have discovered in four years of traveling across Canada, speaking in a wide variety of settings, including many universities, is that I think many people are open to talking about some of these issues in a way that is intelligent and respectful. Last year, my colleague, Ravi Zacharias, and I were at McGill University, for a pair of open forums entitled “Does Spirituality Matter?” We had been told by the organizers that we might, if we were lucky, get 100 students per evening. In the end, 900 per night attended, and the overflow room had an overflow. People of all faiths and none wanted to engage with the topic and the questions and conversation flowed long into the night.

I believe we stand at a cultural moment where the need to answer some of life’s biggest questions gets ever more pressing, as science, technology, and politics raise them all the louder. What kind of “questions” do I have in mind? The old ones: What does it mean to be human? Does life have any kind of purpose? What does the “good life” look like, and who gets to decide? Is death the end and how does your answer to that question, negative or affirmative, effect the here and now? Was Bertrand Russell right when, after reflecting on where his worldview predicted the universe to be heading, he concluded that “only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built”?

Whatever position one takes on these matters, we can at least agree, I hope, that these are not unimportant questions. They are also questions on which people disagree and thus we need to find a way — through dialogue, conversation, questioning and listening — to explore what others think.

Before I moved to Canada, my wife and I lived in England, where one of my favourite habits on a weekend was to visit Speakers’ Corner at Hyde Park in London. Speakers’ Corner is affectionately known as the world centre of free speech, for there anybody can stand on a ladder or a soapbox and speak about their beliefs — religious, political or otherwise. I learnt public speaking at Speakers’ Corner but also found it a wonderful place to debate and dialogue with people who radically disagreed with my Christian worldview, especially Muslims and atheists. (I so enjoyed those conversations that they led me to do a degree in theology and philosophy, and then a PhD in Islam.)

What I learnt at Speakers’ Corner and what I’ve continued to discover, as I’ve had the privilege of speaking to diverse audiences around the world, is that human beings are not going to agree on everything. The major worldviews disagree profoundly on almost all of the important questions (for example: are human beings merely atoms and particles, or do words like “mind”, “consciousness”, or even “soul” refer to something?) But it is through dialogue and debate that we can be encouraged to think more deeply, stretched to consider the challenges to our own worldview, and perhaps challenged to rethink our own reasons for our convictions better.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian writer and political activist who survived the gulags and wrote with such insight into the human condition, was fond of this old Russian proverb: “One word of truth outweighs the whole world”. Canada is, like much of the western world, deeply pluralistic. Some people look at that pluralism and think the way to deal with difference is to rudely squash all challenging worldviews. Others think we should collapse the distinctives and say that “truth is relative”, that everybody believes essentially the same. But I think the way to a peaceful society lies down neither of those paths, not least because truth is too important to reduce to power plays or to relativism. Perhaps if we can learn to listen, to discuss, to dialogue, and to debate, we can find ways to live together with our differences.

—Andy Bannister

A Ronning Centre Series

Vancouver: Monday Evenings, March 3–May 12, 2014

Victoria: Tuesday Evenings, March 4–May 13, 2014

What does it mean to be a good neighbour in today's context of Ecocide and global inequity? As we glimpse the magnitude of suffering to which we are bound, we desperately ask: where on Earth do we begin?

Our horizon of increasing climate change, poverty, violence and suffering is a profoundly religious problem. The cause of global suffering is deeply tied to our society's disconnection between our bodies and our Earth, an identity propagated by our consumer culture. To lovingly respond to our crises means that we give of our selves for the sake of our neighbour; to live simply so that others may simply live. As these crises of climate change and inequity increase, the root of the word *religion* indicates a role we are called to embody. The Latin verb *religio* means *to bind together*. As mosques, synagogues, churches, monasteries, temples, we are all called to great, small acts of love; that is, to make known the sacredness of our Earth and welcome all to know and care for this commonplace.

Caring for All Creation:

The state of our Earth, an overwhelming reality, has sparked despair and apathy within many of our hearts. Many of us remain in this state of paralysis, for how and why might we act if we do not believe beyond reason that there is hope beneath our feet? As we seek to determine and embody our call to be good neighbours and good stewards of our Earth, how might we do so sustainably? In other words, where do we begin and return to again and again?

As we learn more and more about the effects of increasing climate change and suffering, many of us are responding with action because we greatly fear what shall be if we do not. Indeed, change motivated by fear is productive and efficient. However, fear as motivation and survival as reason cannot guarantee a *kinder* future. From where else can we begin? From what starting place brings about this kinder future?

Our love for all Creation can be our starting place. From here, we can change our lifestyles, adapting to the needs of our communities and

Leading Christian Thinker Frank Schaeffer To Reflect

As early as 1960, just five years after it was founded in Switzerland by Francis and Edith Schaeffer, the Evangelical centre named L'Abri was described by Time Magazine as a centre of Reformed church intellectual activity.

Frank Schaeffer is the son of Francis and Edith. He became involved in the activities at L'Abri, particularly in film making, in the mid to late 1970s, when he worked with his father, Francis, to produce "How Should We Then

Live?" and "Whatever Happened to the Human Race?".

Both these films and the related books played a significant role in galvanizing the religious-political right in the USA in the late 1970s--early 1980s. Frank himself has recounted his role in shifting his father's focus to the right in *Crazy for God: How I Grew Up as One of the Elect, Helped Found the Religious Right and Lived to Take All (or Almost All) of it Back* (2007).

Land, Water, Our Natural Community

mitigating further injustice not because we understand we *have* to for sheer survival, but because we *love* to — because we deeply love our Earth and its fullness thereof. In spite of, and because of, our different histories, homelands, gifts, and weaknesses, we can share this common reason and vision: towards a *kinder* future, not because we fear what may be, but because we *love what is*. And, to love it, we *must know it*.

So many feel alone in their good works and so many still remain in despair. So, let us gather. Our Earth is our commonality, however we identify and however we work. When we recognize this in each other, our land- and waterscapes become our common work, common language, our commonplace.

The Chester Ronning Centre Series “Caring for Creation: Land, Water, Our Natural Community” hopes to make known our Earth as our commonplace and deepen our kinship with it. Over the course of three months, this series will provide weekly opportunities for participants to gather as large regional- communities and as smaller neighbourhood-

communities. This long-term approach enables community-building and encourages a local application of the knowledge and wisdom explored in these gatherings. Through facilitated dialogue and rooted in contemplation, doxology, and indigenous wisdom, this series hopes to lift up the ‘small’ local acts of love for our particular land- and human-communities as the radical Way in which we must respond to global systemic-injustice. Each gathering will begin with a shared meal together, followed with dialogue, guest speakers, and reflection around a central theme. This series is an effort to build what Aldo Leopold terms “a community land-ethic”. Come, let us gather and listen. All are welcome. All voices are needed.

Agrarian philosopher and farmer, Wendell Berry, was recently asked by a reporter, “Mr. Berry, do you actually believe we will change this disaster around in time?” Berry responded saying: “I do not believe we have the right to ask that question. The only question we have the right to ask is: ‘What is the right thing to do?’”

— Carmelle Mohr,
Ronning Centre Junior Fellow

on His Religious Journey in Lecture Series in B.C.

Since then Frank has made an intriguing journey, commencing at the highest levels of leadership within the Reformed and Evangelical traditions, to the Orthodox way and away from the political right of centre in the USA. He has told the tale from his own point of view in a variety of fiction and non-fiction books.

In February 2014 Frank will make a lecture tour in the Fraser Valley, jointly sponsored by the Chester Ronning Centre and the Orthodox

All Saints of North America Monastery in Dewdney, British Columbia. In a series of public lectures (which will be videotaped) he will discuss various topics, including his personal reflections about L’Abri and his journey to Orthodoxy.

A full listing of Schaeffer’s events in Vancouver can be found in the Calendar of Events on pages 19–20.

The Doubtful Triumph of Non-Violence

Independent Canadian journalist and author Gwynne Dyer, widely known for his perceptive comments on current affairs, has been recently named as a Distinguished Visiting Fellow of the Chester Ronning Centre. Now based in London, England, he will deliver a lecture at the Augustana Campus on March 20, 2014.

He will address the prospects for non-violence in situations in the Middle East where both political and religious passions are easily aroused. Dyer has been covering the region as a journalist and a scholar for more than thirty years, and can offer exceptional insights into its affairs at this crucial juncture. In Dyer's words:

"We came quite close to seeing America stumble into another Middle Eastern war in early September. The Russians have pulled Obama's chestnuts out of the fire for the moment, and the UN inspectors are already taking control of Syria's chemical weapons, but the civil war continues, killing about 5000 people each month. It could still spread to Lebanon and Iraq as well.

"Of all the attempts at non-violent, democratic revolution in the Arab world over the past three years, only Tunisia's is still standing. Egypt has fallen back under the control of the army, which

slaughtered more than a thousand people in the streets after the coup. The threat of a US-Israeli attack on Iran because of its alleged nuclear weapons ambitions has receded a bit because of the new Iranian leader's offer of unconditional talks, but powerful forces on both sides are working hard to kill the initiative.

"Libya teeters on the brink of partition, even democratic Turkey is drifting into dangerous waters, and the so-called revival of the "peace process" between Israel and the Palestinians is a complete sham. Neither side expects anything to come of it. And everywhere, the extremists and the terrorists cow the sensible people into silence, or just kill them."

Dyer's books on the Middle East include *Ignorant Armies: Sliding into War in Iraq* (2003), *Future: Tense* (2005), and *The Mess They Made: The Middle East After Iraq* (2007), all of which were number one or number two on the *Globe & Mail's* non-fiction best-seller list.

For details of his forthcoming lecture, entitled "The Doubtful Triumph of Non-Violence", please see the Calendar of Events on page 20 under 20 March..

Are Lawyers Secular Seminarians?

An exceptional perspective on the law will be presented at a Ronning Centre lecture on 10 March, when Daniel Mol, an Edmonton area litigation attorney, will argue that religious consciousness is integral to a whole understanding of the practice of law, and to the maintenance in good-faith of our western legal tradition.

Lawyers, he will maintain, can be envisaged as secular seminarians, ministers of transcendent (if temporal) authority, and, for the private citizen, vicars of state power. This law/religion analogy serves to describe day to day legal practice as much as it does the broader role lawyers have assumed (and had foisted upon them) in our society.

Daniel J. Mol has appeared as counsel in all levels of court in Alberta, including on a number of reported cases, and once before the Supreme Court of Canada. He took his undergraduate degree in history and political studies at Augustana University College, a master's degree in international politics at the University of Wales (Aberystwyth), and his law degree at the University of Alberta.

Daniel is a director of the Calgary-based Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms and he occasionally writes and lectures on history and legal theory.

For details of Daniel Mol's lecture please consult the Calendar of Events on page 20 under 10 March..

Cardus Think Tank Examines Role of Faith Groups in Urban Society

Cardus is a Christian think tank with headquarters in Hamilton, Ontario. The Chester Ronning Centre has agreed to collaborate in their research on Edmonton.

Beginning in early 2013, Cardus re-designed their work on urban development as a new program called “Social Cities” with a focus on the social dynamics of what makes a good city. It is easy enough to think of cities as collections of people – we cite population numbers as an indication of how many individuals belong in a given geographic area.

What you will not see is population figure for institutions and organization in a city or community. Social Cities is looking at that landscape from a variety of angles including the way that organizational structures contribute to flourishing or floundering for people in cities.

We are slowly re-learning what has been known for a long time – cities that exhibit vitality, creativity, and well-being are typically made up of a very diverse range of organizations, institutions and other social structures. Religious organizations of all kinds are part of this diversity. One of the projects that Cardus is developing within Social Cities is called “City Soul”.

City Soul is an exploration of how faith based organizations might contribute more effectively to long-term planning and strategic development in cities. If cities are significantly social, then the organizations that foster, preserve, and develop collective meaning, purpose, and belonging can scarcely be ignored. Without any assumptions of animosity or neglect, City Soul builds on the interactions between urban planners and faith based organizations that already exist and uses research to see how those interactions could be enriched for the long-term well-being of people in the City.

If more regular forms of engagement, learning, and collaboration are not established, city flourishing will only be sporadic and temporary. Given the many stresses that city administrators, planners, politicians, and leaders must contend with, bringing the deep resources of religious communities into the substantial long-term discussions of what makes a good city seems timely.

City planners are called on to make contributions to the public interest (common good), to educate the public, and to balance the many interests present in land use, transportation, and economic development. If such deliberations are undertaken without finding ways to draw the deep social resources of religious communities into the plan, our long-term effectiveness will be diminished and future generations will have to bear that cost.

Rather than being tolerated, religious communities have an opportunity to bring considerable gifts to the city if the various forms of binary “us-them” habits can be set aside. A municipal government, however effective, cannot provide citizens with meaning, purpose, belonging. Smart cities will understand that religious institutional engagement can contribute significantly to urban vitality in the city and that engagement can stimulate the various religious communities to become local centres of more significant thriving in the process of living out their mission in the community.

Planning processes that are able to take full account of these dynamics may be one of the significant city building breakthroughs of the twenty-first century as the institutional vocations of faith based organizations reach a more full and effective stage of flourishing. Rather than making things difficult for religious communities, enlightened and well-educated planners will provide space for religious communities to discover their institutional vocations in the world.

The City Soul project is working alongside a wide range of organizations in communities of all sizes to explore how this might be done among nearly 4,000 Canadian municipalities and nearly 90,000 municipal government units in the United States. Globally there may be as many as a million local governance units. Many other important social issues can be supported by attending to the institutional dynamics in our cities, towns and communities.

— Milton Friesen,
Director of the Social Cities Program, Cardus

Ronning Centre Cafés for Winter 2014

At Edmonton

The winter Philosophers' Cafés in Edmonton will focus on the general theme of "Evicting Religion from the Public Commons: Blessing or Curse?"

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

Is there still a constructive role for religions in debating public issues?

Animateur: David J. Goa (Ronning Centre)
25 January, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Is morality only a human creation?

Animateur: Paul Viminitz (University of Lethbridge)
8 February, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Should we talk publicly about more than "the economy"?

Animateur: Dittmar Mündel (Augustana Campus)
22 February, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Do secular philosophies say all that need be said about questions of justice?

Animateur: Michael De Moor (Kings University College)
8 March, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

What's happened to our conception of a city?

Animateur: Milton Friesen (Cardus)
22 March, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

On the road to secularism? Charles Taylor meets Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Animateur: Nicholas Wickenden (University of Alberta)
5 April, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Is the prophet necessarily a voice crying in the wilderness?

Animateur: Martin Tweeddale (University of Alberta)
12 April, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

At Camrose

The fall Religion and Public Life Cafés in Camrose will continue on the theme "Vocation: The Gift of Service."

All sessions will be held at a **new location**:
2-004 Epp Conference Room, Augustana Campus

Servant Leader

Animated by Les Parsons, Ski Coach, Augustana
Friday, 24 January 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Teaching Language, Giving Voice

Animated by Kim Misfeldt, Prof. of German, Augustana
Friday, 7 February, 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Finding Grace in Failure

Animated by Greg Pietz, Pastor, Resurrection Lutheran Church
Friday, 21 February, 8:30-10:00 a.m.

Here I Am . . . Send Someone Else

Animated by Brian Krushel, Senior Pastor, Camrose Church of God
Friday, 14 March, 8:30-10:00 a.m.

The Impact of Vatican II on My Faith Formation (1962-2014)

Animated by Sheilagh Ross, Businesswoman, Community Leader
Friday, 21 March, 8:30-10:00 a.m.



Calendar of Coming Events - Winter 2014

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

JANUARY

Christian Response to Muslims: Fear and Opportunity

A Ronning Centre Conversation with David J. Goa
Sunday, 19 January, 9:00–10:00 am
Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose

Servant Leader

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by Les Parsons, Ski Coach, Augustana
Friday, 24 January, 8:30–10:00 am
Epp Conference Room 2-004, Augustana Campus

Is there still a constructive role for religions in debating public issues?

A Philosophers' Café animated by David J. Goa
Saturday, 25 January, 1:00–3:30 pm
Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

Politics and Theology of Blasphemy: The Pakistan Experience

A Lecture by Distinguished Visiting Fellow Mumtaz Ahmad, Prof. of Political Science and Vice President, International Islamic University, Pakistan, Co-sponsored with the Dept. of Political Science, University of Alberta
Thursday, 30 January, 3:00–4:30 pm
Room 3-6 Business Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton

The Afghanistan End-Game and the Future of Militancy in Southwest Asia

A Lecture with Distinguished Visiting Fellow Mumtaz Ahmad, Co-sponsored with the Department of Political Science, University of Alberta
Friday, 31 January, 3:00–4:30 pm
Room 3-6 Business Building
University of Alberta, Edmonton

Blasphemy and the Challenge of Freedom of Speech

A Ronning Centre Consultation with Mumtaz Ahmad and David J. Goa
Saturday, 1 February, 10:00 am–12:00 pm
N101, King's University College
9125 – 50 Street NW, Edmonton

FEBRUARY

Theism, Humanism, or Scientism: Which is the Real Delusion?

A Ronning Centre and Veritas Forum with Andy Bannister, Martin Tweedale, Al-Hajj Usama Al-Atar, and David J. Goa, Moderator, Co-sponsored with the Interfaith Chaplains Association and P2C
Monday, 3 February, 3:00–5:00pm
Education North 2–115
University of Alberta, Edmonton

What Does a Good Society Look Like and How Do We Get There?

A Ronning Centre and Veritas Forum with Andy Bannister, Don Carmichael, Sabira Deyjee, and David J. Goa, Moderator, Co-sponsored with Concordia University College
Monday, 3 February, 7:00–9:00pm
HA017, Concordia University College
7128 Ada Blvd, Edmonton

Theism, Humanism, or Scientism: Which is the Real Delusion?

A Ronning Centre and Veritas Forum with Andy Bannister, Martin Tweedale, Aleem Karmali, and David J. Goa, Moderator, Co-sponsored with Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute
Thursday, 6 February, 7:00–9:00pm
Epp Conference Room, 2-004
Augustana Campus, Camrose

Teaching Language, Giving Voice

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by Kim Misfeldt, Prof. of German, Augustana
Friday, 7 February, 8:30–10:00 am
Epp Conference Room 2-004
Augustana Campus, Camrose

Is morality only a human creation?

A Philosophers' Café animated by Paul Viminiz, Philosophy Dept., University of Lethbridge
Saturday, 8 February, 1:00–3:30 pm
Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

Frank Schaeffer Events in British Columbia

Co-sponsored by the Canadian Orthodox Monastery and the University of the Fraser Valley

Can Liberal Christianity Survive in the 21st Century?

A Ronning Centre Roundtable with Frank Schaeffer, L'Abri Fellowship, Film Producer, and Author
Monday 17 February, 7:00 pm
Canadian Orthodox Monastery
3732 Hawkins Pickle Road, Dewdney, BC

Calendar of Coming Events - Winter 2014

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

The Religious and Political Right in the USA

A Lecture by Distinguished Visiting Fellow

Frank Schaeffer

Tuesday 18 February, 7:00 pm

University of the Fraser Valley room B101

33844 King Road, Abbotsford, BC

Journey to an Orthodox Life

A Lecture with Distinguished Visiting Fellow

Frank Schaeffer

Wednesday 19 February, 7:00 pm

Contact Kimberly.franklin@twu.ca for details.

Toward a Theology and Pedagogy of Active Hope: Lessons from My Parents

*A Ronning Centre Lecture with Dittmar Mündel, Prof. of Religion,
Global and Development Studies, Augustana*

Monday, 24 February, 7:00 pm

Location TBA

Check <augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning> for details.

Finding Grace in Failure

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by

Greg Pietz, Pastor, Resurrection Lutheran Church

Friday, 21 February, 8:30–10:00 am

Epp Conference Room 2-004

Augustana Campus, Camrose

Muslim Tide, Christianity, and the Reshaping of Canada

A Ronning Centre Conversation with David J. Goa

Saturday, 22 February, 9:00 am–12:00 pm

Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose

Should we talk publicly about more than “the economy”?

A Philosophers' Café animated by Dittmar Mündel

Saturday, 22 February, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

MARCH

Do secular philosophies say all that need be said about questions of justice?

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Michael De Moor, Asst. Prof. of
Social Philosophy, King's University College*

Saturday, 8 March, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

Lawyers as Secular Seminarians

A Ronning Centre Lecture by Daniel J. Mol,

Barrister & Solicitor

Monday, 10 March, 3:00 pm

N101, Kings University College

9125 – 50 Street NW, Edmonton

Here I Am . . . Send Someone Else

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by

Brian Krushel, Pastor, Camrose Church of God

Friday, 14 March, 8:30–10:00 am

Epp Conference Room 2-004

Augustana Campus, Camrose

The Doubtful Triumph of Non-Violence

A Ronning Centre Lecture by Distinguished Visiting

Fellow Gwynne Dyer, Canadian Journalist, Author,

Co-Sponsored by the Augustana Theme Committee

Thursday, 20 March, 7:00 pm

Faith and Life Chapel

Augustana Campus, Camrose

The Impact of Vatican II on My Faith Formation (1962–2014)

A Religion and Public Life Café animated by

Sheilagh Ross, Businesswoman, Community Leader

Friday, 21 March, 8:30–10:00 am

Epp Conference Room 2-004

Augustana Campus, Camrose

What's happened to our conception of a city?

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

Saturday, 22 March, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

APRIL

On the road to secularism? Charles Taylor meets John Jacques Rousseau

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Nicholas Wickenden, Prof. of
History, Emeritus*

Saturday, 5 April, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

Is the prophet necessarily a voice crying in the wilderness?

*A Philosophers' Café animated by Martin Tweedale, Prof. of
Philosophy, Emeritus*

Saturday, 12 April, 1:00–3:30 pm

Steeps, 11116 – 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

For more information, see our website:

<www.augustana.ualberta.ca/ronning>

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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.



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2 WHAT TO GIVE

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

Monthly Gift Pledge:

- ☐ \$ _____ / month
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- ☐ \$ _____ / year
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3 HOW TO GIVE

- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Cheque (Payable to the *University of Alberta*)
- ☐ Direct Debit (Please Enclose a Void Cheque)
- ☐ Credit Card: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____ / _____

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4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RECOGNITION (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

- ☐ I/we wish our gift to remain anonymous. Please do not publish my/our name on donor recognition materials.
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OVER ➡



THE CHESTER RONNING CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE focuses its work on a set of issues and themes that demand our attention whether or not we are religious. We invite you to become a *Friend of the Centre* and join the table of hospitality that brings depth and texture to the discussion of vital questions on points where religion, faith and public life intersect.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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

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

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

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



5 DONOR INFORMATION

Name: _____

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6 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

My gift is in honour of (optional):

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

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!

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Chester Ronning Centre
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

BUILDING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment provides the Centre with a nimble way of bringing creative thinking on current issues and themes into its work. The fellowships will attract scholars as well as public intellectuals to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the discussion of the complex themes. James and Sonja Hendrickson in a challenge to our community, continue their pledge to match gifts to this endowment.

"It is our hope that others will value the work of the Centre and join us in this effort so the endowment can grow to its full potential." — James & Sonja Hendrickson

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

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

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

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



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