



# Chester Ronning Centre

for the Study of Religion and Public Life



## Annual Report

July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

Prepared by

Dr. Ian Wilson, Associate Director of Programming and Incoming Director (as of July 1 2017) &  
Diane McGall, Administrative Assistant

### **Change in Leadership**

This year has been a time of major transition for the Chester Ronning Centre. For more than a decade, the Centre has been synonymous with the work of its Director, David Goa. David worked to establish the Centre as a hub for interdisciplinary thinking and research on key issues relating to religion and life in the world today. From the many challenges of multiculturalism right here in Alberta, to the complex intersection of religion and secularism in the Middle East, to name just a couple examples, David has been at the forefront of discussion. In June of 2016, David retired from his position as Director. We wish him all the best as he moves on from his time at Augustana. After an extensive search, the Director position was offered to Dr. Ian Wilson. Dr. Wilson teaches in the Philosophy & Religion program at Augustana and, since July 2016, has worked as Associate Director of Programming at the Centre. He will officially start his role as Director of the Centre on July 1, 2017.

### **Centre Developments & Key Initiatives**

#### ***Advisory Committee***

The Ronning Centre operates with the support of an active Advisory Committee whose members are invited by the Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Director of the Centre. Dean Allen Berger appointed 6 new members this year, with one appointment pending. The Advisory

Committee's mandate is to support the work of the Centre and its Director, provide advice and community feedback, and assist in fundraising. Appointments are for a three-year term, renewable.

*Current Advisory Committee Members:*

**Brandon Alakas, Ph.D.** – Augustana Faculty (English) – Dr. Alakas teaches courses on classical and medieval literature. His long-standing interest in Latin literature in particular is fueled by his research on monastic culture. He has published on Latin historiography but his current work examines devotional literature written immediately before the English Reformation. When not reading or writing about monks, Brandon tries to make time for his excessive number of hobbies, which include language learning, cooking, and running.

**Jocelyn Hendrickson, Ph.D.** – Faculty of Arts (Religious Studies, History & Classics) – Dr. Hendrickson is a historian who researches the Islamic legal history of medieval and early modern North Africa. She is currently working on a book project, “Pilgrimage on the Periphery: Performance and Prohibition of the Hajj in the Medieval Islamic West,” for which she received a SSHRC Insight Development Grant. Dr. Hendrickson received her Ph.D. from Emory University and previously taught at Whitman College in Washington State.

**Rabbi Kliel Rose** – Beth Shalom Synagogue, Edmonton – Rabbi Y. Kliel Rose was born in Jerusalem to a rabbinical family and grew up in Winnipeg, Canada. Kliel earned a B.A. in Judaic studies from Gratz College, in Philadelphia, after which he studied at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). As a student, Kliel served a number of congregations in New York and one community in London, England, under the auspices of Masorati Olami. He was ordained in 2004. Throughout his time as a Rabbi, Kliel has been involved and volunteered on several non-for-profit organizations. His primary interests have been related to Interfaith Dialogue and Justice.

**Daniel Sims, Ph.D. (cand.)** – Augustana Faculty (History) – A member of the Tsay Keh Dene First Nation, Prof. Sims currently teaches History and Indigenous Studies at Augustana. Prior to joining the faculty at Augustana, he taught sessionally at the University's North Campus in History and Native Studies. His research primarily focuses on native-newcomer relations in Western Canada, with a particular emphasis on the law, environment, and economy. Prof. Sims received his B.A. from Concordia University of Edmonton, and in Fall 2017 he will complete his Ph.D. in History at the University of Alberta. (appointment pending)

**Nakita Valerio** – Alberta Muslim Public Affairs Council – Nakita Valerio is an academic, activist and writer. She recently earned an M.A. in History and Islamic-Jewish Studies at the University of Alberta, where she received a number of awards and fellowships. She has been recognized by Rotary International with an Award for Excellence in Service to Humanity and has been named one of Edmonton's “Difference Makers” for 2015 by the Edmonton Journal. Nakita is the co-founder of Bassma Primary School in El Attaouia, Morocco, and the Director of Public Policy with the Alberta Muslim Public Affairs Council.

**Joseph Wiebe, Ph.D.** – Augustana Faculty (Religious Studies) – Dr. Wiebe teaches Religion and Ecology with an interest in ethics, imagination, and community. Wiebe's ongoing research is on the ways land shaped Mennonite and Métis identities within different religious

and political contexts. His first book, *The Place of Imagination* was just published by Baylor University Press (2017).

**Rev. Markus Wilhelm** – Glory Lutheran Church, Sherwood Park – Rev. Wilhelm attended Camrose Lutheran College, has studied in Germany and served Lutheran congregations in British Columbia and in Calgary, Edmonton, and Sherwood Park, Alberta.

### ***Chester Ronning Lecture on Religion and Diplomacy***

The inaugural Chester Ronning Lecture on Religion and Diplomacy took place on November 29, 2016. This annual lecture, which will focus on contemporary issues in religion and international politics, will honour Ronning’s diplomatic career and its legacy. This year, Dr. Peter Jones presented a lecture on the intricacies of “track two” diplomacy and the roles religious leaders and communities might play in such work. Dr. Jones is Associate Professor, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa; consultant for the Centre for International Policy Studies; and Annenberg Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. Prior to his career in the academy, he served as a senior analyst for the Security and Intelligence Secretariat of the Privy Council of Canada; and in various positions related to international affairs and security at the Privy Council Office, Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Department of Defence.

### ***Community Service Learning (CSL)***

The Centre continues to work closely with CSL. Fourth-year student Thiviyan Nathan, who graduated from Augustana in the Spring with a degree in Global and Development Studies, completed part of his senior practicum at the Centre, sourcing and preparing local foods for several events, while researching interconnections between religiosity and local and sustainable food production. In conjunction with the Spirit of the Land program, the Centre also hosted a number of CSL placements who participated in the program’s Fall and Winter conferences.

### ***International Fellows Program***

The vision of the International Fellows Program is to connect internationally renowned scholars with students, faculty, and community members on local, national, and global levels. The Centre’s International Fellows are public intellectuals that have substantial knowledge of both religious and civil perspectives on current issues. They offer a depth of knowledge to enhance our understanding of these matters. Going forward, each year, the International Fellows Program intends to bring fellows to the Augustana Campus to engage students and faculty on current themes and issues in which they have noted expertise. Fellows will participate in outreach activities such as conducting lectures, seminars, and workshops; and will prepare op-ed and briefing papers on current issues pertinent to the intersection of religion and public life. These activities will engage the following communities:

- public and private universities (Canadian and international)
- various religious communities

- civic/governmental agencies and organizations
- journalists and other members of the media

This year the Centre received a generous gift from the Wendy Cassady Memorial Foundation in order to further develop and sustain this program.

### ***Junior Fellow***

Lisa Vaughan-Farrell was this year’s Junior Fellow at the Centre. Throughout the year, she attended staff meetings and contributed to event planning, providing invaluable student input as we discussed the current and future work of the Centre. Lisa graduated from Augustana in the Spring with a double major in English and Philosophy & Religion. In the Fall of 2017 she will begin a career at the Catholic elementary school in her hometown in British Columbia, where she will continue to pursue her passion of engaging and educating young persons.

### ***Spirit of the Land Program***

On account of several generous gifts from local donors (who wish to remain anonymous), we have continued to engage and educate Augustana students and the broader community on issues related to local knowledge and sense of place. As noted below (see “Programming Highlights”), Spirit of the Land put on two successful conferences in the 2016-17 academic year. In addition, in the summer of 2016, the Centre hosted three Spirit of the Land interns—Carley Angelstad, Kate Gael, and Anderson Gael—who developed a summer program called “Seeds for the Soul,” which featured evening talks and practical workshops on the connections between spirituality and ecology. The interns also conducted research on establishing local land trusts and on the possibilities of improving the health of Mirror Lake through floating aquaponics.

### ***Yang Endowment Funds Recipient***

Hyun-Joo (Lina) Lim, who just completed the second year of her B.A. degree, received \$500 from the Yang Endowment to support her ongoing study of Philosophy & Religion at Augustana. The Yang Endowment was established to support Philosophy & Religion students in a variety of ways. Funds from the endowment may support research assistance, conference or workshop travel, or degree costs (books, tuition, etc.), among other student financial needs.

## **Programming Highlights**

Dr. Catherine Caufield (Associate Director, Research) put together an impressive slate of events for the 2016 Fall term. Highlights included Distinguished Visiting Lecturer Dr. Kieran Bonner of St. Jerome’s University at Waterloo, who challenged us to consider how global tech culture is impacting human self-understanding, and how this impact is shaping our approach to education

today. We also welcomed Dr. Peter Jones of the University of Ottawa, who gave the inaugural Chester Ronning Lecture on Religion and Diplomacy, a talk which introduced us to the intricacies of “track two” diplomacy, and which noted how important religious leaders and groups can and should be in that kind of dialogue.

During the 2017 Winter term, we hosted another Distinguished Visiting Lecturer, Rabbi Lindsey bat Joseph, who gave a series of talks addressing the challenging topic of warfare and Jewish ethics. And Visiting Fellow Dr. Brian Doak of George Fox University shared his award-winning work on the Book of Job and natural theology. During Dr. Doak’s visit, he joined a number of scholars from around Alberta to take part in a Symposium on the roles of the Bible in contemporary postsecondary education. The symposium papers are currently being prepared for peer-reviewed publication.

Spirit of the Land programming, too, continued to thrive and grow this year, under the leadership of Rajan Rathnavalu and Carley Angelstad, and with the support of summer interns Kate and Anderson Gael. In November, our fifth annual Spirit of the Land conference welcomed speakers from across Canada and around the world. Highlights included Karen Mahon’s vision for moving from suffering to creativity in the face of global ecological crisis, and Dr. Alex Wilson’s call to move beyond superficial understandings of First Nations’ cultures. In mid-February, we sponsored “The Spirit of Reconciliation,” a conference event that featured students along with special guests in a community discussion. The aim of the discussion was to look beyond simply acknowledging past wrongs, in order to enter into right relations with other spheres of Canadian life, including the natural, economic, and religious.

## **Programming Details and Statistics**

Total events: **16**

Total attendance: **1250**

\*Please note that each event’s total attendance is noted in brackets after the event date\*

### ***Chester Ronning Lecture on Religion and Diplomacy (First Annual)***

- *Dialogues across Divides: Track Two Diplomacy*  
Dr. Peter Jones (University of Ottawa)  
November 29, 2016 [60]

### ***Conferences***

- *Reconciling Land, Life, and Livelihood*  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual Spirit of the Land Conference  
November 4, 2016: Keynote with Dr. Alex Wilson (USaskatchewan) and Roundtable Discussions [175]

November 5, 2016: Speakers, Panels and Roundtable Discussions [150]

November 6, 2016: Practical Workshops [50]

- *The Spirit of Reconciliation*  
Cosponsored by the Aboriginal Students Office and Spirit of the Land  
February 16, 2017: Keynote with author Maria Campbell [90]  
February 17, 2017: Smudge & Talking Circle, Student Research Presentation, Ask Me  
Anything session with Prof. Daniel Sims (UAlberta Augustana) [130]

### ***Conversation Series***

- *Mixed Blood and Urban Indigenous Identity*  
Sharon Pasula (St. Joseph's College)  
September 14, 2016 [40]
- *The Camrose welcome sign was out - but no Syrian refugees were directed our way - what happened and how should we respond?*  
Alan Ford and Joe McMorrow (Camrose Refugee Committee)  
October 12, 2016 [20]
- *Commemorating the Reformation: Five Hundred Years Later*  
Bishop Larry Kochendorfer (ELCIC), Dr. Faith Nostbakken (ELCIC) and Dr. Julien Hammond (Roman Catholic Archdiocese Edmonton)  
October 19, 2016 [40]
- *Community and Christian Ethics in an Age of Climate Change*  
Dr. Joseph Wiebe (UAlberta Augustana)  
November 2, 2016 [60]
- *Indigenous Research Methodologies: Sharing My Research Journey*  
Dr. Claudine Louis (Maskwacis Cultural College)  
November 9, 2016 [25]

### ***Distinguished Visiting Fellows Lectures*** (made possible by the Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment and Hendrickson Memorial Endowment)

- *Can first questions (Who are we? How should we live?) be an educational focus in this era of global technological culture?*  
Dr. Kieran Bonner (St. Jerome's University of Waterloo)  
October 4, 2016 [80]
- *ISIS, Donald Trump, and Technological Culture: Reflections on Human Purpose*

Dr. Kieran Bonner (St. Jerome's University of Waterloo)

October 4, 2016 [55]

- *Do the Victors Have Moral Limits? A Jewish Perspective on the Ethics of Warfare*  
Rabbi Lindsey bat Joseph (Sol Mark Centre for Jewish Excellence)  
January 24, 2017 [40]
- *Dancing on our Enemy's Grave: The Ethical Limits of Victory*  
Rabbi Lindsey bat Joseph (Sol Mark Centre for Jewish Excellence)  
January 24, 2017 [50]

### ***Symposiums***

- *Memory, Imagination, and Community: A Book Launch*  
Dr. Joseph Wiebe and Dr. Ian Wilson (UAlberta Augustana)  
March 3, 2017 [55]
- *The Role of the Bible in Postsecondary Education*  
Dr. Ehud Ben Zvi (UAlberta), Dr. InHee Berg (UConcordia Edmonton), Dr. Brian Doak  
(George Fox U), Dr. Anne Moore (UCalgary), and Dr. Ian Wilson (UAlberta  
Augustana)  
March 8, 2017 [50]
- *Reformations and Renewals*  
Dr. Brandon Alakas, Dr. Geoff Dipple, and Rev. Craig Wentland (UAlberta Augustana)  
March 22, 2017 [50]

### ***Visiting Fellows Lectures***

- *Ask the Animals: Nature and Theodicy in the Book of Job*  
Dr. Brian Doak (George Fox University)  
March 7, 2017 [30]

### **Select Grants and Special Project Funding**

- \$3800 – Shell Enhanced Learning Fund (SELF) Grant, to support student work at the Spirit of the Land “Spirit of Reconciliation” conference
- \$5000 – Shell Enhanced Learning Fund (SELF) Grant, to support student work at the Fall 2017 Spirit of the Land conference

- \$15,000 – Gift from local donors (who wish to remain anonymous), to support and develop the Spirit of the Land program
- \$70,000 – Gift from the Wendy Cassady Memorial Foundation, to support the International Fellows program

## **Finances (as of 2017 Fiscal Year-End)**

<b>Current Funds</b>	
<i>Ronning Centre Annual Fund</i> (includes donations designated for Spirit of the Land programming)	\$48,873.56
<i>International Fellows Fund</i> (supported by the Wendy Cassady Memorial Foundation)	\$70,000.00
<b>Endowment Balances</b>	
<i>Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment</i>	\$693,223.90
<i>Hendrickson Memorial Endowment</i>	\$113,717.28
<i>Yang Endowment</i>	\$13,512.63

## **Publications**

This year, we began moving Ronning Centre publications to an electronic, online and open access format. Anyone with internet access can now download publications of our visiting scholars' lectures and essays, free of charge, at the following site:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/augustana/research/centres/crc/publications>

### ***2016-17 Centre Publications***

Caufield, Catherine (ed.), with David J. Goa. *Reflections on Religion and Public Life*. New Pluralism and Institutional Transformation Series. 2017.

Hutchinson, Roger C. *Comparative Ethics and the Importance of Context – Essays and Addresses – Part I*. Occasional Papers Series. 2016.

Hutchinson, Roger C. *Comparative Ethics and the Importance of Context – Essays and Addresses – Part II*. Occasional Papers Series. 2016.

### ***2016-17 Staff Publications***

Caufield, Catherine (Associate Director, Research)



### Book

*Shmiot Fugue: Neomysticism in Contemporary Jewish-Mexican Fiction*. Saarbrücken: Hadassa, 2017.

### Peer-reviewed articles

“The Agency Paradigm: A Pedagogical Tool to Facilitate Nuanced Thinking on Sensitive Issues.” *Teaching Religion and Theology* 20.1 (2017): 89–101.

“Diversity in the Public Sphere: Jewish Mexican Women Writers and National Identity.” *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 13.1 (2016): 1–21.

“Castillos en la tierra: Narration of Spiritual Exile.” *Destiempos* 10.52 (2016): 36–58.

“Theology of Inculturation of the Faith and the Oblate-Aboriginal Encounter in Alberta.” *Canadian Journal of Scholarship and the Christian Faith* (2016): <http://journal.cscsf.org/journal/ecclesiology/theology-of-inculturation/>

### Non-peer reviewed article

“Canada’s small towns can make refugees feel at home,” coauthored with Joseph McMorrow. *Edmonton Journal*. A.10. Columnists. Thursday, April 7, 2016.

### Editorial

“Multifaceted analysis and reflection on thinking and living religion.” *Religious Studies and Theology*. 35.1 (2016): 1–3.

### Book reviews

Mixed Blessings: Indigenous Encounters with Christianity in Canada, edited by Tolly Bradford and Chelsea Horton. *Religious Studies and Theology* 35.2 (2016): 119–121.

Coming Full Circle: Constructing Native Christian Theology, edited by Steven Charleston and Elaine A. Robinson. *Anglican Theological Review* 98.4 (2016): 753–755.

Wilson, Ian D. (Associate Director, Programming)

### Book

*Kingship and Memory in Ancient Judah*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

### Peer-reviewed articles

“Faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, able to rule by sense of smell! Superhuman Kingship in the Prophetic Books.” Pages 30-44 in “‘Not in the Spaces We Know’: An Exploration of Science Fiction and the Bible,” edited by Frauke Uhlenbruch. *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 16, article 9 (2016): [http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_221.pdf](http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_221.pdf)

“Yahweh’s Consciousness: Isaiah 40-48 and Ancient Judean Historical Thought.” *Vetus Testamentum* 66 (2016): 646-61.

### Book reviews

My People as Your People: A Textual and Archaeological Analysis of the Reign of  
Jehoshaphat, by Chris McKinny. *Journal of Theological Studies* 68 (2017): 250-53.

The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity, by Eva Mroczek. *Critical Research on  
Religion* 4 (2016): 317-21.