Director’s Note

I am delighted to announce that the Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment on Religion & Public Life has been established. Dr James and Sonja Hendrickson initiated this Endowment with a gift of $100,000. The University and the Augustana Faculty have committed to obtaining matching funds from the Alberta Government Access to the Future Fund for all contributions to this Endowment. We at the Centre intend to build the Endowment so that its revenue will sponsor a number of Distinguished Fellows annually. You can read more about this opportunity for our supporters on pages 4 and 5.

We have scheduled two Augustana Distinguished Lectures for this academic year. In October, Clinton Curle will present several lectures at Augustana and in Edmonton. Curle is concerned with the significance of a half-century of human rights law and how it may serve us for years to come. In February 2008, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, a Lutheran theologian of note, will deliver “The Church in Public Life: Luther for the 21st Century.” She will also conduct a workshop for clergy and church workers in Edmonton on “Religious Claims in the Public Square: Lutheran Resources.” While many religious communities have turned their attention inward, she encourages attention to the Church’s gifts for the life of the world.

Since inception of CRC, Robyn Simpson-Mohr has provided administrative support accounting for 1/3 of her time. She has anchored the Augustana Chaplaincy through some demanding years. Now that the Chaplaincy and the CRC are on firm footing, Robyn will be devoting all her time to the Chaplaincy. We are grateful for her work and hospitable spirit.

Administrative support for CRC has moved to Debbie Smeaton and her staff, Kathy Laube and Janet Hegholz, at Community Education. We are pleased to have the additional skills each of them brings to the work of the Centre.
Religion: Public Affair or Private?
Shayda Nanji

If one wears a turban, a cross, a hijab or a yarmulke, is it a public display of religion? Our society, and indeed our world, has become more pluralistic; we can no longer afford to ignore this reality. Why then do we feel uncomfortable talking about it? All too often we are scared to discuss all things religious precisely because we are “blinded” by these outward forms and focus our energies on what separates us rather than the human spirit which connects us all.

Growing up in colonized East Africa, the notion of religion being a way of life was not so much a conscious idea, as it was a lived experience. You quickly learned that grandparents had to be respected, and sharing with those who were less fortunate was not a question. Respect for teachers was expected and helping classmates understand what they found difficult was second nature. When it was time to attend prayers, you did. Your friends were brown, black, white, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, etc. Religious festivals were celebrated with joie de vivre by everyone. Diversity of peoples, customs, and cultures was woven into the very fabric of our lives. I realize now, though, that whilst this diversity was accepted, it was not recognized as strength by all, nor was the plurality of peoples well understood or valued.

It was not until I became a mother in Canada, a country so far removed from my very easy, innocent childhood, that I began to question and search for answers to an apparently simple statement, that “Islam is a Way of Life.” How could I give my children the same sense of comfort and belonging to the faith in which I was raised? Our faith is little understood and glaring headlines do little to further that; rather they widen the gap. How then could I instil in them the ethics and values of true Islam? How could I explain to them that faith, no matter what religion you were born into, is part of your everyday life, a conviction of heart and mind?

The answer is not so simple, because our world is not so simple. Human history is replete with wars which have been fought in the name of religion. Cultures have clashed, but ultimately wars boil down to human greed, ego, power, control, and global hegemony. Today we hear about the West versus Islam, as though the faith of over a billion people is somehow an enemy to go to war against. It has been proposed that this separation between Islam and the West comes from a “clash of civilizations.” Those more enlightened describe it as a “clash of ignorance.” In a secular society, which relegates religion to a position away from the public sphere, the gap in our understanding of common humanity widens and the prism through which we look at each other becomes narrower. We need to capture this diversity and harness it as the strength which it is, because it is this very diversity which enriches our lives. Only then can we appreciate all that is glorious and beautiful and work for the common good of mankind.

The Holy Quran talks about this and our collective responsibility in a beautiful verse:

“O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is the Knower, Aware.”
Surah (Chapter ) 49 Ayat (Verse) 13

Thus I believe that the Ronning Centre provides an ideal canopy under which enlightened and hospitable discussions can flourish in a public space. In a world that has often struggled to adequately address the need for healthy, faith-inspired dialogue, the Centre is a beacon of hope for those looking to truly discover the beauty of the plurality of mankind.

Shayda Nanji, a pharmacist with her own business in Edmonton, is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Chester Ronning Centre.
Relearning Community
Adapted from Big Things Happen on a Small Campus: 2007 Report to the Community in Spring 2007.

“Communities are changing and we have to relearn what they are and adapt to the future.” — Brian Rozmahel

When Brian Rozmahel (Augustana, 2005) talks about Augustana, he uses the phrase “transformative experience.” Brian wanted to bring that experience to his home community of Viking. He did that with “Relearning Community: A Series of Five Community Gatherings.” The idea started with a conversation with his brother on the problems in the world, from family breakdown to global environmental issues. At the heart of the conversation was the issue of losing what it means to be a community. Brian spoke to Dittmar Mündel (Religious Studies) and Roger Epp (Political Studies) about bringing together the “academic knowledge with the rural grassroots wisdom.” The weekly community seminars became a reality this winter. Held at the Viking Station Gallery and Arts Centre Guild, Viking’s historic train station, academic speakers from Augustana Campus and the University’s Faculty of Arts in Edmonton met with folks from over ten communities to discuss politics, globalization, the environment, alternative communities, and what it means to be a truly healthy community.

The seminar was a catalyst for new friendships, a wrap-up symposium and dinner, and the formation of the Rural Outreach & Agricultural Renaissance Society (ROARS) for further community action.

Requests from other communities led to one-day Relearning Community Workshops in Forestburg and Wainwright in June 2007. These events were funded in part by the Community Partnership Enhancement Fund, encouraging partnerships between community-based organizations.

Speakers at the Relearning Community events included Roger Epp, Brian Rozmahel, Dittmar Mündel, Karsten Mündel, Satoshi Ikeda, Sara Dorow, Glen Hvenegaard, and Mary Beckie. If your community is interested in hosting a Relearning Community event, please contact Dittmar at pdmundel@telusplanet.net.

Brian Rozmahel at the historic Viking Train Station where the inaugural Relearning Community event was held.

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Visit our website at
www.augustana.ca/ronning
Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment

In an unprecedented act of support for the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus, Dr Jim and Sonja Hendrickson have donated $100,000 to launch an endowment for the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life.

The Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment has two purposes. The first is to attract visiting scholars and leading public intellectuals to the University of Alberta as Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows for terms of up to a full academic year. While in Camrose, they will deliver a series of lectures, engage with students, and participate in the Centre’s activities both within the University and at public forums, regionally and nationally, in addition to working on individual projects.

“These distinguished fellowships will bring diversity, freshness, and creative thinking to the conversations we are nurturing around the complex intersection of religion and public life,” said David Goa. “They will enable us to be nimble in responding to the issues of the day.”

The second, long-range purpose — once the Endowment grows — is to establish permanent professorships or chairs at the Augustana Campus to anchor the Centre for the future. At current rates of return, a professorship requires the support of an endowment of about $1-million. Under the terms of the Hendrickson Endowment, the University is committed to give priority to matching funds over time from the Alberta government’s Access to the Future Fund. The Hendricksons have offered to match other donations made by the end of December 2007, to a maximum of $50,000, as part of their ongoing financial commitment to the Endowment.

“This is a wonderful, generous, visionary gift from people who’ve been friends of Augustana for a long time. It will help the Ronning Centre realize the potential and national profile we imagined for it when it was established,” said Augustana’s Dean, Dr Roger Epp. The initial Hendrickson gift has already been followed by a $10,000 donation. “It’s tremendously reassuring to know that there are people prepared to support the important work of the Ronning Centre in this way,” said Goa.

The Hendricksons, from Victoria, B.C., each attended the former Camrose Lutheran College, and together served 25 years on its Board of Regents prior to Augustana’s transfer to the University of Alberta. “We’ve had a lifelong relationship with Augustana,” says Sonja Hendrickson. “We wanted to create a continuing legacy, and the Centre offered that in the work it does. It’s a good fit.” Jim Hendrickson also believes the importance of the Chester Ronning Centre lies in its continuation of Augustana’s original mission, “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. This is a significant vehicle for people wanting to support the Centre; we’re just opening the door.”

Catch the Vision

We work on the boundaries, artificial and real, of religion and public life. We work at the heart of culture. We draw forward the finest thinking of religious and civil traditions to address the difficult and complex issues facing both religious institutions and civil society. It is no longer good enough to settle into religious and secular silos or into conservative and liberal theological spheres. Church, synagogue, mosque and temple deserve better. Our civil institutions must have a richer frame of reference to address the demanding issues that unfold daily. The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment provides a new opportunity to move the thinking of both religious communities and civil society onto healthier ground. We ask you to consider supporting this initiative.

To find out how you can be part of this significant work please contact Bonita Anderson, Director of Development, Augustana Campus at 1.800.590.9992 or 780.679.1183. For more information on the work and planning of CRC contact David Goa, Director, at 780.679.1104.
The Joy of Giving

Got a problem with your estate? A surprising number of people do, especially when they begin to consider seriously what they want to leave to whom, and what kind of complications may arise among heirs - or Elsewhere - from these decisions, over which their executors will be left to preside.

Although Canada has neither estate taxes nor succession duties, many people don't realize that upon death of the last surviving spouse, CRA deems the assets of an estate to have been disposed of at fair market value and taxes them as income of the deceased for that year. Registered accounts (RRSPs, RIFFs, defined contribution pensions, etc.) that have been tax sheltered all these years now suddenly come “due” and are taxed at roughly 44%. So the “residue” of most estates amounts to many thousands of dollars for the government.

Have a favourite charity? When all is said and done, most people do and would rather have part of their estate go to charity rather than to the government. The trick is to work with a knowledgeable planner and take defensive action early enough to allow your planning to make a difference.

We first began serious planning when a speaker at a pre-retirement seminar suggested people should divert monies that would ordinarily flow to the government to a charity. “Think big,” he said. “Most people will find they can give a million dollars.” He then proceeded to show how taking out insurance to replace any amount you might want to leave to your heirs, would allow you to leave your tax sheltered (i.e. registered) funds to a charity. The charity then receives the full amount, and the insurance passes directly and tax free to your heirs, avoiding even probate fees.

The more we considered this, the more we agreed that’s what we wanted to do, with a couple of additional wrinkles. We realized we could double our contribution if the charity were also eligible for matching funds from a third party. And we decided to start cashing in our RIFFS now, in effect converting them into a kind of mini-foundation, so we could begin to see the fruit of these “investments” during our lifetime and not oblige the charity to await the death of the last survivor.

For us, the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life, established to recognize the legacy of Augustana’s founders, became our first and obvious choice when the University of Alberta agreed to match, over time, not only our funds but those of all contributors to an endowment to fund the Centre’s activities. We see this as a win-win situation. The Church — indeed all churches and all faiths — receive an academic Centre that regards the impact of religion respectfully and seriously, at a time when so many of the critical issues of our time (war and peace, globalization, environmental issues, poverty, social justice, homosexuality, etc.) have a fundamental religious dimension. Augustana, for its part, receives a Centre with the potential to be recognized nationally and internationally, funded by income that is independent of, but supplemental to, that of the Faculty.

Jim and Sonja Hendrickson
Incarnation or the Virtual No-where?
David Goa

For more than thirty years I have had a privileged journey. Various women and men — Christian (Orthodox monks, Catholic farmers, and evangelical missionaries some call fundamentalists, among others), Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist — have taken me by the hand and led me into their fields of meaning. I have simply wanted to understand how they understand the world we share in Western Canada. Martin Buber’s invitation to enter into a dialogue where each person is a “thou” and no one a “you” has led me into the cultural memory, living tradition, historical experience, and sense of place of those who have come to be my friends. Admittedly, I have been interested, almost solely, in men and women who claim the religious life, who pray in order to know themselves and to be open to the holy, and who treasure their tradition and place in the world. They treasure their religious tradition, not as some cultural artefact or out of a nostalgia for the absolute but because it has given them the capacity to struggle: from fantasy to the real, from illusion to truth, from death to life. The abiding insight of these encounters and friendships has been the realization that the deeper the spiritual discipline, the greater the capacity for engaging the grace of daily life and the terrors of history. It is not those who claim a liberal cast of mind or an ideology of tolerance who recognize “thou” in the other but those who stand on firm ground precisely because they are initiated through their faith into the depths of their own struggle and their own very human story. It is this ground that has nurtured their capacity to engage the struggle and story, perspective and gifts, of those they meet whatever their commitments or place within our society. They have come, as George Grant put it, to a “love of their own” which gave them the disposition for the “love of the Good.”

Wolfgang Sachs, in his demanding essay, “One World,” has argued that we are incapable of living only in “space” and need to make a place for ourselves, a specific local place where memory and our participation in the larger story may call us to presence. Density and depth, the thickness of life, always involves our ancestors, our neighbours, and the particular stranger at the gate; always involves the web of social and cultural bonds. It is also in place, and only in there, that we are known for who we are and that we come to know the enormous diversity and variety of the human story. Virtual space is no-place and it is only, as Sachs puts it, in place “that people weave the present into their particular thread of history.”

The Christian faith centres on the incarnation of God in the humble rabbi who walked the valley of the Galilee. It unveils the simple truth that each person’s struggle and story, perspective and gifts, are discernible along the pathways of daily life. We may be given the grace to see each other as “thou” along these pathways, or, to use that wonderful metaphor from the Gospel, when we sit down “at the breaking of the bread.” Communion opens us to identity, both our own and that of the other. We come to know each other in incarnation, ensarkosis, as the Greeks called it, the enfleshment of our life with its entire struggle to move from fantasy to the real, from illusion to truth, from death to life.
Globalization and its chief popular tool, the Internet, offer a new order on a worldwide scale. Zygmunt Bauman, in his critical analysis, has pointed to the claim that globalization provides more mobility for people, capital, and information of benefit to the whole of the human family. Anyone who regularly feeds on the mass media would assume this sea-change in the organization and instruments of our world is our fate, and individuals and whole societies must simply watch as boundaries, institutions, and loyalties shift in ways not immediately discernible even to astute observers. Bauman suggests globalization has created a class of absentee landlords on a global scale, changing not only our economy, politics, and social structures, but our perceptions of time and space as well.

The claims of the prophets of this new order remind me of the second temptation in the wilderness. “Then leading him to a height, the devil showed him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, ‘I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.’” (Luke 4:5-7) In the Gospel account we are provided with an antidote to those offers that, touching on all that is best in human aspiration, threaten to turn these aspirations into ambition. The key is recognizing utopian rhetoric, and the antidote, for Christians, is Jesus’ teaching on the nature of the kingdom of God. We need only ask the Amish question, “What will this do to my community?” to free our minds from the temptation to turn our aspirations into global ambition. For Christians, and many other religious women and men, the temptations offered under the rubric of globalization are rooted in utopian notions of development, democracy, and human rights. We need to be careful here. The Christian faith calls its sons and daughters to be present. It does not call them to be right or successful, much less to bring about a new world order through some technique or ideological breakthrough. It calls us to walk the local pathways and experience that spiritual friendship which makes “all things new” not because we have “information” but because we have been touched by the mystery of the being of another person. The virtual world may offer various opportunities of use to the common good. What it simply does not and cannot offer is the “breaking of the bread” where the terror of history and the grace of our life story are present, when all “you” becomes “thou.”

This essay is adapted from one originally published in Ecumenism/Oecumenisme (2001); reprinted in Catholic New Times (April 2002).

2 George Steiner, Nostalgia for the Absolute (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1997).
Point & Counterpoint

Splitting the Difference
David J. Goa

By the time this newsletter is in your hands, we may know if this is the summer of schism for Lutherans and Anglicans. More than one bishop has said to me that it has already happened. Others compare it to a divorce, saying all that remains is signing the property agreement. But what about the children, and what about the ancestors, the future, and the past? If divorce in any of its many forms has entered your flesh, you know the gravity of this question. It shapes the future and reshapes the past. The Church is one of the few institutions in our fragile world that cares for the future and the past. It has shown an enormous capacity for the full range of difference. At its best, and often even in its dark times, the Church has understood this caring as an intimate part of the capacity of its faithful for presence to the life of the world.

It grieves my heart to see this splitting of difference. It is no time for Schadenfreude. I have heard it from all quarters and from those in other Churches: a diseased pleasure in the exposed wounds of others. Over the last thirty years, most of the mainline Churches, including Lutherans, Anglicans, and Roman Catholics, have turned inwards. This withdrawal from the life of the world bears witness to a loss of vision and purpose. Conservatives and liberals alike mourn this state.

According to the Daily Telegraph, a group of conservative Anglican leaders have been working to establish a parallel Church in the United States. Canadian Lutherans on both sides of the same-sex blessing debate are fatigued, and many of them say they simply want resolution. Both sides are convinced of their ground. There is little left to discuss. It is too late for intervention. But what of the children? What of the ancestors?

I do not know how this discussion ought to have unfolded. I have asked those on both sides to think back to the beginning of the debate. Was there another way of proceeding, different ground on which to stand, larger ideas, or better questions? Conservatives and liberals alike offer none. Odd what we share when we split the difference. So I wonder out loud. How would this have turned out if those who care on both sides had worked at the recovery of the depth of the tradition, and the depth of compassion, as ways of coming to consider what the Church ought to do? Did the awful rhetoric of the civil debate on changing the marriage law pollute the debate in the Church? What if we had understood that civil union is part of property law and all Christian marriage, even the least liturgical, is understood as a divine blessing, what then? Would schism be so easily accommodated if even a few at the table had a rich ecclesiology? The understanding of the nature of the Church has thinned markedly in my lifetime, coming dangerously close to being a doctrine of fraternity, and this on both sides of the debate. What if just one Lutheran or Anglican theologian in the last 500 years had written a substantive theology of marriage?

Whatever unfolds in both of these communions over the next months, will the good reasons on both sides be good enough for our children and our ancestors? There is clearly a lot of work to do so that the young may claim the Church with vigour and draw from their spiritual ancestors the substantial capacity to do the healing work for the life of the world that is at the heart of the Christian vocation. This recovery will be as needed in four Churches as it is in two.

David Goa came to Augustana Campus in 2005 to serve as Director of the Chester Ronning Centre. His life's work has focused on religious tradition and modern culture.
In the last twelve years I have spent two to ten months annually in Mexican villages and towns with Augustana’s Rural Development Exchange. One of the great reverse culture shocks for me is Canadian suburbia. Everything is so homogeneous, so clean. The lawns are so expansive and perfect. No homeless or addicts or mentally ill released too early from hospitals seek shelter here. No beggars, buskers or prostitutes ply their trade in these cul de sacs. They know how to read the invisible signs: only the pure may enter here. It is the spirit of the 4th-century Donatist heresy made concrete by city planners and developers. The purity, of course, is more economic than moral, but it is comforting to confuse the two, so one doesn’t have to examine the ethics of a socially and ecologically exploitive economy.

Our ways of living and working influence our ways of seeing and interpreting life. Is it possible that a search for cleanliness and security also influences our thinking within Churches? Can we sustain important disagreements? Can we live with difference and complexity? Or do “traditionalists” and “progressives” seek their own division of the world into clean and unclean to make the world orderly and predictable, that is, into suburbia?

Our town in Mexico, Tepoztlan, is rich in diversity and complex in its inner dynamics. Adobe houses and yards with chickens and donkeys are side-by-side with houses of brick or cinderblock of the tradespeople and professionals, and walled compounds of the rich. As I descend to the heart of town on Good Friday, I see the 16th-century Church of the Nativity, flanked by the regular market and the artisans’ market. The procession with a statue of Jesus carrying His cross carried by relays of people under the mocking gaze of Roman soldiers on horseback wends its way toward the church. There are villagers in traditional shawls, older women in gingham dresses, men with broad-brimmed hats in hand, urbanites with midriff prominently exposed, macho males, sensitive fathers and their children, dignitaries, ne’er-do-wells, and humble folk. In the midst of the procession with the two priests is one of the liturgists, a closet lesbian, leading the prayers at one of the Stations. They pass the fishmonger, who for once does not cry out her wares; the “Good times” coffee shop, with Mexican and European tourists; the beer vendors, who are making a good business; the poor basket weavers from Tlalacazapa; and the young lawyer selling glass-ware. The procession enters the church yard. Now people gather around Jesus on the cross, while some of the Roman soldiers stand watch and others sit on the ground playing cards and rolling dice. Hundreds come and contemplate Jesus and the thief who asked Jesus to “remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Some stay from twelve to three at the foot of the cross. Others sit or stand in quiet devotion or quiet chatter for half an hour. Just leaving the church yard, a gay agricultural extension worker, who has “come out” to a few close friends with great fear of ridicule in this macho culture, greets me with a nod. The newspaper vendor is there, who confided to me in a stage whisper that the pope was a “Hitler Youth” in the past.

Somehow all the economic and cultural and religious complexity, all the town battles and disagreements, are not resolved, but held by the “holy one in their midst” who calls his followers to be there for the life of the world.

Dittmar Mündel, an Augustana faculty member in Religious Studies and Interdisciplinary Studies since 1980, is committed to experience-based, community-engaged teaching and learning.
A number of controversies condition human rights talk and practice today: the tensions and affirmations between rights and traditional religions, rights and security, rights and economic development, and rights and values embedded in particular cultures. The standard Enlightenment view of human rights is not sufficiently rich to guide us through these tensions. Taken together, these call for a thorough reconceptualization of human rights. One of the most promising lines of thought is the one initiated by John Humphrey, which draws on modes of thinking resonant with the Christian East.

Rev. Dr. Clinton Timothy Curle, LLB, MTS, MA (Theology), MA (Legal Studies), PhD (Political Science) is pastor of a Wesleyan Methodist church in Ottawa, teacher at Carleton University, and Executive Director of World Hope International Canada, a relief and development organization. His academic interests are focused on international human rights as a site for the intersection of faith, law and politics in our world. His first book, *Humanite: John Humphrey’s Alternative Account of Human Rights*, was published in 2007 by the University of Toronto Press.

Two additional lectures will be in Edmonton. See page 13 for details.

Cost to attend any of the Distinguished Lectures is a suggested $10.00 donation. Students attend free of charge.
Ronning Centre Internships

In May 2007, we welcomed our first Ronning Centre Intern, Catherine Rubanga. In her studies at Augustana, Catherine demonstrated serious engagement in a number of the complex themes where religion and public life come together, themes that are part of Canadian public life as well as an important part of current discussions in many other countries. Catherine has assisted us in development of the Centre research archive in two ways. She has prepared the inventory of a large collection of photographic materials donated to the University by Noel and Wendy Cassady. Noel is one of Chester Ronning’s grandsons and Wendy worked with Dr Ronning, assisting him in preparing several manuscripts for publication. The photographic collection documents Ronning’s family life, including his childhood in China, his work as a diplomat in China, Norway, and India, and his time at Camrose Lutheran College, as well as the family’s life as part of the settlement history of Alberta. Catherine has also built our reference files on news stories where religion and public life are at issue. Several of the Centre’s staff and associates initiated a research project this summer that will examine the landscape of faith and politics in Alberta. Catherine has participated in the initial work of the project by providing a kind of topographical map of the current evangelical presence in our province.

Catherine comments:
My journey through four years of undergraduate studies at Augustana has provided me with a remarkable opportunity to learn a great deal about the historical, social, and cultural life of the human family. This has dovetailed with the singular experience of living in rural Alberta as an international student and taught me so much about the nature of community, social values, and the demands of civil life. It has also given me the joy of many friendships. I have lived on campus and used this opportunity to be an active member of the Student Association, served as a Resident Assistant, and participated in the student charity, Augustana Against AIDS, which brought Stephen Lewis to speak in 2006. My horizons have grown through all these experiences.

Working with the Chester Ronning Centre has been an excellent opportunity to build on my learning, extend my thinking and understanding, and acquire a number of new skills, as well as develop the skills I acquired in the last four years. My major in sociology was put to really good use during my summer work at CRC.

The Purpose of CRC Internships

The Internship Fund enables Augustana students to work with CRC and develop their knowledge and understanding, along with the delicate skill set needed by the next generation of scholars and public intellectuals to engage the many demanding issues of religion and public life in restorative ways. Interns are appointed for a four-month period and are chosen based on their promise as young scholars. They work directly with CRC staff on research projects and program development.

Internships are funded through designated contributions to CRC. We invite all those interested in contributing to the shaping of a new generation of scholars capable of working hospitably and effectively in the area of religion and public life to contribute to this initiative. Internships are usually shaped for the April – August period and require $10,000.
Many religious communities are faced with a range of complex issues as they try to clarify for themselves how their faith engages a modern, pluralistic society. The media tend to give us “sound bites” of religious groups as they struggle to be true to their own traditions. Often one religious voice is pitted against one secular voice, as if they represented the full gifts of religious and civil tradition. Also, “populist” religious and civil speakers often do not transcend easy slogans. The Ronning Centre is committed to giving depth and texture to our ways of thinking about how religion intersects with politics, economics, social structures, ecology, and cultures.

We invite you to make use of the resources of the Ronning Centre to explore complex themes that are important to your faith community and to civil society. Are you concerned about the uses or misuses of sacred texts in the public square or within your communities? Would you like to examine how the Hebrew prophets view the globalization of consumerism? Are you worried about being a Muslim in Alberta, when the word “Islam” and the phrase “war on terror” are constantly linked in the media? Would you like to explore the gifts and challenges of other religious traditions in our multicultural society? Is your religious community interested in trying to understand Alberta’s religious landscape? Do you have a thorny issue that is best opened up to new perspectives and discussions by an outsider, or by a scholar who understands the depth and texture of the tradition in which you stand? Then contact David Goa, Director of the Ronning Centre, to see what resources the Ronning Centre may have for you.

Staff of the Ronning Centre and its associates welcome opportunities to partner with you at the venue of your choice (from a few hours to a two-day retreat) and open a hospitable space for discussing difficult issues and themes within the context of your religious tradition.
Upcoming Events

Augustana Distinguished Lectures
Re-Thinking the Enlightenment: New Directions for International Human Rights
Tuesday, October 9, 7:30 p.m.
Augustana Campus, Faith & Life Centre Chapel
Rev. Dr Clinton Timothy Curle

“The most important book I have ever read”:
John Humphrey, Henri Bergson, and International Human Rights
Wednesday, October 10, 3:30 p.m.
University of Alberta, Location TBA
Rev. Dr Clinton Timothy Curle

What has Constantinople to do with New York?: Byzantine Reflections on International Human Rights
Wednesday, October 10, 7:00 p.m.
St Herman’s Church, 9930 – 167 Street
Edmonton
Rev. Dr Clinton Timothy Curle

The Church in Public Life: Luther for the 21st Century
Wednesday, February 13, 2008, 7:30 p.m.
Messiah Lutheran Church, 4810—50 Street
Camrose
Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda

Workshop for Clergy & Church Workers
Thursday, February 14, 2008, 10:00 a.m. - noon
Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014—81 Avenue
Edmonton
Dr. Cynthia Moe-Lobeda

Ronning Centre Seminars
Beyond the Stereotypes: Missionaries, Science, and Culture in the South Pacific?
Wednesday, September 19, 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Augustana Campus, Faith & Life Centre, FL04
Dr Jane Samson

Is Political Friendship Possible in the Modern Age?
Friday, September 28, 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Augustana Campus, Faith & Life Centre, FL04
Dr John von Heyking

Is Political Friendship Possible in the Modern Age?
Friday, September 28, 3:30 p.m.
King’s University College, Room N201
9125 - 50 Street, Edmonton
Dr John von Heyking

Globalization and Community Amid the ‘Oil Boom’
Wednesday, October 17, 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Augustana Campus, Faith & Life Centre, FL04
Dr Sara Dorrow

Ronning Centre Study Circles
Faith & Modern Politics
War, Economics, Poverty & End-of-Life Issues
David Goa and Dittmar Mündel
Monday evenings, Sept. 10 - Nov. 19, 2007
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Augustana Campus, Faith & Life Centre, FL03
$150 + GST + materials.
Call 780-679-1198 to register.

The Bible: From Weapon to Life-Giving Word
David Goa and Dittmar Mündel
Saturday, October 27, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Trinity Lutheran Church, 10014 – 81 Avenue
Edmonton
Light lunch to follow. Fee: $7.00 for lunch

The Bible: From Weapon to Life-Giving Word
David Goa and Dittmar Mündel
Saturday, November 3, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Augustana Campus, Faith & Life Centre, FL03
4901 – 46 Avenue, Camrose

For more information on the activities and resources of the Chester Ronning Centre and how to register for these events, visit www.augustana.ca/ronning.
…focuses its work on a set of issues and themes that demand our attention whether or not we are religious. In their day, many of the founders of Augustana engaged similar issues and themes that daily flash across every news broadcast and galvanize the attention of today’s scholars. The demand is for a more complex attention to be paid to these issues, an attention that is both inclusive and critical.

Our Purpose is to cultivate a deep understanding of issues and themes at the intersection of religion, faith and public life and to do so in the public sphere and in religious spheres. Our 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.

The following suite of activities shapes the work of the Centre and engages students, scholars, public intellectuals and activists in the following ways:

- the annual Chester Ronning Centre Forum on Religion and Public Life;
- Augustana Distinguished Lectures — an annual event funded by the Hendrickson endowment;
- cafes, study circles, seminars consultations and conferences;
- ongoing research and Ronning Centre publications.

We invite you to consider supporting the Centre:

The Ronning Centre Distinguished Visiting Fellows Endowment supports a program of distinguished visiting fellows to the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life. It provides the Centre with a nimble way of working on current issues and themes into its work in the University community, the public square, and religious communities. These fellowships will attract leading scholars from across academic disciplines, as well as leading public intellectuals with a demonstrated capacity to contribute thoughtfully and constructively to the discussion of the complex themes at the contemporary intersection of religion and public life.

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

The Ronning Centre Annual Fund and Friends publications enhance the ongoing work of the Centre making it possible for many to learn and contribute to the understanding of religious perspectives on public life and public understanding of religious perspectives.
Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre ...the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life focuses its work on a set of issues and themes that demand our attention whether or not we are religious.

We invite you to become a Friend of the Centre and join the table of hospitality that brings depth and texture to many of the compelling issues of our time where religion, faith and public life intersect.

**Friends of the Chester Ronning Centre** will receive:
- Invitations to our conferences, seminars, lectures, forums, cafés, study circles and symposiums;
- Our regular newsletter;
- Notification of our publications, research and public forums;
- Invitations to conversations with public intellectuals and scholars that go beyond the news stories of the day;
- Opportunities to influence and support fruitful research and religious and public conversation on many of the most compelling issues of our day.

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**I would like to become a Friend of the Chester Ronning Centre and support the ongoing work of the Centre**

**Chester Ronning Centre annual membership fee of $15.00 will be deducted from your charitable gift**

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   - □ The Ronning Centre Student Internships
   - □ The Ronning Centre Annual Fund

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For more information on giving opportunities to the Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public life please call (780) 679-1558

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CHESTER RONNING CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE
University of Alberta, Augustana Campus
4901 – 46 Avenue, Camrose, AB T4V 2R3
www.augustana.ca/centres/ronning centre

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