

# REPORT FROM THE Center

## Martin Marty to speak at Inaugural Cookson Lecture Series

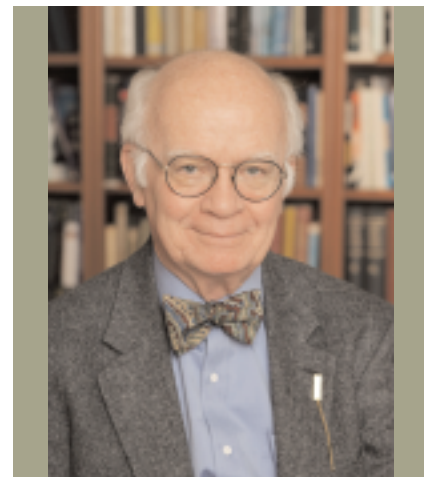
Dr. Martin E. Marty, one of the world's most renowned and respected religious scholars, will speak at Virginia Wesleyan College on October 26. This event will inaugurate the annual *Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture*.

Marty's talk, entitled "Theo-cracies, Demo-cracies, and Other -cracies," will explore the implications of an impulse toward theocracy that has recently resurfaced in America.

Marty, a professor of religious history for 35 years at the University of Chicago, is a speaker, columnist, pastor, teacher, and author. He has authored more than 50 books, including *Righteous Empire*, winner of the National Book Award; the three

volume treatise *Modern American Religion*; and his most recent book, *When Faiths Collide*. His numerous honors include the National Humanities Medal, the Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and more than 70 honorary doctorates.

Marty's lecture will be presented on Thursday, October 26, 2006, at 7:30 p.m., in the Boyd Dining Center at Virginia Wesleyan College.



The *Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture* is named for the Center's founding director, Dr. Catharine Cookson. Following Dr. Cookson's death in 2004, a fund was established for the purpose of bringing scholars in religious freedom and related areas to the Virginia Wesleyan campus. This lecture series honors these gifts. To support the continuation of this series, please contact the Center or the college's Department of Advancement.

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### REFLECTIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR



## The Earliest Religious Freedom Law

What would you count as the earliest law establishing religious freedom? Is it the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, adopted in 1786? The 1689 English Act of Toleration, recognizing the rights of dissenting denominations? Or perhaps the Rhode Island Charter of 1663, upholding the principle of liberty of conscience for everyone in the colony?

Each of these enactments represents an important step on the long historical journey to the religious freedom we enjoy today in the United States. But the earliest Western law on religious freedom – probably the earliest such law anywhere – appeared in 1568, more than two centuries before Jefferson's famous Virginia Statute. The unlikely location for this law was the Kingdom of Transylvania in Eastern Europe,

*continued on page 2*

# Campus Kaleidoscope

## ACTIVITIES



Campus Kaleidoscope, the student chapter of The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ-Virginia), is sponsored at Virginia Wesleyan College by the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom. CK partners with other student organizations, and occasionally with community groups, to co-sponsor events to enhance appreciation of our differences, develop personal and institutional understanding of bias, bigotry and racism, and help

make our community more inclusive. Its larger goal is to prepare college students for effective citizenship in a diverse society. On April 4, the memorial anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., CK organized and participated in an interfaith "Walk for Nonviolence" in downtown Norfolk. This event marked the conclusion of the annual Season for Non-Violence, a nation-wide grassroots movement honoring Dr. King's and Mahatma Gandhi's visions for a nonviolent world.

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and its story constitutes an important episode in the history of religious freedom.

The two central characters in this story are minister and theologian Francis Dávid (Dávid Ferenc), and King John Sigismund (János Zsigmond), who ruled Transylvania from 1540 to 1571. Once part of the old Kingdom of Hungary, Transylvania was an independent state during most of the 16th and 17th centuries. These were years of intense theological and political struggle throughout Europe, due largely to the upheavals caused by the Protestant Reformation. Francis Dávid (c. 1510 – 1579) was born

in the city of Kolosvár, the capital of Transylvania. After being educated in Catholic schools, he went off to study theology in Wittenberg, Germany, the very city where Martin Luther had posted his famous 95 theses in 1517, setting off the Protestant Reformation. While in Wittenberg, Dávid became familiar with Reformation ideas, and this seems to have stimulated years of personal religious searching. After returning to Kolosvár around 1555, he renounced Catholicism and became a Lutheran minister. By 1559, however, having become convinced that the Calvinist understanding of the Lord's Supper was preferable to the Lutheran, he converted to Calvinism, eventually becoming Bishop of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church in Transylvania.

While the controversy between Lutherans and Calvinists intensified, Dávid began harboring doubts about the doctrine of the Trinity. Antitrinitarian views were springing up all over Europe

during this period, from Spain to Italy to Poland, and Dávid became an important voice in this movement. As his theological views developed, he increasingly



*Francis David preaching at the Diet of Torda.*

rejected Calvinism, finally preaching his first public Unitarian sermon in 1566. This led to a period of intense and highly popular public theological debates, often held at the behest of the King. Dávid's eloquence and debating skill led the King to appoint him to the post of Court Preacher. The Calvinists, however, denounced Dávid's views as heretical, and religious controversy threatened to split the state.

Eager to end the controversy and restore stability, King John convened a

## A New Look

We have changed the size and appearance of our newsletter. The larger size will allow us to include more information on Center events and other items of interest. Our Calendar of Events will now be included in the newsletter (see page 8). We plan to continue publishing in this 8-page format, but we'll probably experiment with the layout and the contents as we go along. We hope you enjoy this new look. Let us know what you think.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

### *in the News*

Co-sponsors included the Masjid William Salaam, the Ohel Shalom Temple, and the Ghent United Methodist Church. The walk concluded at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza in Norfolk with a reading of portions of Dr. King's famous "I have a dream" speech.

*For more information about CK, including pictures from the walk, visit the CK web site, available through a link on the CSRF Web site.*

diet, or assembly, in the nearby town of Torda, in 1568. After listening to the various religious views, the King formally issued an Act of Religious Tolerance and Freedom of Conscience, commonly known as the Edict of Torda. Here is its most significant language:

*"In every place the preachers shall preach and explain the Gospel each according to his understanding of it, and if the congregation like it, well, if not, no one shall compel them for their souls would not be satisfied, but they shall be permitted to keep a preacher whose teaching they approve. Therefore none of the superintendents or others shall abuse the preachers, no one shall be reviled for his religion by anyone, and it is not permitted that anyone should threaten anyone else by imprisonment or by removal from his post for his teaching, for faith is the gift of God."*

This decree also marks the founding of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania. Unitarianism's position was solidified in 1571 when, on the day before his death, the King formally recognized Unitarianism as one of Transylvania's official or "received" religions, along with Catholicism, Calvinism, and Lutheranism. The faith

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## Supreme Court Allows Sect to Use Hallucinogenic Tea, Upholds RFRA

The U.S. Supreme Court on February 21, 2006, ruled unanimously that a small New Mexico sect could use a hallucinogenic tea in religious rituals. Chief Justice John Roberts, in his first religious freedom case, said that under the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), the group's right to religious expression and practice superseded federal drug control laws. The Court's ruling served as a strong endorsement of the RFRA, which requires the government to show a "compelling interest" before it can limit religious freedom. – RNS



## Intelligent Design Ruled Unconstitutional

In a case likely to have far-reaching implications, a federal judge dealt a setback to the teaching of intelligent design (ID) in public schools by ruling that a Pennsylvania school district's policy - which required that ninth-grade students hear a statement that evolution is "not a fact" and that intelligent design is an alternative theory - was unconstitutional. The December 20, 2005, opinion ruled that ID is not a science, but rather a variant of creationism, a religious theory, and as a result the board's policy violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. Proponents of ID claim the universe is so complex it must have been created by an intelligent, higher being. Critics say ID is unscientific and represents a barely veiled attempt to bring religion into public schools. – RNS

## Intelligent Design Gains Momentum, Raises Eyebrows on Campuses

The nationwide debate over intelligent design is now spilling over onto university campuses. At nearly 30 public and private universities, students have started clubs aimed at promoting intelligent design. The clubs are sponsored by the Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness Center (IDEA), a small, nonprofit organization whose advisory board includes fellows of Seattle's Discovery Institute, the driving force behind the ID movement. Victor Hutchison, professor emeritus of zoology at the University of Oklahoma, who attended some IDEA club meetings on his campus, said the clubs fit into Discovery's larger plan "to attack evolution and replace it with their religious viewpoint of creationism" and eventually "establish a theocracy."

– RNS



## Bush Adds Faith-Based Center to Homeland Security Department

In a March 7, 2006, executive order, President Bush called for a center on faith-based and community initiatives to be opened within the Department of Homeland Security. A February report had found that while faith-based and other nongovernmental organizations provided "essential support" to hurricane victims, they "were not adequately integrated into the response effort." The new office, the 11th faith-based agency center Bush has created by executive order, will be staffed primarily by individuals in the Federal Emergency Management Agency. — RNS

## Prison Ministry Program Ruled Unconstitutional

An Iowa federal court ruled on June 2, 2006, that a state-financed evangelical Christian prison treatment program operated by InnerChange was "pervasively sectarian" and violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. The New York Times reported the story, noting that the case may have important implications for the Bush administration's faith-based initiative. InnerChange is affiliated with Prison Fellowship Ministries, an organization founded by Charles W. Colson, an influential evangelical and close ally of President Bush who went to prison for his role in the Watergate cover-up. In its 140-page opinion, the Court noted that the InnerChange program taught that sin was the root of inmates' problems. The program also offered special privileges to inmates who accepted its evangelical teachings.

## Appeals Court Says N.Y. Church Can Allow Homeless to Sleep on Steps

A federal Court of Appeals ruling on April 27, 2006, allowed a prominent New York church to continue offering shelter on its steps to New York's homeless population. In 2001, the City told Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church it could no longer allow homeless people to sleep on its property, saying the outdoor site constituted an illegal shelter. The church, however, argued that providing services to the homeless was a religious activity protected under the First Amendment's Free Exercise clause. The church called the ruling "a strong defense of religious freedom" that reflects "an important part of the ancient Christian tradition of offering hospitality to the poor and to strangers." — RNS

## Utah Supreme Court Upholds State Ban on Polygamy

The Utah Supreme Court upheld the bigamy conviction of a member of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) who had argued that his plural marriage was protected under the Religious Toleration clause of the Utah Constitution and the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In its May 16, 2006, decision, the Court rejected the claim under the Utah constitution because it expressly excludes polygamy. The Court also ruled that bigamy is not a protected form of religious free exercise under the U.S. Constitution. The FLDS sect follows early Mormon doctrine supporting plural marriage. The main branch of the Mormon Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, officially renounced polygamy in 1890.

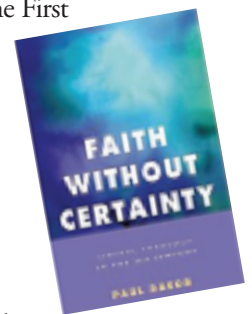
For more details on these and other stories, see the CSRF Web site.

## Center Director Keynotes International Theology Conference

Paul Rasor, CSRF Director, gave the keynote address at an international theological symposium, "Unitarian Universalism: Liberal Religion for a Changing Global Society," held in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in July. Rasor's address was entitled "Postmodernity, Globalization, and the Challenge of Identity in Liberal Theology." Speakers from Spain, Indonesia, Bolivia, New Zealand, The Czech Republic, The United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Romania also participated. The Unitarian Church of Transylvania, the world's oldest Unitarian movement, founded in the mid-16th century, hosted the symposium.

## Director's Book Recognized

Center Director Paul Rasor's 2005 book, *Faith Without Certainty: Liberal Theology in the 21st Century*, received double recognition this year. In March, the ODU Friends of the Library honored the book at its Annual Author Dinner. Rasor gave a talk at this event entitled "Faith, Freedom, and the First Amendment: A Liberal Perspective." In May, *Faith Without Certainty* was named one of ten national semi-finalists and received honorable mention at the Independent Publisher Book Awards for 2006 in the category of religion.



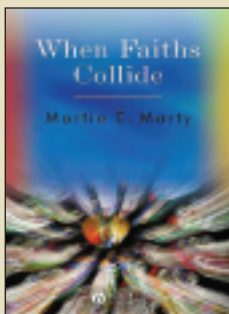
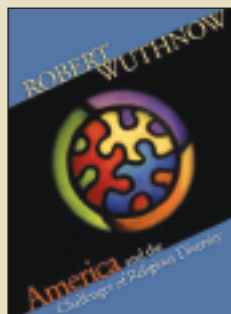
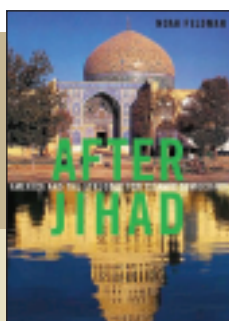
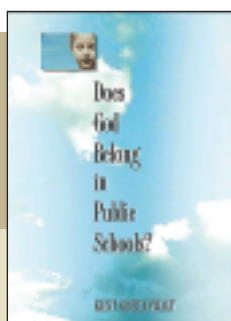
# CSRF Library Growing

Thanks to a generous gift, the Center's library is being updated and expanded. We have added more than 150 new books since last fall, and the library now contains more than 800 volumes. The new acquisitions cover a range of topics, focusing on constitutional law, religious freedom and church-state relations, religion and law, and religion in public and political life. The Center's collection also includes books on a variety of religious traditions, theology and religious studies, philosophy, education, and other topical areas. The books are housed on shelving newly installed in the Center's conference room. Over the next few years we plan to add several hundred additional volumes. This will make the library even more useful as a resource for students, faculty, and others interested in researching issues in religious freedom. All CSRF books are included in the college library's online catalog and most can be checked out.



## Rasor's Recommended Reading:

Feldman, *After Jihad*;  
Greenawalt, *Does God Belong in the Public Schools?*;  
Marty, *When Faiths Collide*;  
Wuthnow, *America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity*.



# CSRF Tenth Anniversary

September 2006 marks the tenth anniversary of the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom. Thanks to the vision, dedication, and generosity of supporters from both the college and the community, the Center was formally launched on September 5, 1996, at a ceremony on the Boyd Dining Center Plaza. Far too many people were involved in this effort to name individually. However, special thanks are due to Mr. Bob Nusbaum, whose vision and persistence planted the seed; Dr. Billy Greer, President of the college, whose support created the institutional

space for it to grow; and Mrs. Joan Brock, whose financial generosity enabled it to blossom. Finally, we must acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Del Carlson, late Professor of Political Science at VWC, who served as the Center's Interim Director during those first critical years. Those of us who guide the Center's work today stand gratefully on the foundations laid a decade ago by these and many other dedicated individuals. We continue to build on this legacy as we look forward to the Center's next ten years.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*The following is a sampling of the many new books now available in the Center library:*

BURRELL, DAVID, *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Blackwell, 2004)

CARTER, STEPHEN L., *God's Name in Vain: The Wrongs and Rights of Religion in Politics* (Basic Books, 2001)

CONKLE, DANIEL O., *Constitutional Law: The Religion Clauses* (Foundation, 2003)

DRY, MURRAY, *Civil Peace and the Quest for Truth: The First Amendment Freedoms in Political Philosophy and American Constitutionalism* (Lexington, 2004)

FELDMAN, NOAH, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003)

GREENAWALT, KENT, *Does God Belong in Public Schools?* (Princeton, 2004)

HAIMAN, FRANKLYN SAUL, *Religious Expression and the American Constitution* (Michigan State, 2003)

HAMBURGER, PHILIP, *Separation of Church and State* (Harvard, 2004)

HAMILTON, MARCI A., *God vs. the Gavel: Religion and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge, 2005)

HUTCHISON, WILLIAM R., *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal* (Yale, 2003)

KRAMNICK, ISAAC, AND R. LAURENCE MOORE, *The Godless Constitution: A Moral Defense of the Secular State* (Norton, 2005)

LAMBERT, FRANK, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, 2003)

MARTY, MARTIN E., *When Faiths Collide* (Blackwell, 2005)

MCGRAW, BARBARA A., AND JO RENEE FORMICOLA, EDs., *Taking Religious Pluralism Seriously: Spiritual Politics on America's Sacred Ground* (Baylor, 2005)

WUTHNOW, ROBERT, *America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity* (Princeton, 2005)

## PROGRAM

# Highlights

### NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue Series to explore "Critical Issues in Islam Today"

The world situation has thrust Islam into the forefront of American consciousness as never before. This reality creates opportunities for education and dialogue, but also opens the door to misunderstanding and prejudice. The 2006-2007 Nexus interfaith dialogue series will address some of today's most critical issues facing Islam and non-Muslim perceptions of Islam. Specific program topics include Islam and Violence, Islam and the Religion-State Relationship, Islam and Women, and Islam and Religious Pluralism. The programs begin **Monday, September 18, 2006**, and continue through April. Consult the CSRF calendar (*page 8*) or Web site for further details.



### The Bible as a Symbol in Church-State Issues

On **Thursday, November 9, 2006**, at **11 a.m. (repeated at 7:30 p.m.)**, Dr. Craig Wansink, Batten Professor of Religious Studies at Virginia Wesleyan will give a talk entitled "*Scripture Unread: The Bible as a Prop in Contemporary American Church-State Challenges*," focusing on the church-state issues that emerge when the Bible is used as a prop in public discussion.

### Church and State: Where Are We Now? A Religious Freedom Roundtable

On **Thursday, September 21, 2006**, at **7:30 p.m.**, the Center will host a distinguished panel of experts in law and religion who will discuss recent developments affecting religious freedom and the relationship of church and state.

*Topics will include:*

- U.S. Supreme Court rulings on religious freedom
- The Pennsylvania "Intelligent Design" case and related developments
- Impact of national security policy
- Faith-based initiatives and church-state relations
- Sectarian religious expression in the military
- Prayer in state legislatures and local governing bodies

Panelists include Isabelle Kinnard, J.D., Ph.D., Education Director, Council for America's First Freedom; Shaun A. Casey, M.P.A., Th.D., Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Wesley Seminary; K. Hollyn Hollman, J.D., General Counsel, Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty; and Davison M. Douglas, J.D., Ph.D., Professor of Constitutional Law, William and Mary School of Law. Paul Rasor, Center director, will moderate the discussion.





## Spring 2007 Symposium

The Center's Spring 2007 Symposium will address Creationism, Evolution and Intelligent Design: Religion and Science in the Public Schools. Despite recent defeats of "intelligent design" in the courts and the legislatures, the American public remains deeply divided about the creation and evolution of life and about the way these are taught in the public schools. These matters go to the heart of public education in the United States, raising critical issues of law and politics, science and religion, and educational policy. Speakers will include legal scholars, historians, scientists, theologians, and educators. The Symposium begins Thursday, February 1, 2007, and continues on consecutive Thursdays through March 8. *More information will appear in the Center's spring 2007 newsletter, and on our Web site.*



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grew rapidly, and by the end of the 16th century there were approximately 400 Unitarian congregations in Transylvania.

Over the years, however, it has suffered much persecution at the hand of rulers less enlightened than John Sigismund. Sigismund's successor, Stephan Báthory, a Roman Catholic, affirmed the decree of religious freedom, but also imposed measures to slow Unitarianism's growth. At the end of the 17th century, Transylvania was reunited with Hungary, now under the rule of the Catholic Habsburg Monarchy. For the next two centuries, Unitarians and other Protestants experienced cycles of tolerance and persecution. Perhaps the most significant challenges were to come during the 20th century. After World War I, Transylvania was given to Romania, separating the Unitarians – and other ethnic Hungarians, including Catholics and Calvinists – from their Hungarian roots. This was followed by the economic and physical devastation of World War II, and then four decades

of Soviet occupation.

Today, the Unitarian Church in Transylvania, the world's oldest continuous Unitarian movement, is recovering. It has some 70,000 members in about 125 congregations, though it remains a small minority in the larger Romanian culture. Ironically, more than four centuries after King John Sigismund's decree, Transylvanian Unitarianism is one of the religions now officially recognized by the post-Soviet Romanian government.

This past July, I made my first visit to Transylvania. I was invited to deliver the keynote address at an international theology conference in Kolosvár, now called Cluj-Napoca, hosted by the Unitarian Church. My visit made this history come alive for me. I was able to meet and talk with many ministers and church leaders for whom this history is part of their own story. And in the chapel of the Unitarian School where our meetings were held, likenesses of Dávid Ferenc and János Zsigmond gazed down on us throughout our deliberations. ■

*The Center  
for the Study  
of Religious  
Freedom needs  
your support.*

You can support the Center in many ways: by attending Center programs, by sharing news of the Center's work with others, and by your financial contributions. Please share this newsletter with your family and friends, and encourage them to come to Center events.

If you would like to make a financial gift to the Center, contact the Virginia Wesleyan College Department of Advancement, 757.455.3242.

You may also make online gifts through our Web site: [www.vwc.edu/csrf](http://www.vwc.edu/csrf)

Your gifts allow us to improve our programs, strengthen our library and other resources, and continue our work of promoting religious freedom.

*Report from the Center* is published twice a year by the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom at Virginia Wesleyan College.

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[www.vwc.edu/csrf](http://www.vwc.edu/csrf)

# Calendar

## OF EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER

**Saturday, September 9, 2006**

**One Love Festival: A World Peace Interfaith Music & Arts Extravaganza**

Modeling unity in diversity and fostering a closer interfaith community. Performers welcome; see event web site, [www.hamptonroadsnetworkfornonviolence.org](http://www.hamptonroadsnetworkfornonviolence.org).  
7 - 11 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

**Monday, September 18, 2006**

**NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue**

*Critical Issues in Islam Today: Islam and Violence*

Why have so many Muslims given themselves to violence today? Is there any support for this behavior in the Qur'an or the teachings of the tradition?

7:30 - 9 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

**Thursday, September 21, 2006**

*Church and State: Where Are We Now?*

**A Religious Freedom Roundtable**

A distinguished panel of experts in law and religion will discuss recent developments affecting religious freedom and the relationship of church and state.

7:30 - 9 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

### OCTOBER

**Thursday, October 19, 2006**

*Legislative Prayer, Pledging 'Under God,' and other Ceremonial Public Religious Expressions*

**CSRF Brown-Bag Conversation**

Should legislatures open their sessions with prayer? Is it proper to link loyalty to country with loyalty to God?

What are the religious and constitutional issues? Conversation introduced and facilitated by Dr. Michael Panitz, Rabbi of Temple Israel in Norfolk and Adjunct Professor at VWC, and Dr. Paul Rasor, CSRF Director.  
11 - 11:50 a.m., Shafer Room, Boyd Dining Center

**Thursday, October 26, 2006**

*Theo-cracies, Demo-cracies, and Other -cracies*

Dr. Martin E. Marty, Professor Emeritus of Religious History, University of Chicago

Dr. Marty explores the implications of an impulse toward theocracy that has recently resurfaced in America. This event inaugurates the Cookson Religious Freedom Lecture Series.  
7:30 - 9 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

### NOVEMBER

**Thursday, November 9, 2006**

*Scripture Unread: The Bible as a Prop in Contemporary American Church-State Challenges*

Dr. Craig Wansink, Batten Professor of Religious Studies, Virginia Wesleyan College

The Bible - as an artifact - has great symbolic value, even when people do not read it. This talk focuses on uses and abuses of the Bible and on church-state issues that emerge when the Bible is used as a prop in public discussion.

11 - 11:50 a.m., and repeated at 7:30 - 9 p.m.,  
Shafer Room, Boyd Dining Center

**Monday, November 13, 2006**

**NEXUS Interfaith Dialogue**

*Critical Issues in Islam Today: Islam and the Religion-State Relationship*

Is Islam compatible with democracy? What fundamental values are at stake?

7:30 - 9 p.m., Boyd Dining Center

*All events are free and open to the public.*



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