



Chester Ronning Centre  
for the Study of Religion and Public Life

# Canada and Civil Religion



## John von Heyking

### *A Ronning Centre Seminar*

“Civil religion” is something usually associated with pre-modern societies or the American symbolism of “city on a hill,” not with modern Canada. John von Heyking wishes to challenge this perception by discussing ways that Canada, since the inception of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, has been framed in terms of civil religion that relies on secular and cosmopolitan symbolisms to define Canada. The discussion will show how contemporary protections of rights and freedoms can take on their own “religious” mission, which both advances and undermines freedoms. The attempt to craft a civil religion is fraught with dangers, but seems to be something common to all political societies, for better and for worse.

**John von Heyking** is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Lethbridge, where he teaches political philosophy and religion and politics. He has published and co-edited half a dozen books, including *Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World*, *Friendship and Politics: Essays in Political Thought*, and *Civil Religion in Political Thought*. His scholarly articles and editorials cover a wide variety of topics, including multiculturalism, friendship, Islamic political thought, religious freedom, just war, and cosmopolitanism.

**Friday, 25 November, 3:00 p.m.**  
**N110, King’s University College**  
**9125 – 50 St NW, Edmonton**

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