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RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY SWEEPS TELEVISION AWARDS PRESENTED BY RELIGION NEWSWRITERS ASSOCIATION

Washington, D.C. — *RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY*, the PBS newsmagazine series hosted by veteran journalist Bob Abernethy and produced by Thirteen/WNET New York, swept the “Best Television Religion Reporting” category in the 2008 award contests presented by the Religion Newswriters Association (RNA). The awards were announced at a banquet held during RNA's annual conference on September 20 in Washington, D.C.

Managing editor Kim Lawton received first place award for her report on “Street Children of Brazil.” The segment, produced by Patti Jette Hanley, looked at the efforts by one denominational ministry to rescue and rehabilitate the growing numbers of children who are living, and working, on the streets of Sao Paulo. According to the judges, “Lawton chose to get out of the way and let those called to help the children tell their story in their own words. All the judges were totally silent as they watched.” Contributing correspondent Lucky Severson received both the second and third place awards for his coverage of “Children of Polygamists” and “Circuit Preacher David Brown,” respectively. The first report, produced by Marcia Henning, explored the difficulties faced by several young teens after being expelled or running away from the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints community in Colorado City. The profile of Reverend Brown, produced by Phil O’Connor, examined the efforts of a traveling Baptist minister to serve the spiritual needs of several small churches with no full-time pastor. All reports can be viewed on the show Web site at www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics.

RNA is a non-profit trade association founded in 1949 to advance the professional standards of religion reporting in the secular press as well as to create a support network for religion reporters. Its national awards competition rewards excellence in religion reporting in the secular media. Winners in this year’s eight contests were selected from among 242 entries judged by former reporters, journalists and scholars who praised the entries as “simply amazing” and “beat reporting at its best.”

Major funding for *RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY* is provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. with additional support from Mutual of America Life Insurance Company, The Henry Luce Foundation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and individual supporters. Executive producer is Arnold Labaton; Thirteen/WNET executive-in-charge is Stephen Segaller.



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