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www.thirteen.org

1333 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Contact: Mary Schultz
tel : 202.216.2394
fax: 202.408.0608

press information

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***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY* REVIEWS 2007 NEWSMAKING EVENTS AND LOOKS AHEAD TO MAJOR STORIES OF THE NEW YEAR**

Washington, D.C. — ***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY***, the acclaimed PBS newsmagazine program produced by Thirteen/WNET New York, will feature consecutive studio discussions of this year's top stories in the world of religion and ethics and those expected to make headlines in 2008. The studio segments will be included in the December 21 and 28 programs to be distributed at 5 p.m. ET (check local listings) to public television stations nationwide.

John Allen, Vatican correspondent for *National Catholic Reporter*, Kevin Eckstrom, editor of *Religion News Service*, and Kim Lawton, ***RELIGION & ETHICS NEWSWEEKLY*** correspondent and managing editor, join host Bob Abernethy for the December 21 discussion and analysis of the top religion news stories of 2007. Among the topics to be addressed are: religion's role in the presidential campaigns; the realignment of the Religious Right; the Vatican's relationship with Muslims; the defiance of the Myanmar monks; and the war in Iraq, and the plight of refugees from it.

The following week, the program looks at major stories expected to make headlines in the coming year. E.J. Dionne, columnist for *The Washington Post* and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, David Gibson, religion journalist and author, and Rachel Zoll, religion writer for the *Associated Press*, join Abernethy to discuss: the role of religion in the 2008 presidential campaign; the prospects for peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians; ongoing divisions within the Anglican Communion over issues of homosexuality and theology; the Chinese government's response to concerns over human rights and religious freedom as the country prepares to host the Summer Olympics; and what American Catholics might expect when Pope Benedict XVI visits the U.S. in April.

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 editor and host for the program is Bob Abernethy; executive producer is Arnold Labaton.

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