



Press Contact:
Donna Williams, WNET
212-560-8030; Williamsd@wnet.org

Website: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/>
Facebook: [facebook.com/PBS.ReligionEthics](https://www.facebook.com/PBS.ReligionEthics) / Twitter: [@ReligionEthics](https://twitter.com/ReligionEthics)

PBS's *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly* Sweeps Religion Newswriters Association Awards in "TV News Magazine Religion Reporting"

New York, NY, September 3, 2015 – [Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly](#), PBS's acclaimed series providing distinctive, cutting-edge news coverage and analysis of national and international events in the ever-changing religious world, took top honors at the 2015 [Religion Newswriters Association](#) (RNA) Awards winning first, second and third places for *Excellence in Television News Magazine Religion Reporting*. This year's win marks the second time THIRTEEN's ***Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*** has swept this category. Winners include: Fred de Sam Lazaro and Nikki See (1st place), Lucky Severson and Trent Harris (2nd place) and Kim Lawton and Patti Jette (3rd place). Honorable mention went to Judy Valente and Gail Fendley. (The last R&E's sweep was in 2013.)

The awards were announced on Saturday, August 29 at the RNA's annual conference. The RNA is a journalism association for people who write about religion in the news media. The association was founded in 1949 to advance the professional standards of religion reporting in the mainstream media and to create a support network for religion reporters.

This week, on Friday, September 4, ***Religion & Ethics News Weekly*** kicks off its 19th season on PBS. A highlight of the new season will be coverage of Pope Francis' visit to the United States this fall over the course of three programs scheduled to air on September 18, 25 and October 2. For more information on the segments about the Pope, [click here](#).

Religion & Ethics News Weekly Winners of 2015 RNA Awards:

1st place: [Rwanda Genocide: 20 Years](#) (aired May 16, 2014)

Fred de Sam Lazaro, contributing correspondent, and Nikki See, segment producer

- In 1994, ethnic tensions in Rwanda culminated in one hundred days of killing, in which nearly one million Tutsi men, women and children were killed by their Hutu neighbors. Two decades later in the largely Christian country, many perpetrators are being released from prison and are seeking forgiveness from those they traumatized. The Christian charity World Vision has brought together thousands of pairs of victims and assailants in small groups, encouraging restoration through building houses and planting trees for survivors. "I see real reconciliation is taking place, and it's not fake. It's genuine," says Josephine Munyeli, a peace and reconciliation expert for World Vision. "You cannot fake reconciliation. You can't."

2nd place: [Tiny Houses for the Homeless](#) (aired October 10, 2014)

Lucky Severson, contributing correspondent, and Trent Harris, segment producer

- In Eugene, Oregon, local faith groups, religious leaders, and volunteers have created Opportunity Village, a community of small houses for the unsheltered homeless. Each house is no more than ten feet wide and was built with donated materials. Villagers pay just a dollar a night, and there is no cost to taxpayers.

3rd place: [Syrian Refugees](#) (aired January 24, 2014)

Kim Lawton, managing editor and correspondent, and Patti Jette, senior associate producer

- Almost two and a half million Syrians fled their country in what the United Nations has called the "greatest humanitarian catastrophe of modern times." Faith-based groups—Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox, Mennonite, and more—in Jordan, home of the largest Syrian refugee camp, are doing what they can to help. "Behind each of these wonderful people is a life that is completely disrupted. We see God in all of these people. We see that these are brothers and sisters like us," says Catholic Relief Services president Carolyn Woo.

Honorable Mention: [Carrie Newcomer](#) (aired July 25, 2014)

Judy Valente, contributing correspondent, and Gail Fendley, line producer

- Singer-songwriter Carrie Newcomer's music is rooted in her Quaker faith, and it often emphasizes the sacred in the ordinary. "Some of my best language has come out of the silence" of Quaker meetings, she says, "when I've taken the time to listen to something beyond myself." Her songs as well as her social activism try to fulfill the old Quaker saying to "let your life speak."

Taking ***Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*** beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories and personalities of religion and ethics news, a companion website (pbs.org/religionandethics) features video of each weekly program and individual stories, transcripts of reports and interviews, related articles and additional resources, as well as exclusive “web-only” material.

Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET. Arnold Labaton is executive producer. Bob Abernethy is host/executive editor. Kim Lawton is managing editor. Stephen Segaller is executive-in-charge.

Major funding for ***Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*** is provided by Lilly Endowment Inc. with additional support from Mutual of America Life Insurance Company and individual supporters.

###

About WNET

As New York’s flagship public media provider and the parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state’s unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. WNET is also a leader in connecting with viewers on emerging platforms, including the [THIRTEEN Explore App](#) where users can stream PBS content for free.

Final: 09.02.15