



MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

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KCPT launches multi-platform project on the topic of religion, faith and spirituality

Kansas City, MO, March 16, 2016: Beyond Belief, KCPT's yearlong project on religion, faith and spirituality, launches this month with a number of events:

- A television special hosted by Nick Haines, based on a lively panel discussion about what it means to be Muslim in Kansas City. This will be accompanied by a series of portraits of local followers of Islam on Flatland, KCPT's digital magazine.
- A series of visits across boundaries and borders of religion, with congregations coming together in the months from "Easter to Eid" (April, May and June) for worship, fellowship, and dialogue.
- KCPT and Beyond Belief media sponsorship of the Seven Days project (<http://giveseventdays.org>), which gathers people from around the Kansas City area to combat religious hatred with community activism and a commitment to peace and understanding.
- A June broadcast of a documentary on the theme of meeting across boundaries of religion, including a glimpse inside a trip by two area high schools to the most important places connected with the American Civil Rights movement.

Producer Steve Mencher, who moved to KC from Washington, D.C. to lead the project, has just marked the halfway point of his time in Kansas City. "I've learned so much about how faith is a central part of life here," Mencher says. "There's no separation of church and state, or life and spirituality. Even the atheists and Buddhists meet together on Sunday for what looks to me like church services. I'm looking forward to the spring and summer, and sharing what I'm finding out with the many communities I've reached out to, and those I haven't yet met."

Muslim in the Metro

On Friday, March 25 at 7:30pm (with a rebroadcast Sunday, March 27 at 11am), Nick Haines hosts an hour-long special on KCPT exploring the diverse lives of Muslims in Kansas City, and

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examining the political and social reasons why some have reacted against the perceived threats of Sharia law and “Islamic” terrorism. The participants in the program include Mahnaz Shabbir, Beyond Belief steering committee member and President, Shabbir Advisors; Barry Grissom, United States Attorney, District of Kansas; Zoya Khan, Outreach Coordinator, Muslim Youth of North America; Jack Cashill, Executive Editor, Ingram’s Magazine; and Rep. Dick Jones, Kansas House of Representatives, District 52.

American Public Square presented the March 7 panel discussion where the program was taped, with Ambassador Allan Katz as moderator.

Starting on March 21, Flatland, KCPT’s digital magazine, will spotlight the lives of five members of the Muslim community in Kansas City, ranging from a student convert who is now a local faith leader to a woman born in Pakistan who is a local leader in fighting domestic abuse.

Easter to Eid Calendar for Congregation Visits

This calendar will help facilitate visits of congregations in Kansas City to join others across boundaries of faith. Visits might include worship, fellowship, dialogue, volunteering—or all of the above. We’ll provide resources to aid dialogue and we’ll suggest ways to share the experiences via social media and KCPT’s digital channels. We’ll be launching this at the beginning of April. Until the calendar is launched, we’re signing up people via email, at beyondbelief@kcpt.org

Seven Days

Beyond Belief is a media sponsor of Seven Days, the week of events created by Mindy Corporon and Jim LaManno, whose family members were killed by Frazier Glenn Miller at two Jewish community sites in Johnson County in April 2014. From April 12-18, Seven Days will bring members of the Kansas City area together in activities meant to encourage interfaith action and dialogue to solve the problems of hate and inequity in Kansas City. More about Seven Days: <http://giveseventdays.org>

Beyond Belief Documentary

Airing on June 23, 2016, the program will follow three stories of people of faith coming together across borders and boundaries to find common ground. One of the stories will follow a bus trip to iconic locations of the Civil Rights movement, including the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, by groups from two Kansas City-area high schools. The Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy and the University Academy are both committed to teaching their students about social justice. For both groups, being with students of different faiths and races is part of the point of this trip, sure to be a pinnacle of their high school careers.

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Background: Beyond Belief is one of fifteen national projects aiming to stimulate change in public media. Under the heading Localore: Finding America (<http://findingamerica.airmedia.org>), the projects emphasize local storytelling and connections with diverse audiences who may not otherwise connect with public radio and TV. Here in Kansas City, the project spotlights religion as an instrument for social change. You'll find more about the project at <http://kcpt.org/beyondbelief>

Beyond Belief is produced by AIR, the Association of Independents in Radio, Incorporated, with financial support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Wyncote Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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