



Program Background of Ethical Perspectives on the News May 19, 2014

The 761st episode of Ethical Perspectives on the News was aired on KCRG-TV on May 18, 2014. That milestone was reached because of the vision of Harold Mincey, who first suggested the idea of such a TV program in early 1999; the generosity of KCRG-TV, who provides free air time and the taping facilities and staff to produce the program; the willingness of over 900 people from the surrounding community to serve as panel members, some of them many times; the 28 moderators and 12 producers, who have contributed of their talents over the years; the sponsors of closed captioning for the programs; and the continuing support of the Inter-Religious Council of Linn County.

The idea behind the program was to establish a public forum which would provide information and ethical perspectives on the news of the day and serve as a model for talking about sometimes controversial subjects in a civil way. That purpose has continued to guide the show throughout the 15 years of its existence.

Harold Mincey produced the first episode of Ethical Perspectives which was aired on April 11, 1999. The topic was "Euthanasia." David Weddle, Professor of Religion at Cornell College, was the moderator. Rabbi Ed Chesman, Imam Taha Tawil, and Rev. Harold Mincey were the panelists. Dr. Weddle helped establish the show by serving as the moderator for 60 of the first 75 programs.

Harold produced the first 10 programs and Cedric Lofdahl, a retired Lutheran pastor, joined him as a co-producer in June of 1999. Cedric continues today as the Executive Producer. Terry Boyden and Joe Stutler are current Associate Producers. Peter Welch, an attorney with Crawford and Sullivan; Scott Samuelson, a Professor of Philosophy at Kirkwood Community College; the Rev. Tom Capo, Minister of Peoples Church; Martha Rogers, Rector of Christ Episcopal Church; Lynda Waddington, Gazette Columnist; and Karl Cassell, Executive Director of Horizons are the current moderators. On average, each of them moderates a program every 6 weeks.

A moderator and three panel members discuss a topic selected from the news. At its beginning, the show was only 15 minutes long. That time was increased to 30 minutes in January, 2002, as the result of the favorable response to three half-hour special programs on the September 11, 2001 terrorists' attack on the country. The air time for the show has changed two or three times over its lifetime. Currently the show is aired every Sunday morning on KCRG-TV, Channel 9, at 11:00 a.m.

The moderators and the producers meet monthly to select topics, to arrange the schedule for the moderators, and to suggest potential panelists for each show. The producers then recruit the panel members for the shows. The topics are taken from the news events of the times and cover a wide range of topics from "Euthanasia," the first topic, to "The Culture of Poverty," the topic of the 760th show. Topics from the first five weeks of 2014 give an indication of the wide range of subjects. They were: "The Ethical Issues of 2014," "Prayer in the Public Square," "Life, Death, and Profit," "Core Curriculum Standards," and "Income Inequality."

Many of the programs are now on You Tube. They can be accessed by doing a search on YouTube for "Ethical Perspectives on the News" or from a link on the website of the Inter-Religious Council of Linn County (www.irclc.org).

Ethical Perspectives on the News observed its 15th anniversary on April 13, 2014.