



Religion Communicators Council
An Interfaith Association of Religion Communicators since 1929

Wilbur Awards

Controversial Newsweek Cover Story Leads 2009 Wilbur Awards

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS – “Our Mutual Joy,” *Newsweek* magazine religion writer Lisa Miller’s December 15, 2008 cover story on gay marriage leads the winners of the Religion Communicators Council’s 2009 Wilbur Awards.

According to *Newsweek*, while some readers sent messages of “heartfelt” support, many others disagreed with what Miller calls the “religious case for gay marriage.” The article generated more than 100,000 e-mail responses and over 2,000,000 “hits” on *Newsweek*’s web site.

Wilbur judges noted that, while people of faith and Religion Communicators Council members disagree widely on the subject of gay marriage, Miller’s article is a fine example of the purpose of the Wilbur Awards which is to recognize “excellence in the presentation of religious issues, themes and values.”

Other 2009 Wilbur Awards (for 2008 work) include:

Newspapers, Top 15 Markets – “Trial, Triumph and Transition at Chicago’s Trinity,” Manya A. Brachear and Margaret Ramirez with Christi Parsons, *Chicago Tribune*

Newspapers, Other Markets - “Front Lines of Faith,” Michelle Rupe Eubanks, *TimesDaily*, Florence, Alabama

Editorial Cartoons - John Sherffius, *Daily Camera*, Boulder, Colorado

Books – “Blind Spot: When Journalists Don’t Get Religion,” Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert, and Roberta Green-Ahmanson, Oxford University Press

Television Comedy – Turner Broadcasting System, “House of Payne” – Episode 100, “We’ve Come This Far by Faith, Part 2,” Tyler Perry Productions

Television News – “With Full Honor,” CBS News Sunday Morning, Rand Morrison, executive producer, David Martin, correspondent, Mary Walsh, Producer

Television Documentary – “The POWER of FORGIVENESS,” Martin Doblmeier, executive producer, Journey Films

Radio – “Soul in the City,” CBC Radio One “Tapestry,” Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Erin Pettit, producer, Mary Hynes, host

Film Documentary – “Pray The Devil Back To Hell,” Gini Reticker, director, and Abigail E. Disney, producer, Fork Films

Web-based communications, Blogs – “The Seeker: A personal and professional quest for truth,” Manya A. Brachear, *Chicago Tribune*

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These awards will be presented on March 28 at ceremonies at the Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Their presentation will be hosted by Shiba Russell, anchor/reporter for WCVB-TV, the ABC television affiliate in Boston. The Wilbur's are named for Marvin C. Wilbur, a pioneer in the field of religious communication.

For more information, visit the Religion Communicators Council's website at www.religioncommunicators.org or contact the Rev. Eric C. Shafer, Wilbur Awards chair, at eshafer@trinitylansdale.com or 267-222-0964.