



Release Date: July 18, 2012

Contact: Angela Alston, +1 718-407-0670, [angela at mocamedia.tv](mailto:angela@mocamedia.tv)

New Film *Jesus & Buddha* Explores Practicing across Traditions

Three leading figures in today's Buddhist-Christian dialogue share their personal journeys in the new documentary *Jesus and Buddha: Practicing Across Traditions*. We learn how following the path of the Buddha has informed and deepened their understanding of who Jesus was and what he taught. Their experience and insight bring these two liberating archetypes alive in a way that can help guide us through our own confusion and struggle toward lives filled with joy and gratitude, compassion and service.

The film features: **Father Robert Kennedy**, a Jesuit priest and Zen teacher; **Chung Hyun Kyung**, Professor of Ecumenical Theology and Interfaith Engagement at Union Theological Seminary and a Buddhist Dharma teacher; and **Paul Knitter**, Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary.

During the course of the film, we see that the struggles and anxieties that motivate them are our own. What's more, their reflections throw the light back on us. We can see better the prison of our ceaseless preoccupations, our obsessions, our animosities. Perhaps our own notions of the spiritual path have been limited by our need for answers and our desire for comfort.

In the end it becomes clear from these witnesses that this is not a journey that depends on concepts and abstractions -- and definitive answers are beyond our grasp. The journey is rather one of "practice" and insight. The path these travelers are pointing us to is infinitely spacious and ultimately fulfilling -- it can hold all of the contradictions and the questions as it leads further and deeper into the "incomprehensible mystery" that is this life.

Maybe we don't need to enter a monastery or go to the desert, but some form of discipline may be necessary if we are to move beyond the self as the center of identity and into the liberating vastness of the "Buddha-field" or the nourishing wholeness of the "Christ-reality."

Jesus and Buddha is 44 minutes long, and available on DVD for purchase by individuals for private viewing (\$29.95) and for educational use (\$99.95). A discussion guide is also available.

Featured in *Jesus and Buddha*

- **Father Robert Kennedy, SJ** is a Jesuit priest and Zen teacher in the White Plum lineage. He taught theology for many years at St. Peter's College in New Jersey and as a young man studied with Yamada Roshi in Kamakura, Japan, with Maezumi Roshi in Los Angeles, and later with Glassman Roshi in New York. Glassman Roshi installed Fr. Kennedy as sensei in 1991 and conferred Inka (his final seal of approval) in 1997, making him a roshi (master).
- **Chung Hyun Kyung** is Professor of Ecumenical Theology and Interfaith Engagement at Union Theological Seminary and a Buddhist Dharma teacher in the Kwan Um School of Zen. She trained with Seung Sahn Sunim and Thich Nhat Hanh. She is a peace activist and an author of many articles and books on eco-feminist theologies and peoples' movements, all based on her extensive research in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- **Paul Knitter** is Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary and has for many years been a guiding light in the development of a socially engaged interfaith dialogue that focuses both on peace making and on addressing "the realities of suffering due to oppression." He is author of many books, including most recently, *Without Buddha I Could Not Be A Christian: A Personal Journey of Passing Over and Passing Back*.

Feedback from Viewers

Every Buddhist center in the country should see this." -- **Richard Fiske, Shambhala Mediation Center, White River Junction, VT**

"I felt very affirmed as a Roman Catholic." -- **Kathy Fiske, Artist**

"It was a sensual feast for eyes, ears, and mind, and a privilege to be in the company of such wonderful teachers."--**Denise Lyons, PhD., Organizational Psychologist**

"Beautifully photographed and edited. And listening to them was like listening to music!" **Joyce Dann, poet**

"I found it to be profoundly moving and very powerful, listening on one level and experiencing on a deeper level." -- **Michael Stoner, Business Executive, Author**

"The film speaks to me on some very deep, almost physical level. For so long I have wondered whether you can be a Christian and a Buddhist, both. The thoughtful integrity and joy that this film portrays is a big "yes". You find yourself invited by the "elders" to embrace a larger way of being and believing. It is as if the world has come together in peace. " -- **Rev. Daniel Jantos, Unitarian Universalist Church, Woodstock, VT**

"Christianity has much to learn from Buddhism. This film can help Christians to deepen and enrich their own faith." --**Tom F. Driver, Paul J. Tillich Professor of Theology and Culture Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary**

The Filmmakers

Jesus and Buddha was co-directed by the award-winning filmmaking team John Ankele and Anne Macksoud, through their company Old Dog Documentaries. Their mission is to create films that inspire dialogue and action on social, economic, and environmental justice.

The filmmakers have been working together for 25 years producing issue oriented documentaries on public policy and social ethics. Titles include: *Arms for the Poor; The Global Banquet: The Politics of Food; Coming to Say Goodbye: Stories of AIDS in Africa; William Sloane Coffin: A Lover's Quarrel with America; Beyond the Politics of Life and Choice: A New Conversation on Abortion; Birdsong and Coffee*. Their film *Search for Spirituality* was broadcast on ABC-TV and two films on aging--*Grow Old Along With Me* and *Life Stories*--were broadcast on PBS. Their most recent film, *Grandmother to Grandmother: New York to Tanzania*, is about grandmothers living in two model projects where they are raising their grandchildren in community, one group in the South Bronx and the other in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.

John Ankele, B.A., M.Div. As a producer of radio and TV programming in the 1960's, Ankele used mass media to empower faith communities advocating for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam. And during the struggle for independence in southern Africa, he worked with and trained political activists in the use of media to bring about social change. As a Presbyterian minister and also a student in the Zen and Shambhala Buddhist traditions, he has been involved in interfaith dialogue around contemplative practice and social justice.

Anne Macksoud, B.A., M.A. Macksoud spent 17 years as a teacher (English, photography, and music) before transitioning to film and video production. Once she discovered the "eye-opening" power of the documentary medium, she brought rented documentaries into her classroom on a regular basis. Eventually, she began helping her students make their own films and slide shows on the issues of the day (civil rights, the Vietnam War, and global poverty, to name a few). She approaches filmmaking from the perspective of an artist as well as an educator.

For More Information

For more information about *Jesus and Buddha* or to request a review copy, visit: <http://www.olddogdocumentaries.org>, email Angela Alston at angela@mocamedia.tv or call +1-718-407-0670.

###