

UNITY / "THE THIRD JESUS"
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CONTACT: DAVID LANGER
PHONE: 505-466-1320
EMAIL: david@tvgrp.com

"THE THIRD JESUS" – UNITY WEBCAST WITH DEEPAK CHOPRA
– TAKES A NEW LOOK AT WHAT JESUS REALLY TAUGHT
Series Explores "Jesus and the Awakening to God-Consciousness"
Transcending Traditional Dogma and Religious Institutions

UNITY VILLAGE, Mo. – Best-selling author and spiritual leader Deepak Chopra teams up with leading Unity minister Wendy Craig-Purcell for a bold upcoming six-part video Web series on “Jesus and the Awakening to God-Consciousness,” based on Chopra’s recent book “The Third Jesus: The Christ We Cannot Ignore.”

The series is set to begin Oct. 15 at www.unity.fm, according to Paula Coppel, vice president of Communications at Unity School of Christianity in Unity Village, Mo. Each weekly half-hour segment will be available free for one week, until the next segment is offered. A study guide will be available for groups and individuals.

“We came up with the idea for this series after Oprah Winfrey’s successful webcasts last spring with Eckhart Tolle on his book “A New Earth,”” said Coppel. “That discussion opened the door for a more in-depth look at how Christianity fits within a context of contemporary spiritual beliefs and practices. There were many Christians watching Oprah’s webcast who were confused about how to integrate Eckhart’s teachings with their basic beliefs. There is a way – Unity has been teaching it for more than 120 years. And it is beautifully represented in Deepak Chopra’s book ‘The Third Jesus.’”

“In Deepak’s words, the third Jesus is God-consciousness,” said Coppel. “It was the enlightened state that Jesus was both demonstrating and teaching. The Web series contends that Jesus was not trying to start a new religion, nor was he aiming his teachings at some people and not others. He was pointing the way for all of us to experience the awakening that he himself had experienced.”

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ADD ONE

The Web series “explores each phase in the journey to God-consciousness and how you can apply the wisdom of Jesus on your own path to enlightenment,” she said. We’re not trying to change anyone’s mind or beliefs. We’re just offering an alternative view.”

Chopra sees Jesus' teachings as universal, even though a particular religion – Christianity – was created around him. "There is not one Jesus," Chopra explains in his book, "but three. First there is the historical Jesus, the man who lived more than two thousand years ago and whose teachings are the foundation of Christian theology and thought. Next there is Jesus, the Son of God, who has come to embody an institutional religion with specific dogma, a priesthood, and devout believers. And finally, there is the third Jesus, the cosmic Christ, the spiritual guide whose teaching embraces all humanity, not just the church built in his name. He speaks to the individual who wants to find God as a personal experience, to attain what some might call grace, or God-consciousness, or enlightenment."

Chopra speaks from a particularly fascinating vantage point: He was raised in India by parents of Hindu and Sikh heritage and attended a Catholic school growing up. He has studied the Bible and its origins extensively, though is equally well-versed in Eastern philosophy and religions.

In the first chapter of *The Third Jesus*, he writes: “Jesus is in trouble.”

In the name of Jesus, Chopra says, wars have been fought, crusades have divided countries, and witch hunts have been conducted. Fundamentalists, with little to support their positions in scripture, have cited Jesus to support condemnation of abortion, homosexuality and birth control.

“His teachings have been hijacked by people who hate in the name of love,” writes Chopra.

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ADD TWO

The Web series delves deeply into what Jesus really taught and how it can be applied in today's world. The segments focus on:

Program 1 – Who Is Jesus and Why Does He Matter?

Program 2 – Opening to the Path

Program 3 – A New Way of Being

Program 4 – When the Rubber Hits the Road

Program 5 – What to Expect When You're Expecting Enlightenment

Program 6 – Jesus Without Dogma

Each segment features an in-depth discussion between Chopra and series host, Rev. Wendy Craig-Purcell, founding minister of the The Unity Center in San Diego. Groups and individuals interested in viewing the webcast can sign up at (www.unity.fm).

Craig-Purcell sees the series as especially appealing to those who consider themselves “spiritual more than religious” as well as “Christians with questions.”

“Conservative fundamentalists are the most vocal, organized and assertive Christian element in America, but they are not the majority,” she points out. “There are many, many Christians sitting in their Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopal and other churches holding a broader more universal, inclusive and spiritual view of Jesus than what they are hearing about, but not knowing there's another way. In Unity, we call it positive, progressive, practical Christianity. Our movement is based on the teachings of Jesus, but we also honor the universal truths in all faith traditions. We respect each individual's right to choose a spiritual path believing there is One God called by many different names and found through many different paths.”

“People are more open to these discussions and more curious about spirituality than ever before,” reflects Mindy Audlin, network producer of Unity's online radio network, Unity.FM (www.unity.fm). “Many people are looking for a community of like-minded individuals with whom they can share their spiritual path and exploration. We want them to realize they are not alone.”

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ADD THREE

A recent Pew Forum found 68 percent of adult Americans believe there's more than one true way to interpret the teachings of their religion. "If they knew there was a path like Unity's," speculates Craig-Purcell, "vast numbers would be surprised and delighted. Unity, and the New Thought movement in general, are natural, safe landing places for Christians who are uncomfortable with fundamentalist interpretations and who hold a broader, more universal understanding of Jesus. "

"We understand that this material is controversial and will probably upset some viewers who are committed to their traditional views of Jesus and religion," said Craig-Purcell. "But Jesus, after all, was controversial himself and radical in his time, so we are in good company. Some people will strongly disagree, but others will find in *this* Jesus a teacher and spiritual guide who offers a practical blueprint for living and a path to true awakening that so many are searching for today. "

Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, who founded Unity in 1889 in their Kansas City, Mo., living room, were themselves "Christians with questions." They were Bible-based followers of Jesus, but chose to focus on Jesus' teachings and interpret them metaphysically, applying them directly to everyday life. They saw Jesus as a master teacher and way-shower, but also honored other spiritual teachers who have demonstrated God-consciousness, including Gautama Buddha, Mohammed and Mahatma Gandhi.

"The Fillmores' interpretation of Jesus' teachings was universal, expansive, inclusive and very practical," explains Coppel. "At the heart of Unity is the concept of oneness. We believe that is what Jesus intended and it is an orientation the world needs now more than ever."

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ADD FOUR

About Unity

Unity is a positive, practical, progressive approach to Christianity based on the teachings of Jesus and the power of prayer. Unity focuses on the teachings of Jesus and how to apply them in everyday life, rather than focusing on Jesus as a person. They see Jesus as the great example of what is possible for humankind, rather than the exception.

Unity founders Charles and Myrtle Fillmore wanted to help people realize their oneness with God, and to demonstrate the amazing power of the Christ spirit within us. They taught others how to see the Christ in themselves as well as in others: "I behold the Christ in you" resembles the Hindu greeting "Namaste."

The organizations that carry forth the Fillmores' work are the Unity School of Christianity and the Association of Unity Churches International. Unity is also part of the broader New Thought movement. Unity School is located at Unity Village, Mo., on a 1400-acre tract 15 miles southeast of Kansas City, The Association of Unity Churches International is headquartered in Lee's Summit, Mo., just few miles from Unity Village. For more information about the webcast and to register, visit www.unity.fm.

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