

## BEYOND THE BOOK @ BOOKEXP0 AMERICA

KENNEALLY: Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to this special program here at Book Expo America. My name is Chris Kenneally, and I'm the director of author relations at Copyright Clearance Center, which sponsors an ongoing series of conferences and programs for authors and people in the publishing business, which we call Beyond the Book. And I want to welcome you to Washington D.C. and the Washington Convention Center for what I think is going to be a very spirited and inspiring discussion about inspiration itself.

This is, famously, a nation of laws made by men and women for men and women, and in that way I think that makes the United States a profoundly nonsectarian and some might even say nonreligious nation. Yet we are also a nation of faiths. Religions thrive and multiply here like blossoms on some magnificent hybrid fruit tree in spring. And while the practices differ from church to church and from temple to meetinghouse, what unites us in this profound sectarianism is a deep trust that God truly has blessed America and always shall. And what troubles many, of course, is that this almighty is also free to judge us and in that judgment he may find or she may find America lacking somehow.

The ideals we profess to live by, which we have written ourselves into our laws and into our most sacred documents that are on display in this very city – most famously that phrase “all men are created equal” – thus present this nation with a challenge, perhaps even a curse. Well, I sound like I might be giving a sermon, don't I? Well, if so I want to make a little bit of history and be the first preacher ever to cut himself short because I know you want to hear some other people talk, and that's our panel here.

I'm going to start by welcoming Jay Allison. Jay is an independent broadcast journalist. His work airs on NPR's *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*, PRI's *This American Life*, ABC news's *Nightline*, and other national programs. He is now heard weekly on National Public Radio as the curator and co-producer of *This I Believe*. Over the past 25 years he has created hundreds of documentaries, essays and special series for national and international broadcast, and has won virtually every major industry award for his productions and collaborations, including five Peabodys. He was the 1996 recipient of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Edward R. Murrow Award for outstanding contributions to public radio, the industry's highest honor. In the long history of that annual award, Jay Allison is the only independent producer to ever have received it. And finally in 2002 he received the Public Radio News Directors' Leo C. Lee Award for lasting commitment to public radio journalism. And I want to welcome Jay, who is the co-editor of an upcoming volume, *This I Believe*. And perhaps, Jay, because of that outstanding record in radio, a good place to start is to hear some excerpts from *This I Believe*. So we'll do that right now.

(recording plays)

M: *This I Believe* is a unique space in the media where Americans convene to share thoughtful and respectful statements about the philosophies that guide their lives.

M: *This I Believe*, by that name we bring you a new series of radio broadcasts presenting the personal philosophies of thoughtful men and women –

F: I believe that freedom of speech should not be so abused by some that it is not exercised by others.

M: I believe in the brotherhood and equality of man.

M: I believe in a supreme power whose handiwork, the soul-enlarging firmament declared.

F: I believe in being a good friend, lover, and parent so that I can have good friends –

F: I believe in the power of love to transform.

M: I seem most instinctively to believe in the human value of creative writing.

F: If I have one operating philosophy about life it is this, be cool to the pizza delivery dude. Tip him well, friends and brethren, for that which you bestow freely and willingly will bring you all the happy luck that a grateful universe knows how to return.

M: *This I Believe* has struck a chord with Americans. A listener in Ashland, Oregon, says the series is a wonderful forum to pause and reflect on our own humanity. It serves as a reminder which we desperately need, surrounded by trivia and materialism as we are, that thoughts are still what connect us each to the other and to our world.

(end of recording)

KENNEALLY: That was a nice sampling of the program, which, as we said, is heard weekly on National Public Radio. It was inspired by a similar program from the 1950s, and I wonder if you could talk about that inspiration and also how today's series is different from the earlier one?

ALLISON: The series in the 1950s was hosted by Edward R. Murrow, and it aired every day on the radio. It was a broadcasting and then a publishing phenomenon. The book sold more than any book other than the Bible in those years. It was on the air for five years, and they – they were wrestling with many of the same kinds of things we're wrestling with today. I mean, I think if you read those essays, and we have found in archives all over the country – we've now found 1000 of them, all in

the original audio, and we are in the process of transcribing them and they'll be available in an archive, too. It's a remarkable snapshot of this country at that time. And they, like we, were in a mix of hope and fear. And there was McCarthyism, there was nuclear threat. The issues they were talking about and the things they were afraid of and wanted to make better were very much the same. It was racism, and it was immigration. It was America's place in the world.

And now 50 years later the series then kind of went out of – completely out of circulation, and my colleague, Dan Gettiman (sp?), and I found the original books and starting down the producers. Found Murrow's son and the son of the original producers, Casey Murrow, and said we think the time is right to bring this back and we think that people need to talk – or more particularly, to listen to one another again without again without ranting or trying to convince or persuading another of your beliefs so that they may adopt it too, but simply giving a protected, respectful, safe space to reflect what has meaning in life. And we brought it back to the air a year ago, and the response has been incredible to it.

KENNEALLY: And the point you made is that it's important that this is not negative, it's not attacking, it's always very much a positive message, and it has to be something that whoever is delivering it needs to stand by. That's important.

ALLISON: Yeah, the parameters – you can go to our website at NPR.org and see that there are very few rules about it, but it is required to be a positive statement. It's not about what you don't believe, and it's not your belief as against the belief of another. And so each statement has to be framed in those terms. And it's not a restatement of any political or religious dogma because those texts are available. But what is not is your personal experience, the thing that catalyzed for you the central kind of driver for your daily life. The thing that you organize yourself around. The values that abide.

And we've had people writing from – we've had people – centenarians writing and teenagers writing. And we've aired from all spectrums about – and I think when those kinds of audiences hear each other, and hear each other say in a vulnerable way what it is they hold most dear, it has a real power. We now have gotten close to 14,000 essays written for us and sent in over the Internet. This isn't like checking yes or no on *American Idol*. It's a commitment, and people spend weeks working on it, distilling it, pulling it down. We've had people say it was like trying to pack for a month-long trip in an overnight bag. It's 500 words.

KENNEALLY: Well, how difficult is it for people to be, as you said, non-dogmatic at a moment in our nation's life when it seems that we have – when we're more divided than ever, that people are more crystallized in their positions. Are you finding that perhaps it's easier than you would have expected for people to do this and that they've been wanting to do it? And just now you've given them an opportunity to?

ALLISON: People like to preach and they – in this series, because we haven't given them a license to preach, and in fact have pulled their license, they find more subtle ways to do it. And they use the subtly sermonizing "we" to really mean "you." And we try to – if we find an essay that does that we try to pull people back away from that, and we want the essay. Otherwise we say, look, this is only interesting to the degree it's important to you. Don't tell me how to live or what to believe, and don't prescribe for me. Just tell me what you know. And many – the ones we've aired I think have responded to that call for authenticity, or the call was absolutely unnecessary because what they had to say leapt from the page as being so clear and so from their center that we needed to do nothing.

KENNEALLY: Have any of the statements surprised you? Is there a belief in something that was unexpected and that therefore really felt to you that was important to put on the air and to eventually put in print?

ALLISON: Can I say they all surprised me? Is that a cop-out?

KENNEALLY: That's a fine answer, but give me an example.

ALLISON: I was just talking to someone. One that was surprising, literally, was one that began, it's – "I believe in feeding monkeys on my birthday," which is a surprising hook, to say the least. It was a young guy in Seattle who came from Burma, and when he was born, a monk had told his family, make sure he feeds monkeys on his birthday, and you and he will prosper. So living in Burma, it was very easy to do. There are monkeys all over the place. But in Seattle there are fewer. So the narrative really tells the story of how he has abided by this belief and gone and found lab monkeys, he's gone into zoos, he's tried to get into pet stores and places that train animals desperately saying, please, just let me feed your monkey by the stroke of midnight. But the essay really is about a belief in his tradition and his family and honoring them, and that it's important to them and therefore, it will be important to him, so the belief drives much deeper than the nominal artifact of it.

KENNEALLY: That particular story illustrates the difference, really, for your series from the one in the 1950s, and that is more or less the '50s series was limiting. This is really open to the public. And at least originally in the '50s series, it was famous people. They opened that up eventually, right?

ALLISON: They did. They started thinking – it was a bit didactic. It was thinking you would like to hear the beliefs of successful Americans, those to whom you would – whose lives you would aspire to model yours after. And they realized fairly quickly that that was – they were speaking from on high. If you listen to those '50s essays, everyone spoke in a much more declarative formal way than they do now, but then they opened it up and they started seeking through newspapers and other outlets to find ordinary people.

We, from the beginning, learned from – we’ve learned from them all along. They did a magnificent job on their series. But we have the Internet. And also I put – so I’m able to put out a call on the air on *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* every time one of these airs and say this is for you, too. So it has opened it up well beyond our efforts to do so.

There’s a town in Vermont where the townspeople get together and they wrote *This I Believe* and had an event in the library and sold the whole library out. High schools around the country are doing it. It’s not from our provocation. It’s simply because the idea is good and there’s power in this way of communicating. It’s enormously gratifying to us that we’ve been able to help catalyze it, but we fundamentally don’t take credit for it.

KENNEALLY: And yet you continue to include not just, as you say, ordinary people, which would be simply anyone who volunteers for this, but you do have essays by the famous, the well-known, at least. I wonder if you can talk about an example or two there and what struck you in their contributions. And perhaps also how their contributions have changed from the 1950s.

ALLISON: I’m trying to think of a specific one. I admire everybody who’s done this. It’s an act of bravery. As I say, you’re vulnerable. You stand up there. You say these are words I’ll stand behind, and you stand there basically unclothed and without defense, opportunity to spin, refine, retract, equivocate. You’re saying these are my central beliefs. That’s a brave and dangerous act, I think, in a modern media climate which favors attack and rant and mockery.

So the famous people that have done this I have great admiration for. I can’t say whether they’re fundamentally different than they are in the 1950s, but the people in this book have really stood up and taken a chance (inaudible).

KENNEALLY: You teased us a bit, Jay, and told us that Bill Gates has a contribution. What is it that Bill Gates believes in?

ALLISON: He believes in computers.

(laughter)

ALLISON: It’s perhaps not surprising, but he believes in the power of personal computing, and then he goes on to explain how he thinks it will revolutionize society. It’s very persuasive.

KENNEALLY: Well, I’m going to also ask you for an exclusive here. You’ve said that everybody involved in the project has written one of these essays, each individual has. You have. You’re not going to publish yours.

ALLISON: No, no.

KENNEALLY: But can you tell us what Jay believes in?

ALLISON: The topic line is I believe in listening. And perhaps that seems odd for a broadcaster. I don't really think it is. All my work's in public broadcasting. I started the public radio stations in my town. I do a couple of websites that help citizens tell their own stories. One's called Transom.org, which just won a Peabody, and PRX.org, which is a way for citizens to get their work broadcast. I believe fundamentally in our need to talk to each other, and more particularly to listen to each other, and everything I do in my working life is to figure out how to make that happen, how to get our stories, our truths, shared among us so that we can understand each other better. And the only way to do that is through listening.

KENNEALLY: Did that come difficultly? You do a lot of talking, obviously. Was it hard to get yourself to listen? How hard is it to do that as a reporter, for example?

ALLISON: You just have to remind yourself all the time to be quiet.

KENNEALLY: I'll leave it there, I guess, Jay. Can I ask one more question, and that is about the book itself. Describe how it's going to come to us.

ALLISON: This is an advance reading copy. It's got a CD in the back. You can get these for free down at the Holt booth. The CD will be great because it's all the essayists in their own voices, 60 modern essayists and 20 from the '50s. And it's due out in its full version – this is short about a dozen essays, ten essays that we've added, some really nice ones. We're getting some really good ones in. If you listen to *NPR*, I just – editing one last from an interrogator in Guantanamo. It's amazing. Anyway, I recommend it to you. I think it's good.

KENNEALLY: Thank you Jay Allison. I want to turn now to someone who really is an expert on preaching, and that would be Reverend Martha Simmons. Welcome, Reverend Simmons. A native of Tchula, Mississippi, and the seventh of 11 children, Martha Simmons is considered an elder among women preachers in America. For more than 20 years, she has preached in pulpits across the country and across denominations. More than a decade ago, *Ebony* magazine named her on its honor role of Outstanding African-American Women Preachers in America. In addition to being known for her oratorical skills, she has also served on more than 12 nonprofit boards, and over the past decade has become the primary chronicler of African-American preaching through books, lectures, and her work at the helm of the *African-American Pulpit Journal*. She is also editor of *Preaching on the Brink* and *9.11.01: African-American Leaders Respond to American Tragedy*.

She's here today to speak about a book coming up this fall, *Preaching with Sacred Fire: an Anthology of African-American Sermons 1650 to the Present*. And just as we did with Jay's introduction, I'd like to give you some idea of what that preaching sounds like, so if we could hear the second track on that CD.

(recording plays)

M: (inaudible) always see the wakings of the (inaudible). Now and then, God lets us see the thrashing of the sword (inaudible).

SINGERS: You talk about heaven, heaven. Everybody talk about a heavenly (inaudible).

F: When Jesus asked the question, my God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? God did not bother to answer. Ah, there was silence.

SINGERS: Talk about heaven, heaven (inaudible). Everybody talk about a heavenly (inaudible).

(end of recording)

KENNEALLY: Well, I think that gives us a rousing way to start with Reverend Simmons. And welcome to Beyond the Book. What's remarkable about your collection is that it really does begin at the beginning for African-American experience. I want to ask you about those very early days of slavery and what you found through the sermons the role of the church was for that community.

SIMMONS: Even though the book title says that it begins in 1650, there weren't any sermons by African-Americans that were printed from 1650 to 1750. The reason we started there is because we thought it was impossible for America to understand this preaching if you didn't understand how the preachers were formed and what it was like to step off of a ship from Africa in chains with your family either having been split, or perhaps they died along the way, and what that led you to become in terms of how you approached the divine. That's why we started with 1650 to kind of give some background on the formative years.

In terms of the preaching, by the time you get to 1750, African-Americans have found ways to interact with American culture. So the preaching is American, and yet it still has many traces of Africa in it. There's a sense in the preaching that regardless of what we're up against, somehow we still believe that God is good and God is able, which for me, reviewing a lot of this preaching and looking back at some of the circumstances, I found remarkable, I really found remarkable.

Sojourner Truth, one of the preachers of this time, started to do some writing after they had taken her son, who was free, and sold him back into slavery. And she, along with some friends of hers who were Quakers, were fighting to get him back. In the midst of that, Sojourner Truth was still out preaching, and even before women were able to vote, Sojourner Truth was out preaching, first all saying, I have the nerve to stand up and be a black woman preacher, but also to say, before the word was known, I had the nerve to stand up and be a womanist, or a feminist for some, at a time like that.

So I found the preaching astounding in the early years because of the circumstances under which the people did it. And for me, going through thousands of these sermons, there was a lot more truth-telling, a lot more truth-telling than what I've seen now.

KENNEALLY: Clearly, the role of the preacher and the sermon has changed in the 300 years since the very first ones were given, so I'm going to fast-forward you to today, and I'd like to hear your assessment of the role of the church in the African-American community and the role that preachers play.

SIMMONS: The role of the church in the African – the church has always been central to the African-American community because it was the only place for a time in history where African-Americans had some semblance of power. They could often say whatever they wanted to say, for the most part. There've always been restrictions, and I think there still are in terms of how some preachers operate. But it's always been central. Culture, of course, has made it the case that now the church is not as central as it used to be, because there are competing interests. But it's still central to the majority of African-Americans, because faith is still central.

In terms of the difference in the preaching, media is the difference. Media is the difference. Once upon a time, you could be a great orator and die without very many people knowing that you existed. Now, you can be a mediocre preacher, but if you're media savvy, the whole world will know your name. You don't have to have as much to say. You have to have better media people. I think that that's having a very interesting impact on preaching, in addition to this book.

I lead the *African-American Pulpit Journal*, which is the only preaching and ministry journal that's nondenominational for African-Americans in the country. So for the last almost eight years, I've gotten a chance to see – because we allow people to submit sermons for consideration for publication, plus we go out and ask for sermons. And it's been amazing to see what people are talking about now and how much it's driven by the media and what they believe will sell right now, as opposed to 100 years ago and the issues of the day.

KENNEALLY: Media we think about today that involves the Internet and television and those kinds of visual media, but sermonizing is fundamentally an oral medium. And I was fascinated, you were telling me earlier about some of the recordings that came out, a series of recordings that were produced in the 1920s and 1930s. They're riveting to hear. And they reinforce your point, which is that a sermon should never be dull.

SIMMONS: In the African-American community, unlike some other communities –

(laughter)

SIMMONS: We don't believe that there's anything wrong with preaching being exciting. We believe that there's something about the divine that ought to excite you. If winning the lottery excites you, time spent with God ought to at least bring you close to that kind of experience. And one of the things that we found while we were doing some of this research is that there were preachers in the 1920s and 1930s who started to record sermons. Most of these preachers now have been totally forgotten by everybody, including the African-American community. I didn't know the names of some of these people until I started to do the research and found out that the sermons have been re-recorded and placed on CD. And I was stunned by the sermonizing, just stunned by some of the ways people put together sermons back then. There was a gentleman in the late 1920s, early 1930s, by the name of A.W. Nix, and A.W. Nix had a sermon called The Black Diamond Express to Hell, which he did in six parts it was so famous.

KENNEALLY: Station to station.

SIMMONS: The way he would begin each part of the sermon is with the phrase, Next station! And he does this throughout the sermon, and the stations are, of course, what you would expect for that timeframe. The stations are Drunkardsville, Lyngtown, Gossip Junction. You can't put this recording down. And he became so famous – the recordings back then were only three or four minutes, but he became so famous that he had to keep doing it and he could only keep your attention by adding another station. So, on version six, I think it is, he goes into, instead of Gossiptown, it's Confusionville, and then there's Plotter's Junction. The people are always plotting against the church and plotting against the preacher. And then there's Thievestown.

And finally, there was a gentleman by the name of J.M. Gates, who impacted Aretha Franklin's father, C.L. Franklin, Malcolm X's father, who was a Baptist preacher, and no one has heard of this man since he died in 1945. J.M. Gates was the most famous. He actually recorded 200 sermons before 1935. Gates was so famous that Nix decided, OK, I've got to take a look at what he's doing and do some of that. So what Gates did was, he actually had people, while he was preaching, sitting in the congregation who would hold conversations with him. How does that work? It was fascinating.

So what Nix did was with The Black Diamond Express to Hell, by the time you get to version five, I think it is, he has added a woman in the congregation by the name of Miss Hardboil. And Miss Hardboil talks in the middle of the sermon. She'll say, look, at those stupid people up there being taken in by their preacher. Well, of course, as with any good story, ultimately the preacher is able to win her over and she's glad to get off the Black Diamond Express to Hell, and the church says amen. Just wonderful, riveting preaching that speaks to the genius of so many of these people who were not lettered.

Then there were the orators who were very lettered, like Frederick Douglass. Most people don't know that Frederick Douglass was an ordained preacher, but he was, and that's where he got his start. So the African-American – there is such a rich tradition of people who were formally trained and people who were not, but all had in common an enthusiasm and an excitement for the time that they spend with the divine and how that's to be communicated to people.

So the recordings were fascinating, and we're hoping that after the book is out for about a year, that we will develop a CD because you've got to hear this. You've got to hear it.

KENNEALLY: And what's important about hearing it, I think, is to be able to grasp that history. The fact that this is the first such collection is remarkable itself, and that it's possible to forget some of these characters, and that must be something that you are really excited about being able to offer to the African-American preaching community, let alone the entire nation, a chance to remind themselves of what they've been through and to recognize that they're not alone, if you will.

SIMMONS: It literally broke my heart about six years ago when I started working with preaching and chronicling sermons. I'd call people and say, we need to print a sermon by so-and-so. And nobody knew where the sermons were. They were gone. Some of the earliest sermons by Martin King's father, they're gone. So many other preachers – and their names are in the literature. It'll say Reverend So-and-So spoke to 5000 last night, black and white on this issue, and the sermon's gone, because the African-American community has been and still is a primarily oral community, and no one realized the importance of putting the material in print.

Gardner C. Taylor is considered the greatest African-American preacher in terms of oratorical skill that is currently alive. He's considered – we all know Martin King's name, but Gardner Taylor is considered a better preacher. There's only one sermon in existence by Gardner Taylor's father. One. And the father was actually better than the son. But it's gone.

So when we got the opportunity to put this in print, we said it's got to happen. This is tragic that this much history has been lost. And the other thing we realized is that as we started to talk to people, go to people's basements, people's attics and things like that, is that if you didn't get a hold to some of this material in the next 25 years, you were going to lose another entire generation. Just gone. Because people don't know the importance of it. They don't see it so much as history that I need to share with someone. They're like, this is just a preacher I heard growing up.

And so it became a mission for me and Frank Thomas to make sure that as many people as we can put in print, we put them in print. There are at least another 150, 200 people whose sermons we want to include, and although I'm a preacher and so is Dr. Thomas, we know we're going to be cursed out because of some of the

people we couldn't include. But we at least put down enough information, we hope, to tell other people where to start finding some of these preachers.

But it became a mission because it's not just African-American history, it's American history. If you could see some of the sermons and hear these preachers talk about everything from why women ought to vote, all women, not just black women, but why women ought to vote to what it means to have the right to an equal education. It's fascinating especially during these times when we're discussing immigration and what rights should people get, just fascinating reading. So we knew we had to save as much of it as we could.

KENNEALLY: Well, thank you for that effort, and continue that mission. Just to tell you about the process here. I'm going to speak with Cholene Espinoza, and I hope people will stay because we're going to have an opportunity for you, the audience, to ask some of these authors questions, so please do stay for that, for those of you who are just joining us.

I want to turn now to Cholene Espinoza. This biography sounds like it's for several lives, but trust me, it's really just for one. Cholene Espinoza graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1987 and was the second woman to fly the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft in the U.S. Air Force. She logged over 200 hours of combat time, and was awarded the Air Medal and Aerial Achievement Medal for her service. Currently, she is a captain for United Airlines on the Airbus 320 and 319.

Cholene is a military correspondent for Talk Radio News Service and was an embedded journalist with the U.S. Marine Corps 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion during the Iraq War. She has also reported from Syria, Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem, Jordan, and Kuwait. She won the National Federation of Press Women Award and was a finalist for the New York Festivals Radio Award for her coverage of the war in 2003.

Cholene is here to talk about her book from Chelsea Green called *Through the Eye of the Storm: A Book Dedicated to Rebuilding what Katrina Washed Away*. So now we've introduced yet another element in your life, which should seem to be full enough. I guess the first question to ask is, is this a Katrina book?

ESPINOZA: Katrina was certainly the catalyst for this book. It's really a book about the human spirit and the triumph of the human spirit. I had been to Iraq as a journalist during the war as an embedded journalist and I went back during the reconstruction, and from that experience I had somewhat of a spiritual malaise, I guess you would say. I went back to flying my aircraft for United Airlines, and of course we've had our dysfunction there as well, but we seem to have gotten through that for now. And I was somewhat stuck and disillusioned. But then Katrina happened, and like so many Americans, I felt compelled to act in some

way. I was angry, I was bitter, frustrated with our government, but at the same time felt like it was a moral imperative for me to go down there.

And my partner Ellen Ratner, who's here today, she had met a woman on an aircraft who has an aunt and uncle on the Gulf Coast of Mississippi, and they're two African-American ministers down in the South. And we asked them if they needed some help, and they said certainly. So we diverted our vacation and went down a few weeks after the storm. And literally through the eye of the storm, which is the name of the book, through working with these phenomenal, heroic Americans, where truly the African-American church and the faith-based community in general was the center of community, not a source of divisiveness, but really the first and last responder, is how I regained my faith, not only in God but in the dignity and in the human family and the human spirit.

So I was so moved by them and how they had transformed me through their love, just as Jay's *What I Believe* individual said, the transformative power of love, I want to share that. And I also wanted to raise money to build a community center for them. So I bought a piece of property in Pass Christian, and I've written this story that weaves my life in, really, with their life. And I hope that – yes, it's a book about Katrina, but just like 9/11, just like the Iraq War and Katrina today, it's an opportunity, I believe, for a transformation in this country, healing, reconciliation, and that's really what the true spirit of this book is.

**KENNEALLY:** I mentioned with some levity about your life and just the remarkable things that you have done and some things that have happened to you that I'm sure you think about from time to time and find hard to believe. I think that's what makes the book interesting is that it is not only a Katrina book, it really is a memoir, whether you want to admit it or not.

You brought up 9/11 and I think, if you will, the bookend experiences 9/11 to Katrina. Something didn't happen to you on 9/11. Can you tell us what that was? And then finally, how that kind of worked its way through in that period of malaise to where you felt compelled to go to Mississippi.

**ESPINOZA:** Yes. What Chris is referring to is I was living in New York City – I still am – at the time of 9/11, and at the same time, I was a brand new captain based in San Francisco. And I had a trip on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September in San Francisco. So about a week before I had planned to take Flight 93 on the 11<sup>th</sup>. It was to go Newark to San Francisco. And last minute, basically a few days before September 11<sup>th</sup>, the crew desk called me and said, your trip has been changed because you flew too much this week, so we'll just start you off in Chicago. So I was going to be a passenger on that flight, not actually the pilot. So I was not on that flight because my trip had been changed.

But my classmate from the Air Force Academy, Leroy Homer, Jr., was actually the co-pilot on the flight that crashed into Pennsylvania. This was a – I guess you

would say a moment of – I don't know what you – a moment of truth or a moment of – a significant emotional event, as they used to call it at behavioral science at the Air Force Academy, 101 – where I just couldn't believe it.

First of all, that 9/11 had happened. Here, I'd served in the military 13 years so that this would not happen, people would not drop off their children, go to work and never come home. But I also felt like, why Leroy and why not me? He was a phenomenal man, had worked his way up from nothing, really inner-city. And we had gone to even military prep school together, and he had a beautiful wife and a child, and I'd just seen him in June. We used to run on the beach together in California. Here, me, I'm not married. I have no relationship in my life at the time.

It wasn't until a year after that, really, that I was at his memorial service. It's interesting. I didn't tell this story in the book, but I'll share it with you since you came all this way to listen our panel. But I was standing there and they were showing this picture of Leroy and all of the crew members who died, and they had let these doves go at the same time. I was just in total grief and really inside of myself, and all of a sudden, I looked down, and this dove had landed on me. And it was as though Leroy was saying, Chuck – as he used to call me, easier than Cholene – Chuck, it's OK. Go out there. Live your life and make this world better. So I feel like this Katrina book is really an opportunity to do that.

As I've said, I've had so many blessings in my life. I flew these U-2s, I got to fly upside down in instructional jets, I've gotten to go to a war zone, I've lived in Mississippi. But yet, the greatest privilege of my life is really to feel part of something bigger than myself. That's what I learned in the military. That's what they've taught me, this small community, African-American community, but yet is open to the whole group, white and black, Latino and Asian.

So this is really a narrow miss on 9/11, but by the grace of God, I feel like I can – that I'm glad now that I made it, and as much as I miss Leroy, I feel like I'm here for a purpose.

**KENNEALLY:** The book conveys your experiences with Reverend Rosemary from the Mount Zion Church and her husband, and for me, reading it, I was struck by the echoes of Biblical experience in Mississippi, 2005. I thought that was remarkable. Just explain that in your own terms. Did you feel that, too? Did you feel like you were living through some kind of Biblical episode?

**ESPINOZA:** Since then, I've definitely felt that way. There's a chapter in the book called "Amazing Grace," and it describes Reverend Rosemary's sermon, actually. She describes the exodus of the Jewish people from slavery out of Egypt, and actually, the bishop of the area also gives a sermon around those same lines.

For me, which I don't so much talk about in the book, but since then it definitely has been as though this project, this opportunity to help this community and write about them, has been sort of my emancipation, spiritually, and in terms of my own sense of who I am. But at the same time, as you get out there and you get away from that initial feeling, that initial rush that you're making a difference and you try to raise money for a bunch of poor people in Mississippi and you try to sell a book, for those of you who have done that, and promote a book, it is a long ways from home. It's a long ways from the air, which I enjoy. But at the same time, just as Reverend Simmons said, and what I'm reminded of as they say Mount Zion every day when they have a prayer request is the Lord is able. I don't know what exactly – who God is or what God is or how I fit into the universe, but I do know that through this love, this transformative power of love and so much support that we've gotten through this, that yes, the Lord is able, that we are able, as much as I sometimes look back on Egypt longingly and wish that I was just flying my jets like I used to.

KENNEALLY: You told me that you feel that at this moment in the country there's this potential at least, and your own belief is that there's a shift that will take religious people from a kind of aggressive, crusading stance to one that's more helpful, loving. And you quoted some lines from a song that was sung in church when you were a girl.

ESPINOZA: Yes. It's interesting that the shift that I've seen, I guess. I grew up with somewhat of an eclectic religious background, born, baptized a Catholic. When my mother became a born-again Christian shortly after divorcing my father, so I sort of went to church three or four or five times a week growing up. And one of the songs that we used to sing all the time was "They shall know we are Christians by our love. By our love, they shall know we are Christians by our love."

And we were not politicized in any way. Yet I've seen, if you read the newspapers, certainly in my (inaudible), how I grew up and very much counter to what I saw in Mississippi. Not just in the African-American community, but in the tens of thousands of volunteers who still go there today, and desperately needed today to rebuild is this sense of community and love, that we're all part of the human family, whether you're whatever race or whatever religion or whatever sexual orientation, you're welcome, that God's grace is sufficient. And I believe – It's interesting. I was running yesterday morning before the conference, and I was running on the Mall, and I never noticed this about the Mall before, but there was President Lincoln. And I realized that he's really at the end of the Mall presiding over our nation, presiding over the institutions that can either bind us or divide us. Yet he was the unifying force in probably the most perilous moment in our history.

And I believe that perhaps, yes, it may seem that we're at that again, that divisiveness, but that the spirit that I experienced in Mississippi and that I see as I travel around the country and people are pouring out their support for this project, I believe in the common goodness of Americans and our sense of hope and

possibility and unity over the divisiveness of a political argument, whatever that might be, of the particular day.

KENNEALLY: If I can, just to conclude our discussion, is to emphasize that the proceeds from the book are to go to construction of a community center in Pass Christian, and that's important to you. It's not the reconstruction of the church there, it's the reconstruction of a community center, which clearly would accept anyone, right?

ESPINOZA: Yes, and it's interesting, because when we first talked about this, Reverend Williams had this vision of an educational center. She'd been a teacher for 33 years. She graduated high school at 16, certified as a teacher at 19 in 1965 in Mississippi, and she's recently become an ordained minister. So I had intended – I bought this piece of property and I had intended to deed it over to the church and then they could build this community center. And she said, let's keep it separate from the church, because I want all to be welcome and I don't want any particular denomination to feel like they own this, and this is really for everyone.

So, yes, it certainly has the leadership of Reverend Rosemary Williams, but it is definitely a very open and welcoming community down there. And right now, there's nothing. There's no community center, there's no place for the fire department, no place for the even Chamber of Commerce to meet. And of course, the kids, fortunately, are just walking distance from this piece of property. We hope to break ground right after hurricane season. This center we're designing so that it will be a shelter for future storms. It is on high ground and received very little damage during the storm.

KENNEALLY: Can I ask you to conclude, then, with reading something from a very early section of your book that sort of touches on passages from the Bible that have inspired you.

ESPINOZA: Yes. This is from the first chapter, called "Storms."

"One morning, after another sleepless night, I opened my Bible. I hadn't opened my Bible since returning from the War in Iraq. I still carried it in my suitcase on every trip and kept it next to my bedside at night as though it was a good luck charm, but it had lost its status as my compass for life.

I opened it to the following passage. 'Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another.' Romans 14:13.

This passage cooled my anger, but I was still frustrated. I flipped through a few more pages and found the parable of the mustard seed. 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of

all seeds, but when it has grown, it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’ Matthew 13:31.

This parable turned my thoughts toward the tiniest of Katrina’s survivors, the children, the mustard seeds, the smallest and most vulnerable. But if we did right by them, we could give them a new opportunity and help them grow to become the leaders and protectors of their communities.

Finally, I turned to the words, ‘So the last will be first and the first will be last.’ Matthew 20:16. Throughout my life, I have found strength in this passage. It carries a message of hope into worlds filled with injustice and suffering.”

KENNEALLY: Thank you very much. And thanks to Jay, Reverend Simmons, and Cholene Espinoza.

(applause)

KENNEALLY: I’m very glad now to offer the opportunity for anyone here to ask our panelists a question. If I can ask you, because we are recording for TV, to go to the microphone that’s behind the cameras there, and we’ll wait for you. We have about a half an hour for these questions, so if anybody wants to maybe form a line, that would be probably the best way to go.

F: Who are your publishers?

ESPINOZA: Chelsea Green.

SIMMONS: W.W. Norton.

ALLISON: Henry Holt and Audio Renaissance.

F: I’d like to pose this question to actually all of you, but it really comes up in light of some of the preaching experiences that you talked about and the Hurricane Katrina. Do you feel like this really opened a window for a heart shift in America? Because one of the things that – I live in Atlanta. It’s a very conservative area. One of the things that we’ve often talked about is how Sunday tends to be the most segregated day of the week, still. And it felt, anecdotally, right after Katrina, that a lot of churches that might not otherwise have seen the people of New Orleans as their cause, were really moved by what they saw on television and other things, and they really did open their hearts. And it feels like that was this very impassioned moment, and it’s kind of fading, but you all are out traveling around, talking about these types of things and others. Do you feel like it’s sustainable and it did start a heart shift, or was that just a moment when we were our best selves and it’s kind of over?

SIMMONS: It’s probably over.

KENNEALLY: That's depressing. Why is that?

SIMMONS: I'm a trained theologian, and one of the things that they taught us in seminary was when you get through and all's said and done, please live in the real world. So I try to do that.

The reason I say it's probably over is because I think it's going to take something even more casmaclystic. That's not a word. Cataclysmic. I knew I could say that. Cataclysmic. It's going to take something even worse than Katrina, I think, to shake us up and make us stop all of this craziness about whose God is over here and whose leader is over here and who's this and are you Christian and are you Muslim and are you Buddhist, and which one is right.

Katrina, I hope, was a moment where some people got it, and that's the way I kind of try to think about the human family, not so much as all of what America is doing, but what did it do for me. Because I believe that the world can be changed one person at a time. I believe that. So for that reason, I think that there were great things that came out of Katrina. That's why this woman is helping to build a community center. One person. One person saw it and was moved by it. So I'm glad that Katrina at least I know caused that shift in the culture. But I fear that hate and the struggle for power is so ingrained in this culture that it's actually going to take something worse to really shake us up and shake us out of our seats so that church is not something that we just do on Sunday.

KENNEALLY: Cholene, do you want to try to argue with Reverend Simmons?

ESPINOZA: I don't argue with Rev – I guess I would say that the glimmer of hope that I have on this question is that as I travel around, people are still disturbed by Katrina, but they don't know really what to do. So many people tried to volunteer and they were turned away, or they gave money. They don't know where it went and they feel betrayed by the Red Cross and these other things. And I think the best thing that we can do is try to foster understanding. It's sort of like we fear the unknown and we can stereotype very easily, and I certainly have stereotyped and I talk about my stereotypes and how they completely were blown away by Katrina, literally and figuratively, even my stereotypes about the faith-based community.

But I do believe that the money in this country goes to polarize us, basically. That's how you raise money is some of these – whatever faction or the other, but that America, we're really much more unified, but it's going to take – how do organized a bunch of moderates. They're moderates, right? So I think that it takes really understanding and storytelling, whether it's my book or whether you're learning about other cultures through Reverend Simmons or Jay's book, where it's like What I Believe, and you say, wait a second. That person is nothing like me, but, you know what? I agree with him.

I think that's what it is. I think it's the dialogue, the working together, that will transcend it, but there will never be one event, I think, that will make us change. Like you said so eloquently, it's one person at a time.

KENNEALLY: Jay, can I draw you in and ask whether Katrina changed the submissions that people were providing?

ALLISON: There was a burst of Katrina submission, quite a burst. But I would – I guess I would say I agree with both of you, and this question is what will it take for us to change. I think the real question is, what will it take for you to change, or me. This is the one person at a time, or Cholene. And I think these narratives – what you talked about was very much like a This I Believe essay. It was a transformative moment which crystallized your belief. The essay that you quoted from, it's like this woman, Jackie Lantry from Massachusetts, she said, I believe in the ingredients of love, the elements from which it is made. I believe in love's humble, practical components and their combined power. That's what I was hearing you saying, and I think that maybe somebody in this room heard you talk just now and thought, well, if she did that, I wonder what I could do. And maybe they would actually take that thought and render it into action. Or maybe not. Maybe no one will here, but someone who will read your book. And I think it's the viral effect of these statements and books like these and these thoughts. I think that's kind of all we can do that's non-polarizing and comes from the heart in hopes that it's infectious in the best way.

KENNEALLY: Yes?

F: I'm actually staying along this line, very much so. I am an interfaith minister who's in the process of opening a bookstore that I hope becomes very much of a community center as well. It is in a relatively small city that is wonderfully diverse and also very divisive. I would be interested in each of your inputs as to how to keep the lines of communication open, how to encourage them, how I can welcome the African-American community and all of the populations in the area.

SIMMONS: I think he pointed out something critical when he said this is what I believe, I believe in listening. So much, I think, hate abounds, so much confusion, so many stereotypes abound, because instead of listening to each other, listening to people we don't know, we just fear each other. And then we decide things about people we don't know anything about. And fear causes us to reach conclusions that are often irrational, because they're not based on information, they're just based on fear.

So I would say that it's primary to listen to people, and I mean really listen to them. Not listen to them for what they can do for you. Not listen to them because they may agree with you or because they disagree with you. But just listen to people because they're part of the human family. And nine times out of ten, as my mother used to say, you'll learn something. And you'll be shocked, as I often am, by the

things you learn from folk just by listening. You're not trying to get anything out of it, but just because it's what you need to do as part of the human family.

I think that'll go a long way toward making your venture the kind of venture it needs to be, because people recognize genuineness. They really do. They really, really do, and if over time you show the community – even the people who hate you in the community – that that's not what I'm about, I think that'll have an impact.

KENNEALLY: Can I say, I think that the event that we're at is BookExpo America, and if I were to say what I believe in, I think I believe in books. It sounds corny. It sounds like a plug for all of the people here.

SIMMONS: We agree.

KENNEALLY: But I believe in books, and books, writing, is using a microphone. It's telling a story, and it requires a reader, a listener. And all those books are all those stories waiting to be listened to, it seem to me. And so, if you will, a bookstore is almost like an automatic recipe for some kind of community. Who knows what. I don't know if anyone wants to add to that?

ESPINOZA: One idea that I would put forth is the children. People universally love their children. I found this in Iraq. The way to really – where you really saw the communion between the U.S. military and the Iraq people was when we were offering some kind of medical care or some kind of education or books or some special favors to the children, and to organize events around kids and the betterment. Even if you can get in a lecture on child asthma or whatever, or you can have a party or some type of a book read for the kids or a book fair. I believe that when parents watch their kids play together, they're better teachers, oftentimes than we are, those kids are. And they appreciate that.

ALLISON: Just to follow up on what Chris said and to think about a bookstore context, I'll just read a paragraph from Rick Moody's This I Believe essay. I believe in the absolute and unlimited liberty of reading. I believe in wandering through the stacks and picking up the first thing that strikes me. I believe in choosing books based on the dust jacket. I believe in reading books because others dislike them or find them dangerous. I believe in choosing the hardest book imaginable. I believe in reading up on what others have to say about this difficult book and then making up my own mind.

F: Thank you all.

KENNEALLY: Thank you. Great question. Do we have any other questions from the audience? Yes?

M: Yes. I kind of deal with this subject as well, myself. I wrote a book called *Seeking Solace: Finding Peace and Comfort in Times of Distress*, and it kind of deals with that thing like Katrina and 9/11 and things like that. I had wondered if I noticed something that was going on, a trend. She said it would take something worse than Katrina for people to change, possibly permanently or for it to change more hearts for a longer period of time. I want to know if – I guess I can get a quick answer from each of you all, since you're coming from different points of view. Do you think that part of the problem is not that necessarily people need something worse than that to happen, but that they need something better to turn to?

I'm a believer in Christ. What I have kind of come to witness in some areas, but some areas, maybe not, is whether when something happens like this, we know the churches are flooded. We know that we see that happen, and then it dwindles right back down, just like 9/11. Churches are flooded and then it dwindles right back down to below where they were in the first place. And I want to ask each of you all, do you think that this could possibly be the problem, that people come in, they come back to church looking for an answer and they get the same thing that they've heard? A lot of people go to church on Christmas, Mother's Day, and Easter. Some people call them CME Christians. But I'm wondering, do you think that it's a problem that people are preaching, they're just giving a formula that they've learned in theology school or they're just recycling a sermon that's already been written down that they – and so when people come in, it's not a message. God gives a message for the particular time, from the spirit, exactly what people need to hear for that time, or do you think that that's a problem? Have you seen that happen a lot?

SIMMONS: I don't see. Most of what's being preached now is not drastically different from what was being preached in this country 300 years ago. I've studied white preaching and black preaching. It's not the messages. It's not the messages. And in terms of people needing something better to turn to, I think that this is one of the most fortunate countries on the planet. We've been given so much, so I don't think it's that we need something better. I think we need different tools to grasp what we have.

And the bigger thing, the bigger part of what we have is an opportunity to care for one another, not so much an opportunity to go looking to get something from somebody, whether it be a preacher or something else. I believe – and this again is what my mother taught me – that without a Bible – without a Bible – if I were sane, I'd know I was supposed to care about people. That's the piece we won't go out and get, and I don't think you need any preacher, any church, to tell you that. But if we would go toward that, I think that would take care of a whole lot of other things and it wouldn't matter what they told you on Sunday. You'd know that deep down. If I forgot everything I learned in seminary, that's the piece – if they'd say, what would you give up? I'd give up everything but that piece, that I know that I'm supposed to care about other people. I think that's what's at issue. That's what's being eroded.

M: So you're saying more on an individual basis versus –

SIMMONS: One person at a time.

M: One person, one person to another?

SIMMONS: One person at a time to anybody. One person to another.

KENNEALLY: And Cholene, your book is about giving, really, isn't it?

ESPINOZA: Yes, and more directly to your question is I sort of had that same conversation with Chantrelle Nix, this young attorney who put us in contact with her aunt and uncle. I said, Chantrelle, why is it that the attendance in African-American churches – or it seems like, based on what people have told me – is the demographics is older? I'm saying I think this can be true in any church, not just African-American. And she said, Cholene, when my parents went to church, that's all they had. That was the entire sum of their social network, everything, just as Reverend Simmons said. And now there's just so much else out there to do, so they're not as focused on it. So once Katrina happened, of course, they didn't have those other things.

But what I would also take something, too – that's just sort of an explanation. Now, how (inaudible) it to be. I know from my experience in life that when someone has something to lose, they tend to hang onto it, they foster it. And I believe that this is true in certainly the churches I've been to down in the South is that they are a community, not just a sermon, but it's every day. They're basically there paying light bills, they're helping people with their – they're reading to the children, they're getting them excited about education, and it's a community where you have your friends, your network. And I believe that's the strength of this region, and that's being rebuilt. But I think it's giving someone something to lose so that they want to hang onto it I think is one way to move forward.

KENNEALLY: Jay, is giving at all a theme within the essays?

ALLISON: Yes, giving's a theme that runs through all these essays. I can't speak exactly to the question about how to reanimate or make consistent the churchly belief, but I can say that a lot of the beliefs of the thousands of people who have written to us do become crystallized in moments either of catastrophe or tragedy. When everything else is gone, that's when you have belief, and that's when belief is defined. And that in proximity to death, in proximity to illness – your own or the people you love the most – that's when there is absence and emptiness inside you, and you wonder what in the world will fill you up. I think that's when you name your belief, and it may be a belief in God. It may be a belief in your community. It may be a belief in yourself and what you can accomplish. I don't know. I can't

speaking for how each person will react when the alchemical force is applied to them, but we see the result of it all the time in these essays.

I don't know whether it has to be a national catastrophe. I don't know whether it has to be an event that involves the great Us or U.S., or whether it happens to one of us because of something that happens to our baby brother. But I know that in this book and what I've learned from reading these thousands of essays is that each person finds their way very often in those times.

The last thing I would say on that is that – it's a simple phrase, but it occurred to me in writing one of the introductions for one of these, but beliefs are choices. Beliefs are choices.

KENNEALLY: I think we have time for one more question. Yes, please?

M: Good afternoon, everybody. One of the most difficult things I've found is bridging or attempting to bridge the gap between various religions, Muslims, Christians, Jews, and others. I wrote a book called *The Way to Freedom From Life's Many Addictions*. It's a faith-based guide to recovery, a spiritual healing book. And as I present my book to individuals, the first thing I'm asked – in fact, I was just asked, Are you a Christian? Are you Muslim? I just want to ask the panelists, do you believe that there's a common thread of religiosity that runs through all religions, and if so, how do you, or can you possibly appeal to all religious people with one message?

KENNEALLY: I'll ask the reverend.

SIMMONS: We always start with the preacher.

(laughter)

KENNEALLY: You've got the expertise on that.

SIMMONS: I hope that money I spent on seminary is working today. Is working today.

Is there a thread? I think there is a thread towards the divine that extends around the universe, throughout the universe, wherever you go. People speak about it and live it out in different ways, but I think there's a spark of the divine that resides throughout the universe. No matter what faith community you visit, you'll find it if you're open to seeing it. Now, if you're looking for it in one box, dressed one way, sounding one way, you won't. But if you're open to it, I think you'll see it.

In terms of how you get people to communicate across all faith communities, I think there have been a couple of things that were said earlier that still apply. Number one, if you create listening venues, you'll find out that people are much more open to interacting if you create listening venues. Number two, if you talk

about the well-being of their children and their communities, across faith communities, people are interested. Across faith communities. So if you start to talk about it in terms of things that people have in common instead of the things that divide them, I think that's how you reach out across various communities.

As I've traveled the country – because it's still shocking in the African-American community often, that an African-American female shows up and says, I'm preaching today. It's still shocking. The largest African-American denomination in America still does not ordain women clergy, today, and it's 2006.

So when you talk about bridging across faith communities, all of the intolerance and the fear and the everything, I think has to begin with listening venues and looking for the divine in other people. I don't think a lot of us in America, especially those of us who are Christians, that we do that very well. But I would encourage you to give that some attention and talk to people about the things that you know everyone's interested in. Everyone's interested in being healthy. Everyone's interested in taking care of their kids. And how you get to those places, that's a whole other conversation, but begin with the basics.

KENNEALLY: Jay, can I ask you, because as I understand, This I Believe is going to leap from America to other places. The BBC, am I right, is working on a project?

ALLISON: Canada. It looks like the BBC, although they've just had a great financial crisis, so that's a little less certain. But we're hoping to take it around the world and also through the Internet, also.

KENNEALLY: Would you expect surprises, or would you expect it to, if you will, just grow in the fashion it already has?

ALLISON: Let me relate it to what we're talking about here, which is I think that our – what we fundamentally hold in common as human beings, regardless of our creed, is that we all have the same problems. We may believe in different answers, but that – one hope of the series as it goes international is really what maybe – we keep circling back to the same thing, which is this idea of the single person, the single heart and connecting to another one, and that as you hear a Muslim talk about his children or the death of his brother or whatever it is, that all you can feel is a human connection, and then whatever it is that is his faith becomes less than what happens between his story and your story.

The piece that I was editing this afternoon was about the interrogator in Guantanamo is talking to – it's a female, woman – talking to one of the detainees, who's a Muslim, and he says, what does your God say to you about how to be forgiven for things? And she tells him how her Christian God responds and what he makes her feel. And the detainee, who's a Muslim, looks up at her and says, that's what my God says, too. It's two people.

KENNEALLY: Cholene, can I ask you to kind of bring this down to Earth, which seems like an appropriate metaphor for a pilot, because when you're flying high above us all, humanity is just a generalized concept, and then you land, and all those people you couldn't see at 70,000 feet or 35,000 feet are there waiting for their loved ones and everything else. Does being a pilot remind you of that every time you do land?

ESPINOZA: I think it does. I guess I would relate a quick anecdote. This one-year anniversary of 9/11, I had not gone to church or anything in the entire year, and I went to church, and they were praying the Lord's Prayer, and the priest mentioned our father who art in heaven, and distinguished our father, as though that we are children in the same family. I think that how you get there, how you get to the point of recognizing this fundamental truth, which I believe is self-evident, from what I've seen, is a line in my book that I borrowed from my brother Chip, which is, it's easier to act your way into a feeling than feel your way into an action. And that love and trust are an act of will. And like the Bible says, blessed are the peacemakers, and I believe that people like yourselves who are obviously interested in this and interested in even asking the question – thank you sir, for writing the book and thank you for writing your book – is to say that we can achieve critical mass as we pull each other into this human family. And certainly I hope that not only will we bring others in, but I certainly learned that I healed myself, or I was healed, I should say, by doing that, or at least attempting to.

KENNEALLY: It was a great question, a terrific discussion. I appreciate your attention throughout it. Again, on behalf of Copyright Clearance Center and Beyond the Book, I want to thank the organizers of BookExpo America for having us here. Jay Allison, Reverend Martha Simmons, and Cholene Espinoza. And I'll just quote a line from Jay's book and it's something that applies to us all. We can kind of walk out and have in our minds as we walk out. "Your beliefs are in jeopardy only when you don't know what they are."

Thank you all.

(applause)

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