Title: World Youth Day '02
TRT: 6:30
Air Date: 7/26/02
Correspondent: Kim Lawton
Producer: Ryan Rockwood
Editor: Colm Caffrey
KIM LAWTON: There were cheers and tears...a welcome showing the international superstar status the frail 82-year-old still commands.

More than 250,000 young Catholics from 169 nations came here to see Pope John Paul II and to listen to his vision of the role young people can play in the Church.

Pope JOHN PAUL II: Never forget.

LAWTON: He told them Jesus Christ is counting on them.

Pope JOHN PAUL II: Christ needs your youth and your generous enthusiasm to make his proclamation of joy resound in the millennium.

LAWTON: And he said the Church was looking to them with confidence.

GEORGE WEIGEL (Papal Biographer): He holds the ball of expectation very high and tells the young people, “You are capable of moral grandeur. You are capable of moral heroism. Don’t settle for less than what you’re capable of.”

LAWTON: It’s a message that resonates deeply with many here, including 19-year-old J.D. Flynn.

J. D. FLYNN (World Youth Day Attendee): The Pope doesn’t treat us like children, and neither did Christ. The Pope knows young people are young and idealistic. The Pope knows young people have energy, and he knows that if they fall in love with Christ, they’ll follow Him to the ends of the earth. And so that’s what he requires of them.

LAWTON: John Paul created the biannual World Youth Day nearly 20 years ago as a way to excite young people about the Church. His appearances are always the highlight, but World Youth Day has also evolved into an entire week of activities that include fun, friendship and spiritual development.

J. D. was part of a group of young Catholics who walked here all the way from San Francisco—nearly 3,000 miles. Along the way, they prayed and showed their opposition to abortion. They arrived on opening day and immediately began making friends. Organizers believe World Youth Day offers a key opportunity to affirm Catholic identity.

REE LATHAM (World Youth Day Attendee): I look around, and I see Catholics. And they’re here because they’re Catholic, and they’re here because they want to be Catholic and they want to be better Catholics. It’s really exciting.

LAWTON: Besides the festival atmosphere, the organizers also built in serious religious components. There were daily teaching sessions, called Catechesis classes led by the numerous bishops and cardinals also here.

Cardinal FRANCIS GEORGE (Archdiocese of Chicago): This is an encounter with the Lord, and you have to be taught who the Lord is. So the Catechesis does that, and then out of that, generosity is touched and they do service works. So, it’s prayer, Catechesis, service.

LAWTON: There was also daily Mass. And at a nearby park, 1,000 priests were commissioned to hear confessions in various languages, at 200 separate stations. Some
experts believe the emphasis on such traditions of the faith has great appeal, particularly for the under-25 generation.

Colleen Carroll spent a year researching the spirituality of young people.

**COLLEEN CARROLL** (Author, *The New Faithful*): The very thing their parents saw as oppressive, these young adults see as exciting, even exotic.

**LAWTON**: She admits the participants here may not be typical of their generation, but she’s one of several experts who see a growing trend toward a more traditional practice of Christianity.

**Ms. CARROLL**: These are kids and young adults who tend to go to daily Mass or try to. They go to confession, reconciliation, as often as they can, sometimes every two weeks, which astounds, again, many of their parents. But to them, it’s new, and more importantly, they really feel a spiritual connection.

**LAWTON**: World Youth Day officials hope to capitalize on the spiritual connection many young people still feel with this Pope despite his age and ill health. Upon his arrival, John Paul refused the waiting hydraulic lift and instead exited his plane on foot. Young people here were impressed.

Reverend **THOMAS ROSICA** (Director, Pope World Youth Day): Especially now with his infirmity, they see in him strength. They see in him a friend. They find in him a vision, and a courage, and they find in him a reason to believe.

**LAWTON**: Church leaders acknowledge this event comes at a time when abusive scandals have made it more difficult for some Catholics to still believe. The U.S. sex abuse crisis came up several times, including at a question and answer session hosted by Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

*Unidentified Girl #1*: A lot of people will come up and berate you because of what’s going on, and it’s really hard to say, “You know, the Church is still strong. That’s not what’s representing it, and you’re not seeing the true Church.” But I was just wondering how are we supposed to handle people like that?

**Bishop WILTON GREGORY** (President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops): With charity and gentleness. But that’s not all the Church. No. And as a matter of fact, that’s not most of the Church. No.

Our young people are very much aware of the world around them. They don’t live in a vacuum, and they don’t live in a bubble. But the wonderful thing about World Youth Day is that these young people seem to be able to put everything into perspective.

**LAWTON** (to Bishop Gregory): What message do you hope this sends about the image of the Church?

**Bishop GREGORY**: Well, we have 55,000 young people from the United States here, and I think the image and the message that that sends is that we have a very strong, very vibrant Catholic youth — that the next generation is strong in its faith and wants to get stronger.

**LAWTON** (to Ms. Carroll): Is there a spiritual impact to an event like this?
Ms. CARROLL: Whenever you take a large group like this, you’re going to have kids who came along for the ride, but you’d be surprised how many walk away with something they didn’t even come here with.

LAWTON: Church leaders say they hope this World Youth Day will, indeed, lay a strong spiritual foundation for the young people who will be guiding the Catholic Church into the future. I’m Kim Lawton in Toronto.
Title: US Bishops’ Sex Abuse Policy and Canon Law
TRT: 7:40
Air Date: 10/25/02
Correspondent: Kim Lawton
Producer: Patti Jette
Editor: Bill Coyle
KIM LAWTON: At Catholic University in Washington, D.C., men and women study canon law — the legal code that governs virtually every area of Roman Catholic Church life worldwide. Experts here agree with the Vatican that certain parts of the bishops' new policy on priestly sex abuse conflict with canon law.

Rev. JOHN BEAL (Associate Professor of Canon Law, Catholic University): The pendulum at one time was way over here in dismissing as unfounded the complaints of victims and their families. I think in reacting, we have swung over this way in a rather high-handed way of dealing with priests who have only been accused at this point.

LAWTON: Vatican officials have three main objections to the charter adopted by the bishops in June. They think the definitions, including what actually constitutes sexual abuse, are too vague. They're also worried about the role and authority of the lay review boards that are working with bishops at the national and local level. And they're concerned — perhaps most of all — about the due process rights of accused priests.

Canon law, like Western common law, says accused people should be considered innocent until their accusers have proven guilt. But under the bishops' charter, any, quote, "credible accusation" leads to the suspension of a priest — perhaps indefinitely.

Rev. BEAL: To be judged credible, it is not clear what an accuser has to do. It is not proving beyond a reasonable doubt — or with moral certainty, as canon law would have it — that the offense occurred.

LAWTON: Canon law has a specific statute of limitations for sex abuse offenses. The Dallas policy has none. Under canon law, if a sanctioned priest appeals his punishment, the punishment should be suspended while the appeal is being considered. So far, that's not happening under the charter. Some local dioceses have already generated controversy in trying to implement the charter. The Archdiocese of Baltimore, for example, drew fire for posting on the Internet the name of every priest who has been accused of sexual abuse.

Rev. BEAL: The legal system of the Church has to find a precarious balance between taking seriously the claims of those who say they are victims of abuse and treating the accused fairly, as a valued member of the community.

LAWTON: Leaders of the law advocacy group Voice of the Faithful acknowledge the importance of finding that balance.

JIM POST (President, Voice of the Family): Our view is that injustice to anyone is injustice to everyone. So that you don't protect survivors better, or protect children better, by taking away the rights of the rights of priests.

LAWTON: But Voice of the Faithful and other groups worry that canon law wrangling will hinder the process started in Dallas.
Mr. POST: What concerns us most of all is that this could be another tactic to slow down, a kind of foot-dragging and back-sliding, and that’s unacceptable to us. I think the pressure that we all feel is the need to create safe parish environments as soon as possible.

LAWTON: Many American Catholics are also troubled by the Vatican’s obvious concerns about the lay review boards that have already begun advising many local bishops. The National Review Board has been headed by Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating, an outspoken former prosecutor.

Governor FRANK KEATING: This system cannot work. This healing cannot happen without a lay review board that is independent of the prelate, that has a majority of members that are independent of the Church who will say, “Enough!”

LAWTON: In a speech earlier this month, Keating riled some Church leaders by urging laypeople to help keep bishops accountable.

Gov. KEATING: If this is over and a bishop basically says, “Pound sand. I don’t intend to have a lay board. I don’t intend to implement these charter provisions.” Then what do we do? We vote with our feet and our pocketbook. We go to Mass elsewhere. We go to Mass elsewhere and we give elsewhere.

LAWTON: Some analysts say underlying all of this is the Vatican’s desire to protect Church authority.

MARGARET O’BRIEN STEINFELS (Editor, Commonweal Magazine): The authority question, I think, both concerns the Vatican’s own sense of its authority and its concern, the fear, that the bishops, in writing the norms as they did in Dallas, have turned their authority over to lay people.

Unidentified Man: Let’s begin with a prayer.

LAWTON: The sex abuse crisis has galvanized many lay people to get more involved in Church affairs. Voice of the Faithful groups have sprung up across the country. Many had been meeting in local parish halls. But in recent weeks more and more bishops have been banning Voice of the Faithful from church premises, citing concerns about divisiveness.

Mr. POST: When you lock doors, you lock minds. There simply cannot be reliance solely on Vatican authority, solely on the bishops without full involvement of both the priests and the Catholic laity.

LAWTON: Some Catholic leaders say the Vatican’s response does not indicate any Church reluctance to deal with the sex abuse crisis.

Rev. BEAL: I don’t think that should be seen as a lack of concern about the problem, but perhaps a judgment that this charter was thrown together a little too quickly, under too much media scrutiny, in a pressure cooker, and that it has all of the telltale marks of a hasty job.
LAWTON: Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the U.S. bishops’ conference, says any revisions by the newly-named joint U.S. Vatican Commission will strengthen and clarify the Dallas policy.

*Bishop WILTON GREGORY: I don't believe this is a moment when we have to recreate the wheel.*

LAWTON: The U.S. bishops may ask the Vatican to grant them special exemptions from certain canon law provisions. And since canon law has evolved over the centuries, another possibility could be the revision of canon law.

MS. STEINFELS: This is a very serious and egregious problem we have tried to deal with in this country. It’s a problem elsewhere. Why shouldn’t the Catholic Church itself be concerned to have reflected in its own rules and laws the idea that children need to be protected from sex abusers, clerical and otherwise?

LAWTON: Margaret O’Brien Steinfels spoke at the bishops’ meeting in June. As they now move to address Vatican concerns, she says she’d like to remind them to hold firm on their parishioners’ concerns as well.

MS. STEINFELS: They are, after all, bishops in local diocese in the United States. They are not bishops of Rome. I mean, they are appointed by Rome, but it seems to me they have, two places to look at. And at this point in time I think they really need to look at home more than they need to look at Rome.

LAWTON: The Joint U.S. Vatican Commission hopes to complete its work by mid-November. That’s when the U.S. bishops will be gathering for their annual fall meeting. In the meantime, Bishop Gregory says that each local diocese should still move forward to implement the Dallas policy. But given the uncertainties, some bishops say they’ll wait — at least for another month. I’m Kim Lawton in Washington.
Title: American Muslims: One Year Later
TRT: 8:45
Air Date: 9/13/02
Correspondent: Kim Lawton
Producer: Ryan Rockwood
Editor: Melanie Soich
KIM LAWTON: In New York's mid-Hudson Valley, about 70 miles north of Manhattan, Muslims are being called to prayer.

*Unidentified Woman #1:* Lina, you have to get ready now. Here, let me do your hair.

LINA: All right.

LAWTON: Aziz Ahsan and his family are among those heeding the call.

Mr. AZIZ AHSAN: Ready?

*Woman #1:* You have the keys?

LAWTON: Ahsan is a lawyer who moved to the U.S. from Pakistan more than 20 years ago. Now he's an American...an American who was deeply and personally drawn into the events of 9-11. Ahsan was at the World Trade Center on that fateful morning. He stopped at the post office there to buy sheets of the special new Muslim stamp that had been issued earlier that month. A short time after he left, the planes hit, and he got caught in the deluge of debris.

AZIZ AHSAN: I was panicking and I just wanted to touch my children and my wife and sort of die. It was that close. And it was like every breath was precious at that time.

LAWTON: Hours later, he was finally able to make his way home.

Mr. AHSAN: As a Muslim, I believed that it was God that saved me.

LAWTON: The debris burned his cornea, and some particles remain imbedded in his inner eyelid. Ahsan keeps his clothes from that day in a paper bag in his garage.

Mr. AHSAN: You can see the shirt I was wearing. It's kind of full of debris and dirt. I just don't feel like washing them. I'm not going to wear them because they are 9-11 memories for me. And so I may just keep it, and maybe somebody will benefit by putting it in a museum or someplace where they might appreciate that Muslims were affected by 9-11 as every other person.

LAWTON: He says the impact of that day has only grown stronger.

Mr. AHSAN: 9-11 was a turning point for not only me, but for the whole Muslim community.

LAWTON: Muslims across the nation agree 9-11 has been a turning point that created numerous new challenges as they continue to define their community in America. Perhaps the greatest challenge has been differentiating themselves from terrorists, in the eyes of the government and the public.
Over the past year, President Bush has reiterated that Islam was not to blame for the September 11 attacks. He repeated those assertions again this past week.

*President GEORGE W. BUSH*: *We must remember that our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, not a religion.*

*LAWTON*: But the Bush administration believes a tiny minority of American Muslims may support terrorism. Authorities have detained hundreds of Muslims, raided Islamic institutions and increased surveillance of mosques.

Many American Muslims feel unfairly targeted.

*TALIB ABDUL KARIM* (Muslim Legal Defense Fund): Any time the United States government starts to target our Muslim organizations, they can do so if they don’t fear the retaliation and backlash of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in this country who will speak out.

*LAWTON*: There is strong internal debate about how to do that.

*Dr. AZIZAH AL-HIBRI* (Law Professor): It’s easy to be angry. It’s more difficult to be wise about it. But to focus on confrontation and not on conflict resolution is to misunderstand the basic philosophy of Islam.

Professor *INGRID MATTSON* (Hartford Seminary): It’s is a very difficult issue right now, and there’s a lot of discussion about the strategy for standing up for civil liberties, for the rights of Muslims in this country, without appearing to be sympathetic to violent people.

*LAWTON*: Another challenge has been addressing what many see as increasingly negative public perceptions about their faith, and their community. Aziz Ahsan says nearly every American Muslim has faced this — including his 14-year-old son Shahzad, who has been insulted and called names, among them “Osama.”

*SHAHZAD AHSAN*: It hit me strongly because I saw my father getting out of our car, covered head to toe in soot and the World Trade Center. I was looking at my father almost dead, and I couldn’t understand why people would hate Muslims when they were victims of the attack as well.

*LAWTON*: Many Muslims say they’ve been unnerved by statements by some prominent religious leaders, including evangelist Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham, who has generated controversy for saying the Koran justifies violence against non-Muslims.

*FRANKLIN GRAHAM (from Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly interview)*: *The Koran does teach it. It is there. You can read it for yourself.*
LAWTON: Ingrid Mattson says she sees parallels between Franklin Graham’s view of Islam, and Osama bin Laden’s.

Ms. MATTSON: If you compare statements about what Islam is and what Muslims believe, you’ll find they are almost identical. And I reject both interpretations, both those, you know, the non-Muslims who are saying that Islam justifies violence against Christians and Jews and the Muslims who are saying it.

Imam YAHYA HENDI (Georgetown University): Muslims in America are very frustrated with the way Islam has been portrayed. Muslims do not see Islam as a religion of violence. On the contrary, Muslims believe Islam is a religion of peace that teaches forgiveness and love.

Over the past year, Imam Yahya Hendi has visited numerous churches to explain his faith and build bridges.

Imam HENDI: (Sermon): Let us join hands, let us join efforts, and let us work together as sailors led by the three captains Moses, Jesus Christ and Mohammed.

LAWTON: He’s encouraging other Muslims to follow suit.

Imam HENDI: We are misunderstood, and therefore, the challenge has been how we can re-introduce ourselves in a language that is familiar with our fellow American neighbors.

LAWTON: But Hendi and other leaders acknowledge that American Muslims need to do more to condemn extremist interpretations of their faith.

Imam HENDI: What I would challenge on the screen here, moderate Muslims to speak up more than ever before. Even if they have been, we need to be more active. We also need to educate about Islam, our fellow Muslims who might not understand what the religion is all about.

Ms. MATTSON: Muslims have really needed to think about what they believe, what’s the essential of their beliefs? Are they willing to stand up for them in the face of both Muslims who use violence in the name of Islam, and on the other hand, other people who are distorting our religion for their own reasons?

LAWTON: At a recent meeting of the American Muslim Council, law professor Azizah al-Hibri urged the community to focus less on foreign affairs and more on being good neighbors and wise, well-informed leaders.

Dr. AL-HIBRI: We have not been good Muslims, let’s face it. And if we don’t start with ourselves and if we just blame the others, we’re not going to go anywhere.
LAWTON: Many say the current difficulties have helped the American Muslim community mature. Scholar Karen Armstrong urged Muslims to draw from their traditions to keep moving forward.

KAREN ARMSTRONG (Author, *Islam*, in speech): The Prophet was always going forward. This is not a time, as you know, to retreat in fear. It's a time to take the opportunity of a tragedy, of a struggle, of a horror, to grow.

LAWTON: In upstate New York, Aziz Ahsan says since 9-11, he's felt a renewed sense of responsibility to his local Muslim community. He's been speaking about Islam and writing editorials for the local paper.

He says the American Muslim community must become firmly rooted here — for its own sake and more importantly, for the sake of the next generation.

Mr. AHSAN: We are proud to be Muslims, we are proud to be Americans, and we are proud American Muslims. So, we want our children to be proud.

LAWTON: Ahsan may still carry traces of the World Trade Center in his eyes — but he says all American Muslims carry a piece of 9-11 in their hearts. He just wishes other Americans would believe it.

LAWTON: I'm Kim Lawton in upstate New York.
Title: Religious Anti-War Mobilization
TRT: 1:47
Air Date: 9/27/02
Correspondent: Kim Lawton
Producer: Ryan Rockwood
Editor: Marc Allard
Unidentified Man #1: Gracious God...

KIM LAWTON: Catholics and mainline Protestants from around the nation launched what they called a "season of peace-making." Instead of the traditional prayer and fasting, they urged prayer and faxing to sway government officials against a possible war with Iraq.

Bob Edgar, National Council of Churches: It's important for them to know that we, as people of faith, have something to say.

LAWTON: Leaders of the National Council of Churches and two Catholic groups, NETWORK and Pax Christi, descended on Capitol Hill to discuss their concerns with members of Congress.

Unidentified Woman #1: Do we want to make an investment of $80 to $100 billion in warring efforts, or do we want to make an investment in the lives of people?

Unidentified Congressman: I'm hoping that prayer and petition will help to slow this rush to war.

LAWTON: Meanwhile, more questions about whether a U.S. attack could be morally justified. A diverse group of more than 100 prominent Christian ethicists issued a statement expressing, quote, "a common moral presumption against a preemptive war."

LAWTON: So far only a few religious leaders have publicly supported an attack against Saddam Hussein, among them Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Mr. LAND: Just War theory, first of all, says it must be defensive. And I believe we're defending ourselves against several acts of war by a man who does not keep treaties and who has already used weapons of mass destruction.

LAWTON: But this week moderate Baptists and other faculty members at Wake Forest Divinity School urged extreme restraint in moving toward a first strike. And as the political debate intensifies, many religious activists say in their communities' momentum against the war is building. I'm Kim Lawton in Washington.
Title: Ramadan Moon Sighting
TRT: 4:50
Air Date: 11/8/02
Correspondent: Kim Lawton
Producer: Ryan Rockwood
Editor: Bill Coyle
KIM LAWTON: It’s Tuesday, November 5, just before sunset in Indiana. At the headquarters of the Islamic Society of North America, the phones are ringing off the hook. Muslims are wondering whether anyone has seen the new moon.

Unidentified Caller #1: Is there any news for the moon tonight?

Operator: No news until this point, so you’re welcome to call back after nine.

Dr. IMAD-AD-DEAN AHMAD (Minaret of Freedom Institute): The Islamic calendar is a strict lunar calendar. The result is that every year, the dates on the Muslim calendar creep up by approximately 11 days compared to the solar calendar. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, and Muslims will go out to look for the new moon to determine when the month will begin.

LAWTON: It’s a process that combines science and technology with religious tradition. The Koran teaches Muslims to study the heavens — and specifically the moon — to mark time. Over the centuries, Islamic scholars made numerous contributions to the science of astronomy. Today, scientists can calculate where and when the new crescent moon may be most visible, but Islamic scholars say the actual sighting is still necessary.

Dr. AHMAD (lecturing): It’s going to be challenging to see the new moon from this spot on the Earth.

LAWTON: Tonight, Muslim astronomer Imad-Ad-Dean Ahmad is giving some moonsighting advice to the Muslim Student Association at George Washington University. The accepted practice for moon sighting varies from country to country. Because of the Earth’s size and curvature, Ahmad says the new moon may be seen on different days in different places. That means Ramadan and its month-long fasting may begin on different days as well.

Here in the U.S., the process is overseen by the Islamic Society of North America — ISNA. Beginning on the day the new moon is expected to be seen, ISNA telephone operators stand by to take in reports of any sightings.

Unidentified Caller #2: Is the moon there, the Ramadan?

Operator: No, they haven’t sighted the moon yet.

LAWTON: Although he advocates scientific calculations, Dr. Ahmad still encourages Muslims to go out and look.

Dr. AHMAD (lecturing): I think it’s a great tribute to our heritage — not just our spiritual heritage, but our intellectual heritage. We’ve got to reignite our intellectual curiosity, our critical thinking. Not just accept, “Oh, my cousin in Cairo says he saw the moon, so I guess it must be there.” Go ahead and look for yourself!

LAWTON: On a rainy Washington night just after sunset, these three students took his advice. They headed to a good vantage point, hoping for a break in the weather.
RIKA PRODHAN (Student): It’s a shame it’s so cloudy today.

LAWTON: They knew it wasn’t likely, but said they wanted to carry on the tradition of their faith.

Ms. PRODHAN: The significance of the moon and how it looks during Ramadan is very important to the religion itself, and to understand your religion, to appreciate it, to cultivate it, especially in America.

Unidentified Man #1: They’ll probably sight it tonight somewhere else in the U.S.

Dr. AHMAD: The tradition is that if it’s cloudy, you go ahead and complete a month of 30 days. However, nowadays with high-speed communication, a place that is cloudy can always get a report from someplace that isn’t cloudy.

LAWTON: Any Muslim from the continental U.S. or Canada who sees the new moon calls the ISNA hotline to report the details.

Unidentified Woman #1: Somebody in Florida says they saw it.

LAWTON: This year, the first reports come from Muslims in Florida.

Operator: What time was the sunset?

Unidentified Caller #3: 5:40.

Operator: Is there a place where you are, like, which part of Miami?

ISNA Worker: We have a report from Florida.

LAWTON: ISNA Secretary General Sayyid Sayeed then convenes a conference call of experts to discuss whether the reported sightings are scientifically and religiously legitimate.

SAYYID SAYEED: (ISNA Secretary General) We are very happy and humbled to have you with us.

Unidentified Man #4: I think in view of the evidence we should declare that Ramadan begins tomorrow.

LAWTON: Once it’s determined the reports are valid, the group proclaims that Ramadan will begin the following dawn.

Mr. SAYEED: So, congratulations!

LAWTON: ISNA staff members get the word out through a telephone recording, mass e-mails, and a Web site announcement.

Unidentified Woman #1: Wednesday, November 6, will be the first day of Ramadan.
LAWTON: Most American Muslims follow the ISNA proclamation, although some immigrants still follow their home country's determination. Some believe all the world's Muslims should begin Ramadan on the same day. Others believe scientific calculations, rather than actual sightings, should be used. But all Muslims agree, the arrival of the new moon heralds the holiest month of their year. I'm Kim Lawton reporting.