



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 85, Folder 18, NBC - "A.D." miniseries, 1984-1985.

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date September 3, 1984
to Mr. Vincenzo Labella
from Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
subject Response to A.D. film (about 7 hours, rough-cut)

As you know, I came to the NBC studios in Los Angeles on Monday, August 27. I joined Dick Gilbert, Michael D'Addio and Cathy Schlesinger in viewing about seven hours of the rough-cut of A.D. (I understand that there are about another 3 or 4 hours of film to be seen.)

In this memorandum, I want to make first, several general observations and, then, some specific comments about concrete aspects of the film.

As a primary response, I believe that A.D. (even in this rough form) is magnificent. You and your associates are to be congratulated profoundly for this extraordinary achievement. You have made "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" come alive; it is now something real, humanly meaningful. It has not only historic scope and sweep - it has grandeur, even majesty.

Against that vivid recreation of Imperial Rome, the emergence of Christianity from Judaism, and their early sibling struggles, also take on fuller meaning and depth. While final judgment will need to be reserved until we can view the last 3 or 4 hours of the film, I have no question but that the vast majority of

Christians and Jews will respond affirmatively to A.D. as an important, even inspiring experience. It has the makings of a classic.

As a Jew, I am personally grateful to you, Vincenzo, for the sensitive, knowledgeable and caring way in which you have treated "the Jewish questions." (There are some residual "problems" which still require attention; they are, I would think, easily correctable.) Following are some of the specific matters which need attention:

Opening scene - disciples on way to Emmaus: Shalom Aleichem - is pronounced in poor Hebrew; should be sharper, crisper Hebrew.

- "They nailed him on a tree - suggests "the Jews" nailed him; could you loop in "The Romans nailed him on a tree."

- "Child shall be born to a maiden" - philologically correct from the Hebrew "almah" - be prepared for negative Fundamentalist reaction; see my memorandum to you dated May 2, 1983, p. 2. At the very least, will need some interpretive comment from acknowledged Christian Biblical scholar (such as Fathers Raymond Brown or Joseph Fitzmeyer) to anticipate negative controversy on "virgin birth."

Tiberius - "only pleasure of the senses can ease the pain of the spirit...we pursue action for its own sake...restore justice to Rome; Rome has become filthy shambles" - This is very telling imagery of the debauchery of Rome which should be fully exploited as main theme in early publicity to suggest relevance of film to contemporary moral concerns in the U.S. and the West. (Similarly, Sejanus' comments: "Rome is loud, dirty and treacherous place..." "from Divine Neptune to Divine Tiberius" - the idolatry of rulers, even Presidents...)

Thomas - his first cockney accent as Doubting Thomas is disturbing; accent less noticeable later.

Jesus - "Shalom, peace be with you" - good positive Jewish identity for Jesus, but he could be stronger.

Wedding ceremony - very good; few items: placing laurel wreaths on bride and groom heads is attractive, but seems more a Roman custom than Jewish.

Rabbi (is it Gamaliel? I didn't note who was Rabbi), but point is traditionally, Rabbi should say, "BEHOLD, THOU ART CONSECRATED...IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF MOSES AND ISRAEL" - then the groom repeats the formula and adds, "BEHOLD, THOU ART CONSECRATED UNTO ME IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF MOSES AND ISRAEL." Since the formula has binding power, if the Rabbi says "UNTO ME" it would suggest that he betroths the woman as his wife.

Tiberius - "I am the Empire...the Empire stood for law...city is damned, filled with torture, decapitation...city stinks of corruption and there is no man who is not afraid"; Sejanus - "Rome is in grave danger" - same point as earlier on page 2; main theme of Rome's inner moral corruption.

SANHEDRIN SCENE - GAMALIEL - excellent; first time to my knowledge that any film captures the internal debate in Judaism in first century Palestine; I wish Gamaliel could be somewhat stronger, a little less mushy.

"Shma Yisroel" - should be crisp, sharp Hebrew pronunciation.

MOUNT GERIZIM - accent should be on last syllable - not GERiZim, but GeRI-ZIM (if possible, not crucial). Used several times in this Anglicized way.

- Pilate should pronounce SHA-VU-OT correctly; as Procurator he should know how Jews of Palestine pronounce it.

Tiberius - "Is there no pleasing the Jews in Palestine?" - I'm a little worried about his question becoming translated, "Is there no pleasing the Zionists in Israel?"

-Peter (excellent, moving scene) "My Jewish brothers, all who live in Jerusalem ...repent, be baptized for remission of sins; save yourselves from this crooked generation" (to whom does Peter refer? The Romans? The Jews? The Sanhedrin? The Sadducees? Do you need this phrase?)

-BAPTISM OF STEPHEN - Peter: "I baptize you, Stephen..." - this form of partial immersion may stir negative reaction among traditionalist Christians; important to check with Christian authorities and anticipate concern in early public interpretation.

(Antonia - "honey and water - love and forgiveness" - beautiful passage)

-SANHEDRIN SCENE IS TROUBLESOME - The debate between Caiaphas and Gamaliel is fair, just and balanced, but that spirit is destroyed (at least weakened) by

portraying the Sanhedrin - in black hoods! - as babbling idiots or vultures. Also, the babbling goes on too long so that it becomes a caricature.

STONING OF STEPHEN - while this scene comes through much improved over the scripts I first read, I am troubled by the long hovering of a phalanx of Jews before and during the stoning. The longish exposure of the Jews as stoners makes them appear more ominous and vindictive than seems necessary.

-Caleb - pronounce Ger-IZ-IM (see above)

SAUL'S CONVERSION on way to Damascus - suggests delirium, a kind of mental derangement rather than authentic spiritual conversion; perhaps less of rolling eyes needs to be considered. Sensitive Christians could be offended by this (frankly, fundamentalist Jews would welcome implication that Saul's conversion was result of mental aberration rather than genuine spiritual transformation, but don't quote me on that...)

-Baptism of Saul - same question of partial immersion as that of baptism of Stephen; need to anticipate problems with literalist Christians.

SAUL-PAUL - I am troubled by Paul's line, "I learned to hate before I learned to love" - that seems to suggest that Saul as Jew was taught to hate, but Paul as Christian learned to love. As it stands, it could become a serious slur against Judaism. Needs to be rethought.

-Baptism of Ethiopian - same question as baptism of Saul and Stephen.

-Saul and his father - authentic scene, genuine emotion, but phrase "shame of the cross" sticks out as unnecessarily invidious.

-JUXTAPOSITION OF ROMAN ATTACK ON JEWS AND PETER'S CARICATURE OF JEWS COMES THROUGH AS EVERYBODY DISLIKES OR HATES JEWS --

Publius says, "Get out of here you riotous, unwashed Jews," then next scene, Peter says (after flamboyant "pig's flesh washed down with goat's milk") "we are not to be afraid of eating with Gentiles...what comes out of the heart defiles" - may be true of fundamentalist Jews who sought to preserve sanctity by avoiding contact with Gentiles, but a mainstream Jewish tradition holds that it was the Patriarch Abraham whose primary virtue was that he practiced generosity and hospitality to all wayfarers, heathens, pagans, etc., and gave them food to eat in his tents. These anti-Jewish caricatures are bothersome.

-This problem added to in next scene with Thomas - "it is unlawful to mix with uncircumcized Gentiles." (See Rabbinic Anthology by C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe on "Gentiles," p. 560 ff. - "Gentiles and Jews traveling together on board ship...Gifts are made to Gentiles by Jews who are their "friends and neighbors," etc.

-balanced somewhat by next scene of Valerius who says, "Learn forgiveness from Jews...only one God" - but Valerius is in love with a Jew while derogatory comments are made by authentic Christians.

-Peter - "where old ended...your (Jewish) stubbornness" - this adds to negative characterization of Jews and Judaism.

-It would be helpful to read again as background, "Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People" by E. P. Sanders (Fortress Press).

July 15, 1983

My Dear Vincenzo,

I hope this letter find you and your family in good health.

Not having heard from you since our last telephone conversation, I am naturally curious as to how the script-revisions and filming on "A.D." are going. When time allows, I would appreciate having a word from you as to how the production is proceeding.

Since you referred to your plans for a film on Maimonides, I have spent some time reading up on the sources. There are a number of interpretive books and essays by great Jewish scholars. I would be glad to bring them to your attention when you are ready.

In view of the fact that you indicated when we last spoke that the contract for my services on "A.D." and the check were on their way, I thought you would want to know that neither has arrived as yet.

With warmest personal good wishes, I am,

Cordially,

N.B. - I will be meeting with Vatican authorities in early November and again next March. If I can be helpful, please let me know.

45 East 89 St. (18 F)
New York, N. Y. 10128

May 2, 1983

TO: Vincenzo LaBella
FROM: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
RE: Comments on "A.D. - The Revolution of Love"

General reaction - This is a powerful, vivid, and compelling drama on the emergence of the early Church, particularly Pauline Christianity, against the background of a morally decadent Roman civilization.

The script - which is generally well-written and imaginatively conceived -- has several overall virtues:

- (a) It makes dramatically concrete and real the magnitude of the moral decadence of the Roman Empire, with suggestive analogies to aspects of the moral decline that is eroding the moral substance and will of contemporary American and Western civilization;
- (b) It portrays the redemptive, healing power of Biblical faith that pulses with love and caring as a force for containing that erosion of moral decay;
- (c) It provides as have few other dramatizations the depth of the Jewish rootedness of early Christian ideals, values and personalities.

Nevertheless, there are some troublesome or problematic formulations in the script which are correctable. Following is a line-by-line analysis of the script which identifies these concerns:

PART I - "The Light"

P. 1 - Voice:..."It was only after Jesus of Nazareth appeared on earth, that humankind began to mark each year in the name of the Lord, the Lord of Abraham and Moses.

- Leave out "the Lord of Abraham and Moses." Judaism does not conceive of Jesus as being the Lord of Abraham and Moses; rather "Hashem," the Lord God of Creation, of Genesis, is the Lord of history.

p. 2 - "A.D. 30" - Roman numerals?

p. 7 - Cleopas - his Hebrew blessing over food is inaccurate. The correct translation of "Ha-motzi" (the blessing over bread) is:

"Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe,
who brings forth bread from the earth."

This formulary should be used throughout the script when the blessing of food is required.

- Stranger - "It was all prophesied. 'The Lord himself will choose the sign. A child shall be born to a virgin. And she shall call him: Immanuel."

Clearly this passage poses difficulties from the point of view of modern Biblical scholarship. The Hebrew word in Isaiah 7:14 is "Almah" which translates "a young woman" (feminine of elem, a young man.) It refers to a girl of marriageable age, or one recently married (see Gen 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Prov. 30:19; Song of Songs 6:8). The New Testament passages (Mt. 1:23; Lk. 1:27) are based on an early Greek rendering of the passage.

The choice of translation will have to be made in terms of either being consonant with the best of contemporary scholarship, or not offending traditionalist Christians whose literalism requires "the virgin" idea.

p. 9 - Jesus - "Outside the narrow limits of Jerusalem" - this recalls the invidious polemical Christian argument that Judaism was limited and parochial (narrow) in contrast to the universalism of Christianity. Suggest that "narrow limits" be omitted; else, "outside the walls of Jerusalem."

p. 14 - Mathias, as an observant Jew, would not wear tallit at night.

- Mathias, the wedding ritual as presently formulated has no basis in Jewish tradition. First suggest removal of "the man I have chosen for you" from the betrothal formulary, use it earlier in this passage, thus:

"As your older uncle, and the head of your family after the death of your father, I have the right and duty to choose your man for you and I have done so. Now I must ask you, Ruth, of your own free will and consent do you take Samuel to be your husband, and do you promise to love, honor and cherish him throughout life. If so, answer I do." That is the traditional Jewish formula. The writer's version is more romantic and dramatic.

p. 15 - Mathias (to Samuel and Ruth): "You will exchange your gifts." In Jewish tradition, the bride would not exchange gifts with the groom.

- The ring must be a simple gold ring with no stones.

- Mathias (to Samuel): "Say after me, 'Behold: thou art consecrated unto me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel.'"

p. 25 - The School of Gamaliel - There is a real question as to whether Sadducees, Pharisees, Hellenizing Christians, Hellenizing Jews, and Zealots would be found together in Gamaliel's academy. I suppose dramatic license might be in order for the purpose of dramatizing the "theological ferment that boiled over in first century Palestine" (S. Schechter) as well as the tolerance of pluralism of Rabban Gamaliel. It would be useful to keep in mind in this passage the following statement by Prof. Michael Grant in his excellent study, "The Jews in the Roman World," (Scribner's):

"During the first years after Jesus' death, the group of Jews who had been his followers, greatly diminished in numbers by the catastrophe of his downfall and punishment, disappeared from view for a time. It was later said, perhaps correctly, that their surviving leaders were temporarily arrested, but released owing to the intervention of the greatest Pharisee of the day, Gamaliel I, who was the grandson of Hillel and president of the academy which he founded or developed. The reported version of Gamaliel's speech displays a characteristic Pharaesic ambiguity about Messiahs. 'Keep clear of these men, I tell you! Leave them alone. For if this idea of theirs, or its execution is of human origin, it will collapse. But if it is from God, you will never be able to put them down, and you risk finding yourself at war with God. This advice corresponds to the known Pharaesic doctrine that the supreme power of God leaves some room for free will among men. Moreover, its relatively sympathetic attitude towards Christian opinions, conflicting with frequent emphasis, elsewhere in the New Testament, upon the unfriendly wrongheadedness of the Pharisees, give the words an authentic ring." (p.112-113.)

p. 26 - Replace "Jewish intelligence can always defeat Roman stupidity" with "Jewish love for freedom can always defeat (or prevail over) Roman arrogance and cruelty."

p. 28 - Gamaliel - We forget that we were called as a holy nation...

p. 29 - Another student - He was one of us...instead of "we delivered" substitute, "Another Jew should not have been delivered to a Roman cross."

- p. 31 - The choosing of Mathias as a disciple by dice should be done meditatively, not as a crap game. Christian viewers would be outraged and rightly so.
- p. 32 - If Peter uses "Ha-motzi," it should be correct as on p. 7. Another spontaneous invocation might have been possible, but it would have to be identified as such. But as good Pharisees, they would have regularly invoked "Ha-motzi lechem min haaretz".
- p. 33 - Zachaeus - "You doubt our word, man?" Isn't "man" a modern colloquialism? Maybe, brother?
- p. 34 - Jesus - Shalom, peace be with you
- p. 36 - Stephen - He knew the Torah, our holy scriptures
- Gamaliel - "Admit Caleb my son, that there was much in what he said. We must change ourselves EVEN AS we change our systems of rule. Man's soul and body are inseparable. The soul and the body must be obedient to the Law of the Lord.
- or - The body is the temple of the soul which must be obedient to the Lord."
- p. 37 - Gamaliel - The chains are our own sins, AS WELL AS foreign oppression -- or our own sins , NOT ONLY foreign oppression.
- p. 38 - "Hearken, O Israel" rather "Hear, O Israel" - technically, can also be translated "hearken" but more usual is "hear".
- students' wrestling match is simply jostling, not a Greek game.
- p. 43 - Valerius - "What they might call the Final Discipline." sounds too much like "the final solution"; perhaps better is "the ultimate discipline."
- p. 44 - Sejanus - "Pack your kit...marching orders" - too colloquial, modern talk?
- p. 45 - Quintilius - "Not unlike the Galileans - inferior children of Israel, so to say. Yet in no way less cunning or able."

The Galileans were mocked by the Judeans and Samaritans for their coarse, guttural dialect, their strong individuality, "carrying bravery in Quixotic, seditious causes to violent and fanatical lengths" (Michael Grant, 1;4) Should they be characterized as "inferior" or better "rejected" or "contentious".

p. 47 - Pilate - Shabuot or Pentecost as we call it in the civilized world.
Would Pilate say that, even in derogation?

p. 49 - Ruth - You know that we cannot. It is prescribed that no wedding be celebrated from Passover to Shabuot.

- The prohibition of weddings and other sensual pleasures during the 49 days begins after the Bar Kochba rebellion in 132-135 CE (AD) (to observe the tragedy of a plague that befell 12,000 students of Rabbi Akiba.) This would therefore not be an accurate historical statement. Chief Rabbi Hertz, in his commentary on the Pentateuch, does say, that this period of Sefirah (Counting) is one of "semi-mourning, because repeatedly dire calamities befell the Jewish people at this time." Traditionally, however, the mourning period starts with the tragedy of Rabbi Akiba's students.

p. 59 - Tiberius - "Those wretched Jews" better "those rebellious Jews" - important not to repeat canards that reinforce current anti-Semitic stereotypes.

p. 75 - "botch your suicide" - colloquialism?

PART II - THE TIDE

p. 122 - THE HOMESTEAD OF THE ESSENES - Caleb's empty place at the communal table of the Essenes. Important to keep in mind the strict rule of ritual purity of this sect "whose members were forbidden to have contact with outsiders." (Suggest reading of essay by Prof. David Flusser on "The Social Message from the Qumran," in book, "Jewish Society Through the Ages," Schocken Paperback.)

p. 124 - (143) Caleb and other Zealots enter and cut throats. I am concerned about possibility of gratuitous violence; possible association in audience's mind of "bloodthirsty Jews," even though these are Zealots.

p. 125 - Caleb enters leading Zealots in great numbers, crying "Israel." Would they cry "Israel" (suggesting modern state of Israel) or "Judea" or "Freedom?"

p. 137 - Gamaliel - "It would not be good if we found we were fighting against God." See page 2 of my notes: "you risk finding yourself at war with God."
-"Let them be whipped" - better "Let them be deterred by the punishment of the straps (or whipping), and then let them be gone."

- p. 138 - They hear the sound of flogging - this should not be dramatized to demonstrate how cruel the Jews were.
- p. 149 - Stephen and the mob - his mother is beaten away by the mob; this scene should be done with care not to feed popular anti-Jewish imagery of "the Jews" as a ruthless, bloodthirsty people. Beating of the mother would confirm such an image.
- p. 150 - Saul - "his old synagogue friend" - What's this supposed to mean, simply a "chaver? "
- p. 151 - Gamaliel - "That is a heresy. Jerusalem, the Temple, the holy priesthood - WE ACHIEVE THESE after years of wandering in the desert." I suggest the following:
"That is a heresy. Jerusalem, the Temple, the holy priesthood - they are signs of God's presence in our midst - these were achieved after years of wandering in the desert."
The present script suggests that these sancta are all simply man-made creations; my formulation suggests how Jews traditionally have viewed these holy signs.
- p. 152 - Saul "give them to the rough justice of the people." Suggests the Jews live by mob violence; Better, "And, with the most obdurate cases, let the people mete out justice to them for their transgressions."
- p. 153 - Caiaphas - "Let's call him the strong right arm of orthodoxy" - better arm of fanaticism.
- "entice further Roman oppression" - better "unleash"
- p. 154 - Parmenas - "the old tradition" - better, "the traditions of the fathers" or "the inheritance of the tradition."
- p. 161 - Saul - "the holy work of persecution" - suggests Judaism regards this as normative?
- p. 165 - The synagogue is crammed not only with Christian believers but with Jews hostile to the new faith" - suggest this be handled in way that does not imply that "the Jews" hate Christians.
- p. 166 - Paul - "Fear not, you faithless" - suggests Jews are without faith because they are not Christian

p. 174 - Valerius: "A woman and a man. My being Roman, your Jewishness".
Add: "I know others see this as irreconcilable difference. To me the differences are just like this rain - forgettable."

p. 205 - Paul - "Am I to skulk here because of a few Jews with daggers?"
Better, " a few zealots with daggers."

PART III - THE WIND

p. 222 - Paul - "An empire broken from within, the Jewish law torn by its contradictions" - better "the Jewish Law torn by the turmoil of sects and their varied interpretations". Paul was in fact torn at least as much by contradictions as he imputes to the Law he lived by and then condemned.

p. 241 - Peter's Dream - lobsters, suckling pigs, pitchers of milk...Eat, eat. Nothing is forbidden." I understand the need for the dream as indicating the breaking of the food taboo, but the choice of these foods will deeply bother traditional Jews, for these are among the most forbidden. I wonder whether the early Hebrew Christians actually departed from the Hebrew dietary laws in this way.

p. 243 - My dream broke the law. This voice - does every dream become the voice of God?

- Peter - UP; up...the law of my fathers taught me differently -- This is the classic contrast used polemically to aver the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. In fact, the law of the fathers did not teach hostility toward Gentiles. Read for example the section on "Gentiles" in the Rabbinic Anthology by Montefiore and Loewe (Schocken Books, p. 560ff.) For instance, the Mishna and Tosefta contain many instances of friendship between Jews and Gentiles and of their cooperation, e.g., proselytes and gentiles as co-heirs; greetings should be offered to gentiles in the interest of peace; heave-offerings or tithes or dedications to the Temple from Gentiles are valid (Terumah III, 9); Jewish and Gentile farmers in partnerships are mentioned in Talmud Peah II:9; Gentiles and Jews travel together on board ship, etc.

I realize that drama requires conflict and contrast but these stereotypic statements -- such as law versus grace, love versus justice - simplistically generate further anti-Jewish attitudes which have been repudiated by Vatican Council II and all major Christian bodies.

p. 242 - Peter - Which law? The law that's been persecuting us? Better those zealots of the law who have chosen to persecute us.

p. 247 - James - "You can't turn a man into a Jew." Sense of this is wrong as well as the fact. Does not a proselyte "turn into a Jew?" Were not all the early Christian disciples Jews? Were not the yirei adonai (the God fearers) who later became Jews originally gentiles?

p. 248 - James - "the old law" - more polemical disparagement. Why not in "the Covenant and the Law".

- Peter- Stephen saw that new way began where the old ended; must the old end? This is more of the discarded displacement or substitution theory of the New Israel for the Old Israel. Read Prof. Paul van Buren or Prof. Krister Stendahl of Harvard. The best of contemporary Christian scholarship conceives of continuity not discontinuity between the olive tree and the branches grafted on to it. This form is a regression to pre-Vatican Council mentality.

p. 277 - A Street - Day - A couple of JEWS protest; they are notable, the one for A HUMP ON HIS BACK, THE OTHER FOR A BLACK PATCH ON HIS EYE - very colorful, but is it really necessary to single out the two Jews and present them as gargoyles, ugly human beings?

p. 283 - Caiaphas - avoiding talk about equality of Jew and gentile under the law of the Nazrenes... more of the false contrast? Ephesians 3 about breaking down the wall between Jew and gentile actually comes from a rabbinic teaching.

p. 285 -Herod Agrippa - "Oh, yes. The sacred eternal Jewish faith in the great unloving loving merciful vindictive father of the tribes." I can understand the use of this to characterize Herod's cynicism, but I worry about the impact these "unloving" images will have on the perception of Jews. They get battered both by the Romans and the Nazarenes.

p. 314 - Elder - "Under Roman law our faith is a religio licita, a lawful faith. Yours does not have that status.

AD IV "THE FIRE"

p. 328 - Caleb, "Repeat after me, 'I love this man'.

-see page 2 of these notes for comments on p. 14 wedding service.

p. 338 - Caleb - "The law was never meant to run forever." What law?
Roman law proscribing Jews? Jewish law?

p. 345 - Jerusalem - Day - A Hebrew song tells of the coming of Passover -
important to select proper Hebrew song for Passover. We should discuss.

p. 347 - The hunchback and the eye-patched one - Amos and Job. - The
gargoyles are back, being Jewishly nefarious or nefariously Jewish.
- Amos - "Taking Gentiles in to the Temple" - it should be noted that
there was a "Court of Gentiles" in the Temple.

p. 349 - the crowd shouts, "Kill him; blasphemmer...renegade..."
- Care should be taken not to suggest that this is another "Christ-killer"
mob; make-up and costumes could be important here.

p. 383 - Festus - "Yes, of course...I've nothing against Jewish women. Very
seductive, some of them. Good in bed. That's so, isn't it?
- is there another way of dealing with his lustfulness? This repeats a
street mythology of the seductive, dark-haired Rebecca who has all the
mysteries of sensuality locked in her Jewish parts. These references range
from the earlier "Jewish women who learn to read and write when they're
young" to their being different in bed.

p. 386 - Festus looks at the faces, some of them quietly bloodthirsty" -
- here too care should be taken not to make a hateful caricature of a
Jewish mob lusting for Christian blood.

p. 401 - Seneca - "I have books to write" better manuscripts, or studies

p. 406 - Nero - "Do, do they? They're also too rich" Better, "I hear
that a number of them have accumulated some wealth." Concern - the anti-
Semitic image of "rich Jews" or "all Jews are rich" should not get rein-
forcement.

p. 426 - Tigellinus - "She likes the Jews, dark-eyed, olive-skinned, full
of sexual knowledge and magic..." Isn't there enough of these sexual
innuendoes about Jews in the script.

p. 430 - Peter - "No. There are two faiths in Jerusalem. And they seem unable to live together." Better, "They are siblings in the family of God, and as often happens siblings have difficulty living together."

p. 487 - Valerius - "Now I can call you my brother according to a better law" better, "according to our Christian faith."



rpr

None - I could only find this first draft. It gives the idea, however.
Dick

PROPOSAL FOR PROMOTION OF A.D. TO RELIGIOUS PUBLICS

The aim is to promote A.D. in a freshly compelling way, one that builds upon and within the vast communications systems in the world of religion itself. What we have in mind has never been done to our knowledge.

Normally, the publicist sends set releases to the more respectable magazines. That used to work tolerably well when good religious films and TV programs were rare. Today, with religious materials appearing with greater frequency, the opposite course recommends itself. Instead of starting at our end with a generalized release, we propose to start at their end by tailoring material according to the needs, taste, theology and editorial policy of leading denominational ^{AT} regional organs.

That requires, of course, intimate knowledge of a fairly broad spectrum of magazines, newsletters, periodicals, audio-visuals and TV systems within religion. Twenty years of experience within and without these systems has given the American Values Institute the contacts and the theological perspectives to use these systems in mutually beneficial ways. In short, the AVI will get extra mileage out of the P&G budget by piggybacking on religious media already in place. The pay-off will come through major stories written by them and based upon specially prepared source material from us.



American
Values
Institute

Before describing the approach, we need to put our contribution in the context with NBC promotion. We have alerted Betty Hudson to our plans. Her services in corporate PR, however, are far down the road. Our conversations with Owen Comora have been more immediate. We've told Owen that we think of our work - to use a religious figure - as John the Baptist preparing the way for what he and Betty will do later through mailings, meetings, viewings, junkets and support operations in both secular and religious press. Owen has promised cooperation every step of the way. In fact, he said yesterday, that our preparation needs to get under way immediately, given the deadlines for major stories and activities.

The Method

We recommend a six point strategy. They are listed in priority order for budgetary purposes. To do all six we will need the full amount of \$165,000. Point one, the most critical, can be done for roughly \$80,000. (This is the only one we will illustrate fully.) These figures are the financial bookends around our program and each stands on its own. We offer them as a shopping list for your selection - one, some or all.

Point One - Religious Print Media. Church magazines offer the most direct route to clergy and lay viewers of TV. The variety and reach of these publications is staggering. Run your eyes over the following - chosen at random - whose readership exceeds 10 million:



A.D. (Presbyterian, UCC)	265,000
Christian Herald	280,000
Christianity Today	185,000
Moody Monthly	300,000
The Episcopalian	285,000
The Lutheran (LCA)	570,000
Lutheran Witness (Missouri)	450,000
Lutheran Standard (ALC)	577,000
Texas Methodist Reporter	504,000
The Layman (UPC)	450,000
Ensign (Mormon)	460,000
Columbia (Knights of Col.)	1,300,000
Long Island Catholic	150,000
Maryknoll	1,000,000
Catholic Digest	630,000
Home Life (So. Baptist)	800,000

Our task is to categorize these and others in terms of theology, ethics, social activism, editorial policy and readership. The story we want to plant in Christianity Today with its evangelical tone will not be the same as the one crafted for Christian Century with its liberal tone. The way A.D. will approach the "first Pope" must be interpreted differently to readers of the Catholic Digest and to readers of The Southern Baptist Home Life.

A luncheon with the editor of the Daily Word (circulation 2.1 million) will take a different course from meetings with editors of Lutheran and Mormon journals, to say nothing of sensitive relationships with the Jehovah's Witnesses who edit the redouble Awake (circulation 8.2 million). On the latter, Richard Gilbert has been quoted approvingly by Witnesses as the result of a series of Presbyterian articles which depicted the shameful period of Witnesses' persecutions. This doesn't by any means guarantee mention in that paper but the attempt will surely be made.

The readers of the top 100 religious magazines have two things in common: they are vitally concerned with the period addressed in A.D.; they are TV viewers. That will get us in the door; that and personal relationships. As far as we know, all of the major editors were pleased with Jesus of Nazareth. La Bella is a plus. But the pitfalls abound. Even the name Anno Domini will offend some Jews. Protestants and Catholics will come at the person of Peter from opposite polls. And Protestants are split 203 ways to Sunday on the historicity of the events in ACTS.

Our job, then, is to woo and win, reassure and pique the curiosity. Obviously, the integrity and scholarship of the film itself must be impeccable.

A final word on the impact of these media. Secular publicists always get a shock when they see the space charges for ads in some of the leading religious journals. \$2,000 per page is standard. Does anyone in the secular world pay these prices? Yes, book publishers, for one. Those who know the market, however, prize a review above all listings and for that reason often accompany a review request with a small ad. We might consider similar strategies if the budget permits.

Of one thing we can be sure. A two page spread with pictures is worth all the time and effort we can give it.



Point Two. Ecumenical agencies (cooperative groups of different religious bodies) on state/regional, and local levels, all have publications going to local clergy and churches. But, most importantly, they offer us the only practical way to get actual material into local churches. Our scheme would pay them for local bulk mailings to the churches in their area. In this way we could deliver a poster, copy for parish bulletins and news letters, and a cheap promo piece for redistribution to every member. There are in the neighborhood of 246 of these agencies.

Point Three. In addition to editors who guard the gates to denominational publications, professional religious education and curriculum specialists control access to more than 33 million church school students - children, young people and adults. These religious educators could open their educational materials and their publications to us - if we reach them soon enough.

Point Four. We will cut the goods to fit the cloth. That means tailoring the approach to national religious leaders on the basis of theology and government. Personal meetings with the hierarchy, and plying will be the occasion for information and a brochure. Obviously, their backing will pay off throughout the entire communications system.



Point Five. Women have parallel organizational structures, on both a denominational and ecumenical basis. Millions of church women attend meetings every month, and are bombarded with news, information and other material of special interest to them. We propose to try to open up this system for the TV series. Given enough time and money, it might be possible to tie in the series to their programmatic plans for 1984.

Point Six: Not to be overlooked in our effort to turn on the largest religious audience possible - are the national cooperative agencies (some with important local constituencies), all with publications.

A number of independent or ecumenical organizations have channels of communication, to local clergy or directly to churches:

National Council of Churches
National Association of Evangelicals
Religious Public Relations Council
United Ministries in Education
National Religious Broadcasters
YMCA/YWCA

We will see their leaders personally and include them in releases, press conferences, previews.

There are more exotic things which could be added to the mix, some obvious (ads in religious publications) and some not, (La Bella on PTL, 700 Club and Hour of Power, religious television shows.), video cassette excerpts, portable exhibits for annual and special meetings and the like. More if desired.



Credentials

Even if you have worked the American religious world for a number of years, you find it difficult to cope with its immensity and variety.

Consider the sheer immensity with all its opportunities for publicity: According to Gallup, 80 millions of us can be found at worship once a week. Millions more report having attended church in the past month. 134 million Americans move within the orbit of organized religion in 218 different bodies collecting 14 billion per year, singing in choirs in greater number than engage in any musical activity during the week, gathering into 336,000 congregations with 170,000 Sunday schools, publishing tons of educational material and paying the salaries of 400,000 clergy. For the film publicist, this is a huge canvass upon which to paint.

But consider the variety with all its pitfalls. The mind finds it hard to accustom itself to the bewildering variety where Jews hold to the absolute oneness of God, where Christians believe in a Triune God and millions of other religionists make no room for a personal God at all. Religion USA is a contentious place where the religious activist is amazed at the scholar's ivory tower, where the liberal looks upon the Pentacostal as a fanatic and the latter returns the the compliment by regarding all intellectuals as hopeless elitists - in short, America is a curious land in which ones' delight is anothers distaste and even those who teach religion regard those who practice it as degraded, blind or perverted. And the quick



sand of old oriental faiths and new California fads, and the secular observer becomes pardonably paranoid.

Given both opportunities and pitfalls, religion must be approached selectively and sensitively. The American Values Institute is run by two partners who retains stringers in religion and research to serve various clients (see list below). Most of our work involves public relations, production of religious material for denominational clients, mounting of seminars and conferences, work with public interest groups beyond religion, and the evaluation of scripts for network use.

Richard Gilbert handles most of the conferences as well as the evaluation of scripts for NBC TV.

Charles Brackbill does the public relations and religious/secular production. Since Mr. Brackbill will be the account executive for this proposed project, a word about him is in order.

As the Music Man observed, you've got to know the territory. After working his way to the top of the radio-TV division of The United Presbyterian Church, Brackbill was selected by The National Endowment for the Humanities to build a coalition of all the religious communities in America for the Bicentennial Celebration. During the three year grant, he fashioned a communications program in values which was supported by hierarchies of Catholic and Protestant bodies (mainstream Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, etc.)

and others outside this orbit, namely Mormons, Southern Baptists, Bhuddists, Islamics, Pentacostals, charismatics and Black Protestants. This was the first time so many branches of the religious tree had ever cooperated. The American Values Institute, founded 9 years ago, has built upon these relationships.

In recent years we have

- * Planned and managed 6 national conferences for NBC (voluntary organizations and valuing), and ABC (American Values, American Issues). --
 - * Organized and managed the American Issues Forum with more than 2,000 local discussion groups for a Bicentennial project, funded by National Endowment for the Humanities.
 - * Developed media strategy for Basic Educational Opportunity Grants program of HEW. Wrote, produced and marketed radio and television spots.
 - * Consulted on scripts for television programs and films, including
 - The Nativity, ABC-TV
 - The Day Christ Died, CBS-TV
 - and for NBC-TV
 - Jesus of Nazareth
 - Mary and Joseph
 - Great Heros of the Bible
 - Saturday Night Life
 - Sophisticated Gents
 - Executioner's Song
 - Shogun
 - Holocaust
 - Wounded Knee
 - When Johny Comes Marching Home
 - Remembrance of Love
- ...and others

- * Published a book on religion, business and ethics.
- * Lectured at Princeton Seminary, where Mr. Gilbert is an Adjunct Professor.
- * Written and produced radio and television spots, and the television special The Federal Budget Revue, "the six hundred billion dollar misunderstanding" with Stan Freberg.

1982 Clients

NBC-TV, Broadcast Standards

Institute for Applied Economics, values seminars and conferences, script preparation, film production.

ABC-TV, Broadcast Standards and Practices and ABC Entertainment, seminar/conference at Palm Springs on American Issues.

Lutheran Church in America, Department Press, Radio and Television, research, writing, production and marketing TV spots and local groups dealing with divorce and single parents.

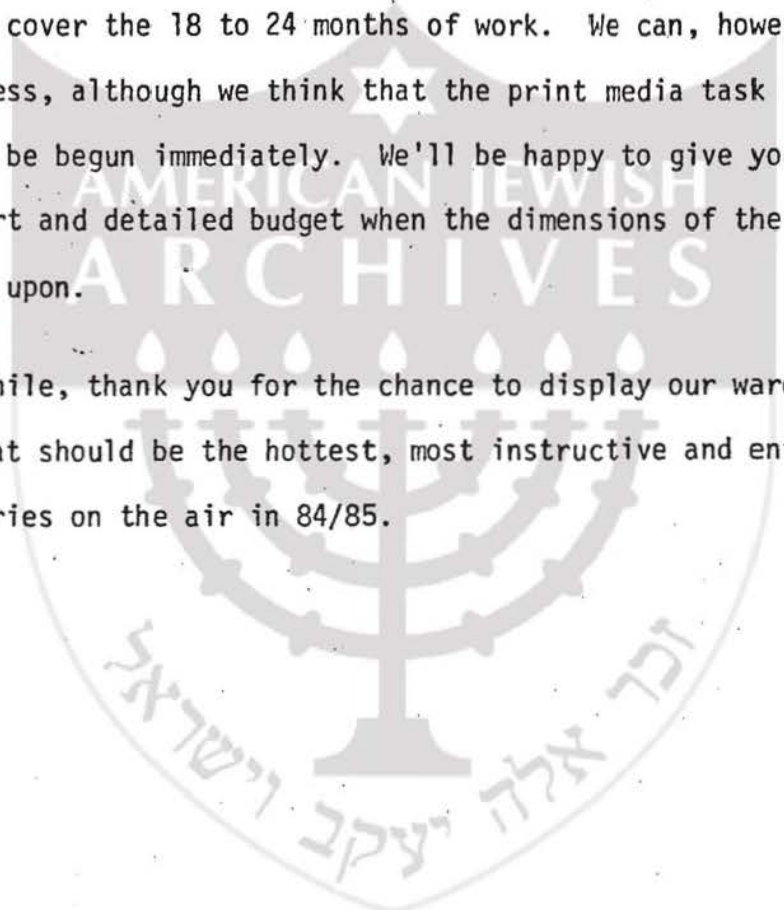
People for the American Way, and Norman Lear, consultation, research, position papers, and a conference with religious leaders.

Note: NBC, ABC, and Institute Applied Economics have been clients for 5 or more years.

Scope of the Project

The purpose of this paper is to prepare the way for a meeting in Cincinnati with the public relations staff. The scope of the project and the budget will depend upon decisions that come out of those discussions. We would like to start our end of things as early in January as possible and continue through the air date. As suggested above, the full six point program can be brought in for \$165,000. That would cover the 18 to 24 months of work. We can, however, do less for less, although we think that the print media task is primary and should be begun immediately. We'll be happy to give you a "pert" chart and detailed budget when the dimensions of the job are agreed upon.

Meanwhile, thank you for the chance to display our wares and join in what should be the hottest, most instructive and entertaining series on the air in 84/85.



May 9, 1983

Dear Vincenzo,

It was wonderful having luncheon with you last week.

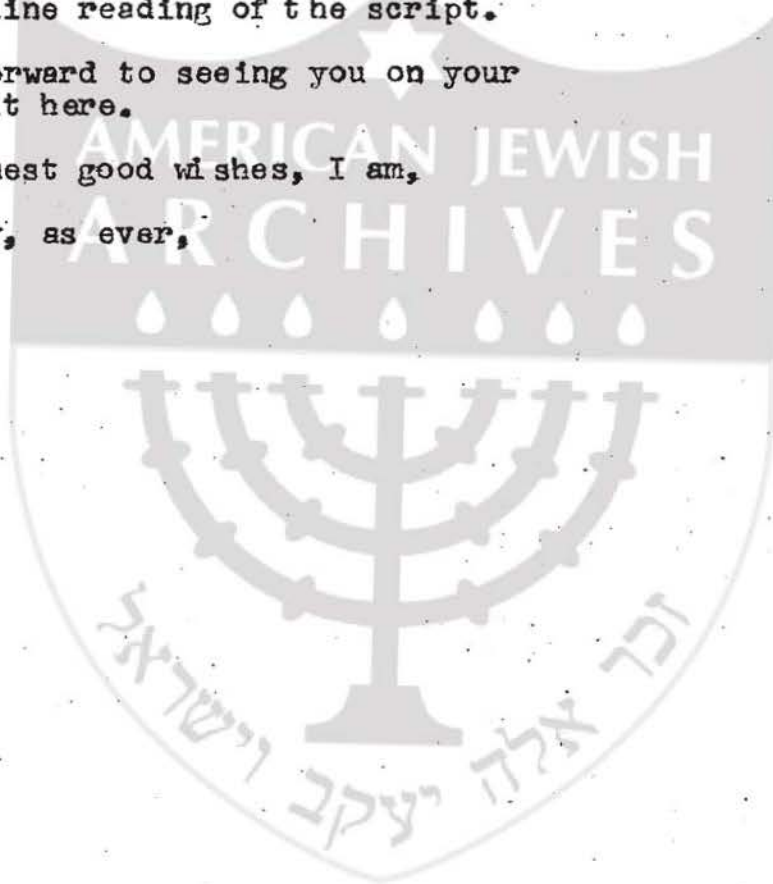
I think the AD script is extraordinarily powerful and interesting.

Enclosed please find my reactions to line-by-line reading of the script.

I look forward to seeing you on your next visit here.

With warmest good wishes, I am,

Cordially, as ever,



Aug. 30, 1983

Ms. Lynn Risdon
Production Coordinator
International Films
9665 Wilshire Blvd.
Beverly Hills, Cal. 90212

Dear Ms. Risdon,

Thank you for your letter about the availability of the research volumes on "The Jewish People in the First Century."

First, I did give copies of the first two volumes to Vincenzo Labella. Have you seen those?

Then, I believe only four volumes have been published thus far. The American publisher is Portess Press in Philadelphia. The editor of that press is Dr. Norman Hjalrn. He told me recently that he went to Amsterdam to discuss the publication of other volumes in that series.

You may wish to write or telephone him and ask if he can send you additional volumes. Please let me know how that turns out and I'll try to be of further help to you.

Sincerely,

cc: Dr. George Jensen

New address: 45 East 89 St. (18F),
New York, N.Y. 10128
212-831-2952

September 2, 1984

Mr. Michael D'Addio
International Film Productions
9665 Wilshire Blvd. (Suite 340)
Beverly Hills, California 90212

Dear Michael,

Georgette and I were delighted to meet you. We are both deeply grateful for your thoughtfulness and consideration which made our trip to Los Angeles so pleasant.

I have begun transcribing my notes on the rough-cut film of A.D. that we viewed last Monday. I hope to be able to send these to Vincenzo and you by the end of the coming week.

In keeping with your suggestion, I am enclosing receipts of the expenses I incurred in coming to Los Angeles for the screening:

Air ticket: \$928
Le Parc
Hotel: \$553.22
Taxis: \$ 75 (including tips).

I would want to be refunded just for the room and meals; the telephone bills and other costs are my responsibility.

Since I will be traveling a good bit, I would appreciate your having the check sent to my home: 45 East 89 St. (18 F), New York, N.Y. 10128.

Georgette and I hope that when Vincenzo and you are visiting New York that you will come to our home. We'd love to reciprocate your kindnesses.

INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTIONS

VINCENZO LABELLA — Producer

MOSES, THE LAWGIVER — 1975
JESUS OF NAZARETH — 1978
MARCO POLO — 1982
A.D. — 1983

August 16, 1983

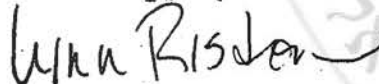
Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
165 East 56th Street
Fifth Floor
New York, New York 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

I am writing to inquire if you can be of any assistance to me in locating a set of books entitled "The Jewish People in the First Century" (1974 edition, Van Gorcum Publishers, Assen, Holland). I have tried several bookfinding companies and have contacted the publisher, who informed me that it was out of print. Would you know of any other avenues I could follow in locating these volumes?

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lynn Risdon
Production Coordinator

9665 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 340
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90212
(213) 859-1960
TELEX: 194561 LSA

VINCENZO LABELLA

120 SOUTH WARNER ROAD
KING OF PRUSSIA
PENNSYLVANIA 19406
(215) 687-3990

GEORGE JENSEN

ONE DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017
(212) 940-8224
TELECOPIER (212) 755-0921
CABLE: "HARBARKOG NY"
TELEX: 12-7231

MICHAEL COLLYER, ESQ.

VIALE MEDAGLIE D'ORO 141
ROME, ITALY 00136
349-6993
CABLE: "MONDAL I"
TELEX: 680 383

MARIO MARIANI

on AJC stationery

PERSONAL

Mr. Vincenzo Labella
International Film Productions
9665 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 340
Beverly Hills, California 90212

My Dear Vincenzo,

I am deeply sorry that I missed seeing you during my visit last week to Los Angeles. From my conversations with Michael D'Addio, I understand completely the importance of your visit to Dallas. I sincerely hope that everything worked out to your satisfaction.

Enclosed please find my memorandum containing my responses to the 7 hours of A.D. that I was able to view with Dick Gilbert, Michael and Cathy.

As you can see, I am enormously impressed and grateful for the magnificence of your achievement. I am convinced that you have produced another classic in film art. My reasons for that considered judgment are contained in the enclosed memo. I am now eager to view the remaining three or four hours of film.

It is extremely important, ~~that~~ I believe, that the publicity and study guides be handled with extreme sensitivity for the broad range of audiences that will be seeing the film. I am prepared to consult with whoever will be preparing the publicity and the study guides to help in the formulations of concepts and language. That can help anticipate many problems.

I look forward to your comments on the enclosed memorandum.

With warmest personal good wishes, I am,

Cordially, as ever,

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum

cc: The Rev. Richard Gilbert
Michael D'Addio

INTERNATIONAL FILM PRODUCTIONS

VINCENZO LABELLA — Producer

MOSES, THE LAWGIVER — 1975
JESUS OF NAZARETH — 1978
MARCO POLO — 1982
A.D. — 1983

September 14, 1984

Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum
45 E. 89th Street
Apartment 18F
New York, New York 10128

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum,

Enclosed please find Check No. 328 in the amount of \$1,448.13, representing reimbursement for the expenses you incurred during your trip to Los Angeles August 25th through 28th:

\$ 925.00	air fare
445.13	room/meals
75.00	taxis
<hr/>	
\$ 1,448.13	

Thank you.

Regards,

Lynn Risdon

Lynn Risdon
Production Coordinator

:lr
Enclosure

9665 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 340
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90212
(213) 859-1960
TELEX: 292518 IFP UR

VINCENZO LABELLA

120 SOUTH WARNER ROAD
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(212) 940-8224
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CABLE: "HARBARKOG NY"
TELEX: 12-7231

MICHAEL COLLYER, ESQ.

VIALE MEDAGLIE D'ORO 141
ROME, ITALY 00136
349-6993
CABLE: "MONDAL I"
TELEX: 680 383

MARIO MARIANI

December 2, 1984

Mr. Vincenzo Labella
A.D. Productions
Compact Video Basement
2901 West Alameda
Burbank, Calif. 91505

My Dear Vincenzo,

I was delighted to hear from Dick Gilbert and Ralph Daniels of the enthusiastic response of the NBC people to A.D. It validates my own reactions and surely must make you and your colleagues feel wonderful about your great achievement.

I have been working with Dick on preparing the one-hour sampler, and we are now inviting some select religious leaders to see it and comment on it for publicity purposes.

I write you now for two purposes:

(1) As you will see from the enclosed, UNESCO has voted to observe the 850th anniversary of Maimonides in 1985. If I can help you further with that project, please let me know.

2) If it is appropriate, I would welcome a credit line on A.D. as "script consultant" or something like that. I was given that on NBC's "Holocaust" production and it was helpful to me in my work.

I look forward to seeing you shortly. In the meantime, my warmest wishes for a Blessed Christmas to you and your family!

Cordially,

NBC

National Broadcasting Company, Inc.

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10112 212-664-3857

M. S. Rukeyser, Jr.
Executive Vice President
Corporate Communications

February 21, 1985

Dr. Marc H. Tanenbaum
45 East 89 Street
Apartment 18F
New York, New York 10028

Dear Marc:

If it takes this long for NBC to draw checks to pay its bills, it's a miracle that anyone still wants to do business with us. Please accept my apologies for the unconscionable delay in reimbursing you for your press tour expenses. I feel doubly bad about all this because, as you know, I took all the bows for having the foresight to insist on your presence.

You were simply wonderful in California, and I hope we will continue to be able to draw on your talent and intellect forever.

Hope to see you soon.

Warmest regards,

Buz

cc: Ralph Daniels

INTERNATIONAL
FILM PRODUCTIONS

VINCENZO LABELLA — Producer

MOSES, THE LAWGIVER — 1975
JESUS OF NAZARETH — 1978
MARCO POLO — 1982
A.D. — 1983

Los Angeles
March 16
1983

Rabbi Mark Tannenbaum
New York.

Dear Mark: I am sending you the "A.D." scripts for your cordial and particularly valuable examination. I have put a lot of love in them, and I believe that certain fundamental historical truths have been either restored or adequately underscored. The very few readers who have had access to the scripts (all of them within the family of our production team) have been impressed with the unequivocal affirmation of the common heritage which binds Jews and Christians above and beyond any division generated in time. A.D. is the story of the confrontation between the power of Rome and the Judeo-Christian revolution. Rome, with its grandeur but also with its despair and vices and violence, emerges as the loser.

9665 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SUITE 340
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA 90212
(213) 859-1960
TELECOPIER (213) 278-4631
CABLE: "HARBARKOG BVHL"
TELEX: 698 656

VINCENZO LABELLA

120 SOUTH WARNER ROAD
KING OF PRUSSIA
PENNSYLVANIA 19406
(215) 687-3990

GEORGE JENSEN

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MICHAEL COLLYER, ESQ.

VIALE MEDAGLIE D'ORO 141
ROME, ITALY 00136
349-6993
CABLE: "MONDAL I"
TELEX: 680 383

MARIO MARIANI

The winners are the oppressed - Jews and Christians - who share a purity of ideals and a common patrimony of love, certainly stronger than any doctrinal conflict.

Our two protagonists - a Roman by the name of Valerius - and a Jew - called Caleb - are the champions of this victory; Valerius who becomes a Christian and Caleb who - like his sister Sarah - remains faithful to his native religion.

I hope you will enjoy this laborious reading which is governed by the agreement that you and I have established since the time of my "Jesus of Nazareth" and that I would like to perfect and update, even by telephone, if you are kind enough to call me at your convenience.

I will then provide immediately to remit to you the rightful compensation. My gratitude, deep and everlasting, supersedes everything. Shalom, Shalom from
Vincenzo