



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 78, Folder 13, "Anno Domini" TV series, 1983-1985.

To The Office of
Dr. Mark Tannenbaum
AJC
156 E. 55th Street
NY NY 10022

Subject:
NBC Dr. Tannenbaum
30 Million Dollars AD TV
Mini Series Apologia
Carolsches
or
Calohsches?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Einen suessen Pessach I offer you and all.

It's a foregone conclusion that Rabbi Dr. Tannenbaum will go into
the Annals of Jewish History prominently.

Kinder und Narren sprechen die Wahrheit; it's easy to be a gadfly
and morning Morning quarterback as from the lower level of Society
Critique is frowned upon by the Establishments, as it appears.

The TV Winds of War and Abba Eban Jewish Civilization TV series
not only were impressive but still linger on in one's Soul and
Mind.

AD shows the sponsor's aim to propagandize and convince and
to lessen prejudices against us Jews and like a Borscht Belt
socalled Jewish Comedian damns with faint praise.

It appears that the almost antisemitic utterances by the Romans
are aimed at the Gentile audience to demonstrate fairness and
to make Jewish History and Jewish qualities more plausible.

For us it was incoherent with a blurred "message" and as they say
in the Garment Center "Will it sell" Will it change thoughts and matters.

I think if part of the 30 Million budget had been allotted to the
African Famine (not only the Falashas) and some Mother Jewish
Theresia and Jewish Albett Schweizer would have been found and
with the Propaganda Skill of the Catholic Church made Heroes
and Heroines out of any fictional but desirable Jew and Jewess

and with the power of NBC Communications and Writers would or will tell the outside World, even it violates the Jewish Tenets not to boast about one's Zedokkah, how American Jewry is concerned not only with Dialogue with prominent Christians but also have a genuine feeling and concern about the Masses Jewish and Non Jewish.

In my own background already in 1920 smart, religious, intelligent Females (Women) Members of our Meschpocheh went to Eretz Yisroel and in the Tradition of Chayim Trumpeldoor and Vladimir Jabotinski bent their backs to make the Soil bear fruits and learned how to shoot a rifle straight (not an Arab Skill) and like Pioneer American Women integrated with their menfolk and help built Kibbutzim.

Some of these Jewish German Women got maimed and killed in open warfare with the Arabsm goated by the Notorious Grand Mufti Hitler Buddy. Later on they planted trees for them and like always they were and are the unsung unknown Soldiers.

If one can believe books, the Massadah Heroines, the Jewish Women in German who jumped with their Children at Speyer to their instant death during the Crusades instead to face the sword or the book of the Fundamentalists.

There were Heroines in the Warsaw Ghettos.

Perhaps it is not in the Jewish Religion but the Bible is full of valarous (and evil Women) who had guts and convictions and were perhaps less hedonistic as their modern American, French English Sisters, save the eternal Jewish Hausfrau perpetuating (what the French and Italians practice too) Motherhood and Apple Pie.

The 30 Million as Propaganda were a Lemon, but commercially perhaps successful for those prurient sensation seekers to be found at the 2 bit 42nd Street Mafia Machines.

The set the clothing the Scenery remarkable a murky view of Roman History (who cares at the Neighborhood Bar)

A plot lacking coherence cameos of famous Performers.

Like a Chinese Chop Sue Meal it left no substance and did not even entertain or instruct the AD TV series in contrast to the Winds of War and Abba Eban Jewish History Series, though slanted gave even handed room for thinking and feeling and was less theatrical and the historic sites somehow more convincing in the context of the plot.

Two Jewish American brilliant Writer Lucy S. Davidowicz and Hanna Arendt classic books laying open "Dem inneren Schweinehund" among Jews and Non Jews and historic insight like Hanna's Exceptional Jews and the perennial Jewish Elitist Establishment gave me relief from the frustration and discomfort and relaxation.

Instead of a bottle of the World Jewish Congress' post bottleleg day booze. President Zillionaire from Canada. Scion.

One has to be careful not to sound and to be stamped as a Jewish Antisemit, which am not, on the contrary am a proud Jew by virtue of family background alone.

In Russia and Poland Jews did the dirty work for the Pans and were middlemen for the alcoholic Peasant of the European East.

In Turkey once Jew became rich in the White Slavery Trade.

And in Pax Romana Jews were Slave traders though not as important as Non Jews. Just as in Bedford Stuyvesant and Harlem most of the huge Liquor Store were Jewish owned and catered to the Blacks making enemies right and left and then pledge megabucks at a Jewish Appeal Dinner.

Of course the non Jews were worse.

Prodhorn's Eigentum ist Diebstahl laissez faire Manchesterism fine. Of course Once Jews needed big money for Bribes and Ransom of Jewish Captives and Slaves

Dr. Tannenbaum seems to fulfill an Historic Mission here.
God Incl and Godspeed to Him.
Yet and Still the AD Ch.4 TV Mini Series (30 Million cost,al legedly)
I wonder what the professionals will say and how it will sell in the Bars and
Streets of Middle America.

AS to New York' reaction one may conjecture was AD Carosches or Chaloshes?
Sincerely, Charlie Adler, April 5,85

Another one of Hollywood Cecil de Mille grandiose tendentious
 for everybody's taste the Highbrows prurience and the averga
 guy's love of castomes, scenery and instant History like
 a Mac Donald 1 Minute just wait for it Chesse Burger.

Though any horny and frustrated sexual fantasy maniac for 2 bits
 on 42n Street Mafia Machines Row for 2 bits could have seen
 KKK-Nazi "Rassenschande white Supremacy Dig instead.
 Amazing the Heil Hitler Gruss of outstrected Arm and the
 Roman Legion Standard verbatim copied by Hitler for his SA
 Rednecks. It nauseated me to see in Hitler's Nazism the
 epitome of Pax Romana; thogh the old Germanen beat the shit out
 of the Romans and as you know Swiss and German (: la Hessians in
 the American Revolution) were hired Soldier Mercenaries, as Tacitus
 dubbed the Germans of his days "as kriegslustig" as valiant Fighters
 in War. That's why Hitler within 6 years could build up the deadliest
 Fighting Force the World up to then had ever seen.

O yes the Germans are brave and courageous Fighters; though they
 are possessed by Anxieties and Fear and Fear breads Aggression
 just as Alochol gives a suerficial high. And German Jew Hatred
 (they by far not a German Monopoly) a self deceptive Ecuse
 for their shortcomings

According to the Post Nazi Literature the Nazis and the Germans
 use Jew Hatred as a selling point in social,econmic and intellectu
 competitions.

The Pen is still mightier than the Sword; President Nixon just
 in the NY Post Series says "Wars start in the M,nd".....

The Prophets of old and a Worl Religion was centered about Jewish
 shortcomings as if they are any better.

For all the Tea in China "Ich bin ein Jude" to paraphrase

American Values Institute

1537 Deerpath, Mountainside, N.J. 07092

Dec. 6, 1983

Dear Bruce:

Review

1. Major/basic info mailing grinding through final stages of preparation for mailing to church leaders on all levels. Material in-closed.*
2. Brochure for meeting handouts and some mailings ready and enclosed.*
3. Presentations of A.D. were made at NABS-WACC (North American Broadcast Section, World Association of Christian Communications). I met personally with the denominational and ecumenical leaders in communications as listed:

Wisconsin/Milwaukee
Southern Babtist Convention
San Francisco/Northern Calif.
Atlanta/ Georgia Methodist
Pittsburgh/ Western Penn.
Los Angeles/ So. Calif.
Mennonite Broadcasters
Albuquerque
Oklahoma
North West Ohio
Southern Presbyterian
Philadelphia
Seattle/Washington State
Portlant OR
Detroit
Lutheran Church in America
United Church of Christ
National Council of Churches
United Methodist Church
The Episcopal Church
American Lutheran Church
Chicago
Religious Public Relations Council
Presbyterian Appalachian Council

Analysis: This is an important group of people, and we get one more crack at them next December. At this meeting, however, they heard of A.D for the first time, and I was preparing the ground work for mailings and further meetings. This was the time to assess the level of their interest and

* NEXT MAIL

willingness to cooperate in giving A.D. a big push in their churches, organizations or markets.

I was honored publically as one of the founders of this group over 12 years ago, and it gave me some purchase for A.D. with newer members.

Major drawback- no preview.

4. TV Guide story on Dick Gilbert interviews have begun. I gather that it's a drawn out process. Will take your advice and try to get him with Jack Wishard to help establish A.D. connection.

Preview

1. December-January follow up with WACC contacts.
2. Aiding and abetting and expediting CBN special projects producer, Scott Hatch, coverage on location. Involves contact with Shell Stuart and CBN. Hatch needs pick up VTR crew. I'll see if he can work with half inch and transfer when he gets back.

If this works, I think it can pave the way for preview pix and interviews closer to airtime.

3. Decisions and work on previews for various types of leaders. Our thinking now:
 - (1) "Giants" major church/religious figures
 - (2) Educators-in New York, dates to be negotiated with Dave Ng (National Council Churches, Education) and Henry Herx, Catholic Coordinator for Information & Education Services). May attach to an existing meeting scheduled.
 - (3) Communicators- discussing Feb.15 or 16 in connection with a major meeting when many (including some from Florida meeting) will be in New York.
 - (4) Editors- either special invitations to New York event, or attached to scheduled meeting.
 - (5) Regional and local leaders-ecumenical and denominational. We are going to explore NBC feed to O&O's-we would produce local attendance.

We may be able to do same kind of thing with non-O&O major markets thru affiliates. A varriation: travel to them.

4. Major denominational and inter-denominational meetings. These annual events offer us an opportunity to show part of A.D. and to provide material.

The range of opportunity is from being part of their agenda, (difficult), to scheduled showings in the exhibits and sideshows that go on at these meetings. Some are more important than others. Here are a few we are investigating now:

- * Church Women United- Ecumenical Assembly in Purdue, July. 2000 women leaders last year-shooting for 5000 this year they say. (Still a chance to pitch them for agenda preview and presentation.)
- * NRB-National Religious Broadcasters--the evangelicals who meet in January in Washington. (They always have the President, etc.)
- * National Council of Churches--two General Board meetings in 1985.
- * Various denominations: Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Southern Baptist, etc.

Conclusion: as previously mentioned, having some kind of completed scenes or section from the film is pretty essential to these plans. If this were not a series dealing directly with religious history and personalities, it would not be as crucial.

As of this writing Michael D'Addio is going to try to get at least a cassette for private screenings with a few individuals who are critical door-keepers.

Dick says that he did not hear Vincenzo say anything about not providing a piece of religious preview material. Depending on what D'Addio comes back with, we may have to try again with Labella. Dick is supposed to go there in late January, and if nothing else, maybe he can personally push it.

Here endeth the report.

CB



**American
Values
Institute**

March 1985

Jaroslav Pelikan -

Mrs. Jan Egan - Pawlikowski

File

July 20, 1983

1537 Deerpath, Mountainside, N.J. 07092

A.D. RELIGIOUS PROMOTION PLAN

This statement embodies all the elements previously discussed. There are three goals behind this plan:

1. To help promote a large audience.
2. To concentrate program information in the six months leading to air time.
3. To get as much information as possible directly to the homes of the religious audience.

Our great advantage is that we will give information from a source religious adherents trust. To accomplish these goals we will use the existing communications systems in the world of religion.

The diagram shows how various parts of these systems are related and how they ultimately reach to the minister/priest/rabbi, to local religious schools and congregations.

We have selected the following for priority treatment:

1. 100 religious periodicals published nationally-official denominational magazines and independent publications, with circulation over 10 million.
2. 400 national and regional religious education publications-journals, popular magazines, teacher materials, student workbooks.
3. 200 women's organizations- each with regional and local groups and newsletters. (There are 2000 local Church Women United groups alone.)
4. 150 regional and local ecumenical organizations, all with publications and the ability to bulk deliver material to congregations.
5. 800 to 1000 regional and local ecclesiastical units of national religious bodies, all with publications, and many mailing directly to individuals.

6. Media/communications/public relations offices of major religious groups. (Example: 201 Roman Catholic diocesan Directors of communication; 800 members of the Religious Public Relations Council; 1000 "independent" National Religious Broadcasters.)
7. 500 members of North American Broadcast Section of the World Association of Christian Communications, with news letter and annual meeting.
8. 50 major national religious leaders, elected and staff heads of religious bodies and agencies, such as National Council of Churches, Religion in American Life, the "Y's" and denominations.

The following activities are planned:

1. Coordination of all plans with NBC and ICPR
2. Programming of data bank with aprox. 5600 organizations, individuals and publications.
3. Recruitment of blue ribbon Advisory Committee of well known leaders from three faiths, evangelicals and educators, who will lend authority and door-opening to the project, and who will provide endorsements.
4. Development of basic print piece to set the tone of our pr and with key facts and descriptions.
5. Meetings to enlist help and open channels with key
 - editors
 - national leaders
 - religious education experts
 - women's organizations
 - pr and media people
6. Phone and mail contacts to enlist cooperation and open publicity channels with
 - major ecclesiastical regional and local offices
 - all regional and local ecumenical agencies
 - religious broadcasters
7. Negotiate agenda time and prepare presentations for major annual meetings (NRB, WACC, RPRC,denoms).

*JAW.
PREVIEW*

"PREU 12.5"

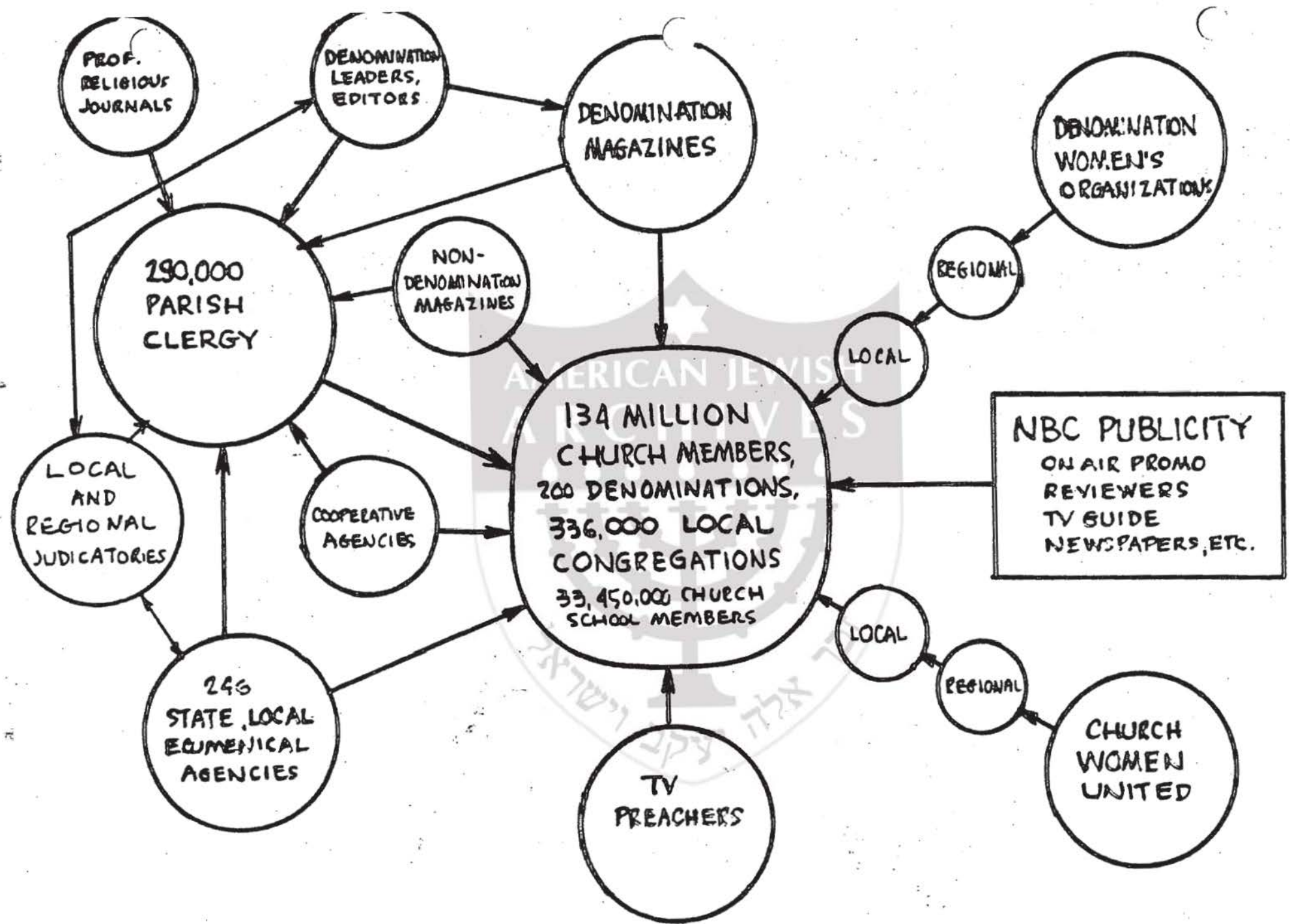
8. Prepare research design to measure reach and effectiveness of overall religious promotion.
9. Negotiate for major Readers Digest story featuring Bruce Metzger, dean of New Testament biblical scholars from Princeton, consultant to AD and editor of new Readers Digest edition of the Bible.
10. Negotiate for a major TV Guide story of scholar-advisors on AD.
11. Negotiate for N.Y.Times religious feature with Ken Briggs.
12. Negotiate Time, Newsweek religious features (Easter= April 7, 1985)
13. Negotiate 30" feature (cassette) with the four scholars and Gilbert, on location, with footage from AD, for use in promotion meetings and religious TV shows.
14. Prepare 11x17 poster for local congregations, distributed through local ecumenical and church units. Reverse side will carry specific information for local pick up in parish newsletters, church bulletins, and pulpit announcements. Space on poster side for local ID and air time.
15. Negotiate travel to location of several major religious broadcasters, such as Pat Robinson (700 Club), Jim Bakker (PTL Club), and others. They might provide own crews. Result could be extensive video coverage in the evangelical communities.
16. Negotiate for placement of AD personalities on Robert Schuler's Hour of Power.
17. A general introductory story, 3 page release to
 - 500 national religious publications
 - 200 national women's organizations publications
 - 150 regional and local ecumenical publications
 - 1000 regional and local ecclesiastical unit papers

Key publications would be supplied with pictures.

Note: All releases will be offered in two versions. One written from perspective of conservative-evangelical Christians, the other from "main-stream" Protestant-Catholic. Certain stories and features may be tailored to Jewish publications.

18. Minimum of six monthly releases (more if experience dictates), concentrated in period leading to air time.

19. Develop special media-oriented stories to religious radio-TV communicators, with possible use of stills and VCR clips.
20. Work with religious education publications for inclusion of AD material in curriculum materials. This would be in addition to study guides prepared by NBC.
21. Promote features and cover stories in key, major religious publications through editorial contact. (Example: Jim Wall of Christian Century to do a piece by him or Martin Marty. Same emphasis, but different angle with Christianity Today.)
22. Negotiate for coverage (or flyer inclusion) in every-home mailing by local denominational judicatories. This significant multiplier could add 100,000 homes reached directly. (Example: Detroit Presbytery, 25,000 pieces; Synod of the Rockies, 40,000.)
23. Work with NBC to include key religious leaders and editors in special press and/or VIP briefings and previews.
24. Ten page feature with pictures, designed for major religious publications who cannot themselves cover the story on location. (Example: Norman Vincent Peale's Guidepost, and Knights of Columbus magazine with 1 million + circulation.)
25. Search for, and readiness to develop additional sources and outlets for promotion of the series. (an NBC religious special, using their resources, done cooperatively with the three faiths, and thus independently promoted by them.)
26. Use of stories in Of Special Interest, new NBC publication for religious leaders. Brackbill is the co-editor. Five issues are planned. That would give us access to eight.



A D

ANNO DOMINI

A MAJOR TWELVE HOUR TELEVISION EVENT

Presented by the Procter & Gamble Company on the NBC Television Network

Nov. 5, 1984

Dear Marc

There are several things which need your attention in connection with "A.D."

1. New York area preview of the tape we now have. Please confer with Dick about a date and the names you want invited.
2. Since my last release must be ready by Dec. 15, the preview will have to be soon--in order to collect some comments to use in the release.
3. I would also appreciate it very much if you would give me a list of Jewish editors and/or publications (nationwide) who should receive the final release. As per your suggestion, we have not been including these publications in previous releases, but we should in the last. It would be helpful to have these as soon as possible because of the time required to get them into the computer.

The Chicago preview went reasonably well. Of the several Jewish representatives present we got one negative and one very positive review. (The whole report is enclosed.)

Many thanks for your help.


Charles Brackbill

* 42 filled out response forms

35 "liked it"

4 "did not like it"

2 wrote in "somewhat" or "50/50"

1 did not check any choice *But commented* →

* The 4 who did not like it

Joy Clough, Media Coordinator, Chi. Archdiocese
"Perhaps it is lack of sequence, but I did not engage with the AD characters here. I liked the Jewish look of the major early Christian characters. I was uncomfortable with the changed (not elipses but changes) in Scripture lines. I have the feeling that there will be much panorama; how much substance? (12 hours in Holy Week seems overbearing scheduling --but I'm never able to see all of a miniseries.)

Dick Seimpson, ICUIS (don't know what this is)
"In trying to be a 'spectacular' film many of the religious events seemed trivialized to the status of soap opera scenes."

Garry Skinner, Executive Presbytery Chicago
"I felt the film dealt truthfully with the literal text and historcal record, but that does not, ~~make~~ in my opinion, make the film a valuable resource for conveying the truthfulness of the Xian message." ...AD will not reach any fresh way the unchurches-the unaffiliated-and it, in my opinion, reinforces an image of Xity that is anti-Semitic, bathrobe oriented. It also, in what I saw, does not deal with the Revelation of John."

Rabbi Norman Lewison, Director Commissions Jewish Life and Culture, International affairs and Israell, American Jewish Congress, Chicago
"I view it as a Jew, a Rabbi, and a student of the Hebrew Scriptures and Talmud-I found the portrayals disturbing."

* The "Somewhat" or 50/50

Dean Peerman, Executive Editor, Christian Century
"It is difficult to make a judgment on basis of brief excerpts-I would prefer having had a chance to see one intact episode. The ~~series~~ series seems to overemphasize 'miracles.'"

Linda-Marie Delloff, Managing Editor, Christian Century
"...Dificult to tell from the samples whether the quality is really very hight...I was not impressed with these aspects (choices Faithfulness to Bible and history/ Authenticity of details (did check)/Dramatization of biblical and historical events/ Visualization of main characters) (MORE)

"As a serious student of Scripture and history, I found ~~the~~ the loose interpretation of history and the lack of a tight critical approach to the material quite distracting from the artistic presentation. Rev. Michael Prokurat, Chancellor, Orthodox Church in America, Hinsdale, IL.

...(re whether religious viewers will be helped in a variety of ways) It is impossible to say based on this truncated preview. (How say in own words) In general, my feeling was that a degree of over-dramatization prevails; on the main characters ~~xxxxxxx~~ portrayed, only Paul seemed convincing, some were unintentionally humorous, eg John Houseman (playing John Houseman)

* of the 35 who liked it there were some negative comments:

"...somewhat concerned about the material we did not see...material potentially offensive to conservative viewers...violence or sex"

"I do have some problems with portraying Biblical characters in that breathy, exuberant, wild-eyed way. That's why I enjoyed Paul. Pter was a bit much. Coleen Dewhurst sounded like a drag queen."

"Some of the characters seem a bit shallow. Others like Paul seemed strong..."

"Well acted, but a bit 'Hollywoodish'"

"Some of action quite good--some a bit hokey..."

"Seemed to be true to life. Problem is that we all have preconceived notions of the characters--where your vision and mine don't mesh, I resist that characterization...for instance, Jesus presence and British accent clashed with my ideas."

"I feel uneasy with literal interpretation of miracles, and what seems to be a caricature of Roman officialdom."

POSITIVE STATEMENTS

Avoids pitfal of fictionalizing biblical events so much that viewers will find it hard to visualize actual biblical event.

✓ Exciting unraveling of a difficult yet important time in the history of the Judeo-Christian world.
★ Vivid portrayals of the effects of this time on lives of people, such as Paul" James Rosenthal, Communications Department, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago.

Provides a context for the events of the faith, and allowing it to be seen as involving real flesh and blood people. Andrew Scheer, Assoc. Editor, Moody Monthly.

✓ "...overall, the series seems to present a strong -- flavor of the times." Robert Johnston, Editor, Chicago Catholic.

✓ "...well acted...there is a ring of authenticity."
Rev. William White, Senior Minister, Chicago Temple,
United Methodist.

✓ "I am amazed and pleased to have a company like
P&G, and a network like NBC sponsor and show this
during Holy Week. Biblical history is a challenge
for us today in the issues we face. This series is
a help." David Whitermore, Executive Director Church
Federation Chicago.

A window to the world which cradled the Christian
way, enabling the sensitive viewer to sense from
across the centuries how the early followers of
Jesus experienced life. Willard Roth, Church Relations
Director, Mennonite Board of Missions.

✓ A very absorbing, moving look at history, reminding
Christians of the courage of early-day believers and
the debt present-day believers owe to them. Fran
Anderson, Editor/Writer Baptist General Conference.

✓ ...placing the foundation of our Christian Faith
in its 'secular history' context has made it difficult
for Christians to fully appreciate the reality of
the faith. It is too easy to be satisfied with a
philosophy or idea, rather than to struggle with
historical reality. I think this production will help.
Charles Peterson, Instructor, North Park College, Chicago.

✓ A powerful presentation which adds a comprehensive
world view to words from the Bible too often used
out of context Bruce Lawson, Evangelical Covenant Church

✓ AD gives a new depth to distant events. Historical
and Biblical background were blended together, giving
one an overall feeling of completeness. I can't wait
to see the rest! Jamie Storms, Moody Bible Institute

✓ A profound and historical film. Will be useful with
teaching in Churches and religious organizations.
Ann Page-el, Director Presbyterian Resources and
Educational services.

✓ It seems to realistically depict the times and
attitudes during the first century in Rome. Biblical
events seem to be well represented and dramatized in a way that
would further understanding of the events and of history.
Very captivating! Nancy Pr?? Moody Bible Institute

✓ I was impressed by AD. The previews made me wish to see
the full presentation. The dramatization makes the
Bible come alive. Rev. David Coleman, Jr. Minister, Bethel
A.M.E Church, Chicago.

Very inspiring, deep, religious and it was about time
for such a series...glad you are doing it. Ana M. Acevedo
Teacher, Catholic Schools

Fine production values, writing, Direction and overall impact impossible to judge seeing roughly 1/12 of the whole. Rodeney Clapp, Assoc. Editor, Christianity Today Magazine.

✓ It seems no expense was spared in the filming. I assume the completed project will be as beautiful as what we saw today. I especially liked the many 'layered' sides...it helps to give a complete, accurate view of ~~the~~ the times as well as the events which were taking place. Patricia Coe, Editor, First Methodist Church, Chicago Temple, Carillon.

✓ I ~~thought~~ felt there was a quiet, yet powerful, moment being portrayed in this program. The various aspects of history being brought together is most intriguing. Francis Cimarrusti, Pastor Our Lady of the Angels Church, Chicago

Vivid portrayal of the times and the story... William Voelkel, Assoc. Conference Ministry, Chicago Metropolitan Assoc. of United Church of Christ

✓ AD appears to be a stimulating television show that will in some respects broaden the viewers perspective in relationship to Biblical and historical events. We will be looking forward to it with much anticipation. Rev. John Newson, Jr. Asst. Minister, Morning Star Baptist Church, Chicago.

Not aware of any attempts on such a scale in this medium treating the "Jewish dimension" of the rise of Christianity as sensitively, yet as faithfully to the Christian Bible as this film does. You are to be commended. Hopefully, it will dispell many stereotypes and misunderstandings, and in the process, alleviate many of the sources of anti-semitism historically associated with this important theme....it should help ~~Christians~~ Christians rethink their assumptions and understandings of the Jewish dimension of Christianity's rise. Rabbi Yechiel Echelein, President Holyland Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Chicago.

"A.D."

TITLE "A.D." (Anno Domini)

FORMAT Drama, 12 hours long. "A.D." tells the story of the early days of the Christian Church as seen through the eyes of Romans, Jews and Christians themselves. It is a dramatic re-telling of the Biblical and historical events through the lives of the Apostles, emperors and fictional characters.

NETWORK NBC

AIR DATES One week in prime time, Spring of 1985

THE STORY "A.D." begins as the crucifixion ends, and dramatizes the development of the Church through the familiar New Testament stories: Pentecost, Peter's sermon, his appearance before the Sanhedrin, his escape from prison, Philip and the Ethiopian, the stoning of Steven, Saul's conversion, his work in Antioch, his defense before Felix and Festus, his shipwreck on the way to Rome, and his imprisonment there.

Parallel developments in the Roman Empire are pictured: the banality and cruelty of the emperors Tiberius, Claudius, Caligula and Nero; the persecution of the Christians; their life in the catacombs and the burning of Rome.

Fictional stories of ordinary people, heroes and villains, are intermixed with the Biblical and historical events. The epic drama ends with the gospel of Jesus Christ taking root and growing as the empire recovers from its rule by madmen.

PRODUCER, WRITERS Vincenzo Labella, who also made "Marco Polo," and the highly acclaimed "Jesus of Nazareth." Written by Labella and Anthony Burgess.

SPONSOR "A.D." is a co-production of Procter & Gamble Productions, Inc. and International Film Productions, Inc.

STARS James Mason, John Houseman, Colleen Dewhurst, Richard Kiley, Anthony Andrews, Ben Vereen, Ian McShane, Ava Gardner, Philip Sayer, and many others, with a supporting cast of over 300.

AUTHENTICITY Although "A.D." is a sweeping saga covering more than 30 years, and stretching across the whole Roman Empire, great care has been taken with the details. Costumes and implements have been copied meticulously from museum pieces, with artisans duplicating first century techniques.

Reproductions of first century buildings in Jerusalem and Rome have been constructed in Tunisia where principal shooting is taking place.

(Over)

Equal care for historical accuracy has been given to the script. Four major Biblical scholars have aided in this, working with Dr. Richard Gilbert, religious consultant to NBC.

Dr. Bruce Metzger, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Dr. John Meier, Professor of Sacred Scripture, St. Joseph's Seminary

Dr. Thomas Robinson, Professor of New Testament, Union Theological Seminary (New York City)

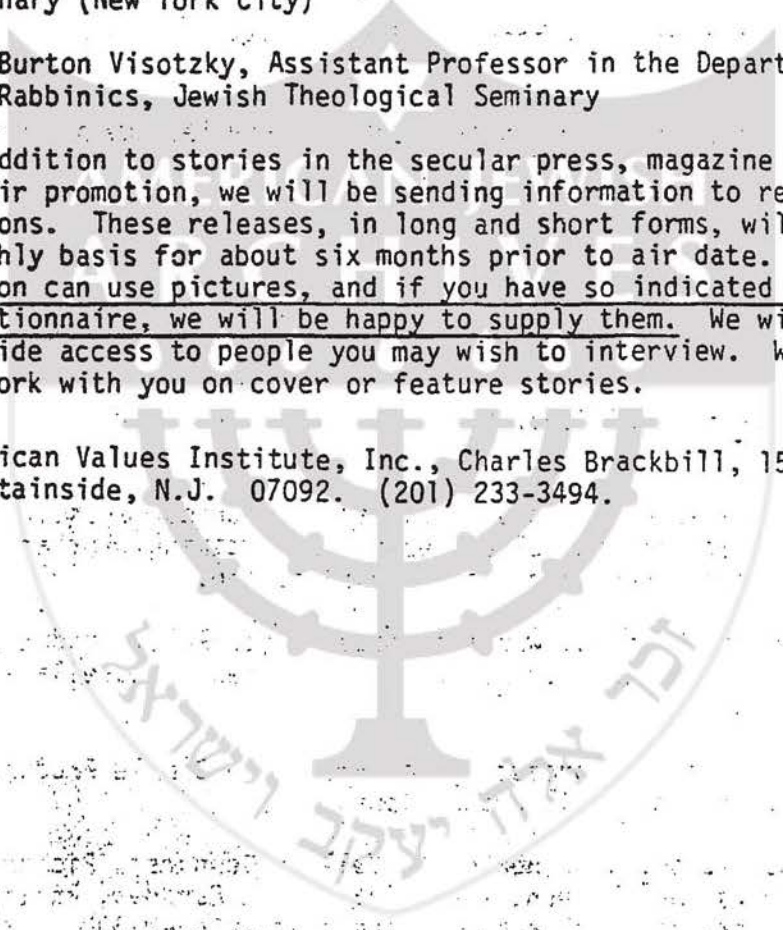
Dr. Burton Visotzky, Assistant Professor in the Department of Talmud and Rabbinics, Jewish Theological Seminary

PROMOTION

In addition to stories in the secular press, magazine features, and on-air promotion, we will be sending information to religious publications. These releases, in long and short forms, will be sent on a monthly basis for about six months prior to air date. If your publication can use pictures, and if you have so indicated on the enclosed questionnaire, we will be happy to supply them. We will also try to provide access to people you may wish to interview. We will be happy to work with you on cover or feature stories.

CONTACT

American Values Institute, Inc., Charles Brackbill, 1537 Deerpath, Mountainside, N.J. 07092. (201) 233-3494.



Shows gear up

'A.D.' melodrama for the masses

By JENNIFER REGAN

A.D., a megaseries about the years right after Christ's crucifixion dominates NBC prime time for five consecutive nights starting Sunday at 8 — just in time for Easter and Passover.

Its 12 numbing hours mix ancient Roman history with New Testament scriptures, adding just enough Jewish ritual so there is something for everybody.

The result is a sprawling script, co-written by producer Vincent LaBella (his *Jesus of Nazareth* was shown Easter, 1977) and novelist Anthony Burgess (*A Clockwork Orange*). It's hard to keep straight just who is persecuting whom in the plot.

Filmed in Tunisia, *A.D.* teems with apostles, zealots, harlots, emperors, gladiators, Epicurians, Stoics, and briefly, even Jesus.

With a syrupy musical score accompanying the "revolution of love" apostles preach as well as actual love scenes, all roads lead to Rome from Jerusalem, Capri, Damascus, Britain and Africa in a dizzying pace that has more in common to the Jet Age than to the era of the camel.

A huge cast of faces old and new make up the teams in *A.D.*'s battle between the good, faithful Christians and the evil of Rome. In his last role, a weary James Mason is the paranoid Emperor Tiberius who lives in self-exile on the Isle of Capri and plays with snakes. John Houseman looms huge as Mt. Olive as a Jerusalem rabbi arguing against the sanctity of Jesus. Colleen Dewhurst is regal as ever as a Roman matron uncommonly decent for the corrupt times.



Jack Warden (so all-American among the British actors who surround him that you'd think you are watching him in *Crazy Like a Fox*) plays a tough-guy advisor to Tiberius. Richard Kiley limps about as the stuttering Emperor Claudius until he chokes on poisoned mushrooms at a banquet — an event so common the servants are told simply to cart off the body with the dirty plates. Ava Gardner, widely publicized as an *A.D.* star, finally shows up late in Part 2 plotting against Claudius in a low growl, looking like someone from the cast of *La Cage aux Folles*.

Among newer faces are Neil Dixon, Prince Valiant of the Roman guard, who risks his life to wed a Jewish slave. She's played by Amanda Pays, with a goodness that comes off better than Dixon's goody-goodness.

Stealing the show are two of Rome's most infamous Emperors. As



Anthony Andrews plays Nero, who dreams of being an actor, in the miniseries "A.D."

Calligula, John McEnery tosses grapes and chases the moon's reflection in a pool with demented abandon before he's done in on the way to the stadium's men's room. Anthony Andrews (who starred in the PBS hit *Brideshead Revisited*) is even daffier as Nero, who doesn't fiddle while Rome burns. Andrews screams, minces, leers, whines and bites his thumb as he orders Christians tossed to wild beasts and throws the Jews out of Rome. Though good of course must triumph, these two bad guys are so wickedly silly that it's a letdown when they disappear from the plot.

Despite holy men and scriptures, Rome's gaudy last days, done most recently in last season's high camp *Pompeii*, win out as entertainment over the Gospel according to *A.D.*

Religious preachings have the lulling effect of a long winded sermon or an illustrated Sunday school lesson and can't compete with Nero lolling on his couch with a Nubian slave, or Calligula humiliating his troops on the beaches of Britain. Christianity may have beaten Rome in history but bad guys are what TV does best. As for the Bible — go out and buy the book.

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