

CONVERSATIONS UNLIMITED - Nov. 26, 1984.

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INTRO UP AND UNDER

11:00.50
11:14.50
11:29.50

Hi, everybody. With the beginning of the Advent season, many of us will be experiencing the annual telling of the Christmas story. One of the story's principal events has to do with the Star of Bethlehem. Today we'll be talking with an astronomer who has researched historical accounts attempting to explain the story most commonly known from the Gospel of St. Matthew in the New Testament of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Bibles.

It is a story at once both well known and filled with mystery. The basic question, of course, is this: Was there really a bright star shining over the village of Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Jesus Christ? And our conversation with astronomer Johannes Hardorp will cover both the background and an answer -- indeed, more than one answer -- to that question. Dr. Hardorp is associate professor in the Department of Earth and Space Sciences at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

I might point out that in a recent lecture on this subject, Dr. Hardorp made it clear that to talk about this topic as an expert one should have a background in astronomy, astrology, ancient history, theology, Greek language, Hebrew, Arameic and even Cuneiform script. And, needless to say, there are not many people who can claim that kind of learning. Dr. Hardorp makes it clear that his field is astronomy and his knowledge on the Star of Bethlehem comes from his own recent reading of earlier research by others. He is acting today as our guide.

Dr. Hardorp, I suppose we ought to start by determining first of all whether Matthew made up his story about a bright star for dramatic purposes. Was there a "star"?

INTERVIEW HARDORP: -- Note Krupp's reservations about story

-- Why important to know?

2 .
-- What year; what time of year? Convenience of incorporating long-standing tradition of Mithraism, as Krupp claims?

-- Buhler's suggestion that the Three knew of Yr 0 events but birth and visit 5 yrs later

-- Who were the Three Wise Men? (Astronomers, Secret Art, astrologers, Ferrari calls them Marduk priests); a black...or a woman today? (See JH's page 3)

-- Messiah expectations high

-- Astronomy of that period - how good?

14:00 BRIDGE MUSIC UNDER

AFO: We'll take a brief break and return in a moment.

BRIDGE MUSIC UP AND UNDER

AFO: Hi. I'm Al Oickle and I'm talking with Dr. Johannes Hardorp, professor of astronomy at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. We've been reviewing the conditions of life about the time that Jesus was born. Now, Dr. Hardorp, I'd like to focus on the Star of Bethlehem. You've said the Star of Bethlehem as reported in the Gospel of Matthew can be taken as a real astronomical phenomenon. I know there are several authorities on the subject. I've read a piece by Sir James Jeans in the Cambridge University Press book called "The Stars in Their Courses" in which the author states that Venus as "far and away the most brilliant object in the sky" is "commonly supposed to be the Star of Bethlehem..." Is that explanation, the brilliant Venus, too simple?

INTERVIEW HARDORP: -- Read Gospel of St. Matthew (JH's ps 6-7)

-- Note language and questions

-- Kepler's 1604 speculation re nova in 7 B.C.

-- Conjunctions - what are they?

-- Conj. of 2 is common; one coming Nov. 25.

-- Jupiter and Saturn every 20 years

3

3 ^{consecutive days} ~~Sun~~

--- Conj. of 3, Earth, Jup. and Sat., rarer

-- Uwe Lemmer 1980: Venus and Jupiter conj.

2 B.C. and soon after a ^{3 cons.} conj. of ~~Jupiter~~ with Regulus

-- Josephus notes lunar eclipse Jan. 9-10 in year 0 (1 B.C.?) as one important sky sign re Herod's death

Passover

-- Update on astronomical history (somewhere every minute someone's taking a picture of the sky)

29:00 OUTRO

10:53:58
10:57

INTRO, UP AND UNDER

Hi, everybody. A draft letter written for the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States has touched off a public debate on economics and social justice. It's not a simple subject, but its main themes are familiar to many of us. Among those themes is the question: Should the rich get richer while the poor get poorer? And another: What responsibility does business have to help the poor? And what are the responsibilities of the academic community, and the government, and the poor themselves?

Recently, a conference on this subject brought together several hundred people who are not only concerned about the problems the bishops are bringing into the public spotlight but, for the most part, are themselves active in attempting to correct what they see as an imbalance of wealth. Today we'll hear some of the dialog among a half-dozen conference participants.

WLIR OUT

Later in the program, we'll talk with Dr. Michael Zweig, associate professor of economics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. The conference took place at Stony Brook and Dr. Zweig headed the conference planners.

WLIR IN

The conference was called "Religion, The Economy and Social Justice," and was subtitled "Exploring the Interface Between Ethics and Economics." This gathering came, appropriately, only four days after the release of the draft report prepared for the Catholic bishops. During the two-day program, some of the participants paused during a lunch period to meet with the press. In a moment, we'll bring you some of that discussion.

MORE MORE MORE

The speakers, in the order in which they enter the conversation, are: Dr. William Tabb of Queens College in New York City; ^{DR.} Gregory Baum of St. Michael's College in Toronto, Canada; Stephen Paysen, Catholic chaplain at Stony Brook, ~~Aron S. Eisenman of Queens College, Amy Nicholas of the United Mine Workers Union in Pennsylvania,~~ ^{Janice Mullinax of S. Dept. of Econ.} and Professor Zweig. In between, you will hear some questions from reporters. Now, let's join the press conference on "Religion, The Economy and Social Justice." We begin with Professor Tabb of Queens College answering a question about the role of the business community.

TAPE 000 - "I think that business people generally...." through to TAPE ~~222~~ ^{27F} - GET READY FOR A FAST CUT - Zweig: "...to see that we have a responsibility for each other."

13:50

AFO LIVE: You've been listening to a recording of a news conference at the State University of New York at Stony Brook covering the topic, "Religion, The Economy and Social Justice."

WLIR OUT

We'll take a short break and return in a moment.

BREAK MUSIC UP AND UNDER

AFO LIVE: Hi. I'm Al Oickle and I'm with Dr. Michael Zweig, associate professor of economics at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. You've just heard some of Dr. Zweig's thoughts on the subject of "Religion, The Economy and Social Justice." They were expressed at a conference with that name during mid-November at Stony Brook. Dr. Zweig, let me ask you a question that came up at that news conference: Is discussion of this type, including the Catholic bishops' letter, going to change anything or is it just more talk?

MORE MORE MORE

- Prose - lots of personal input + whole dialog

INTERVIEW DR. ZWEIG: -- Who has a right to join this discussion?

(Cite quotation that religious should leave politics along.)

-- Role of religious (note Fr. Drinan and Pope's edict)

-- Role of academic community - students

-- Role of labor unions

-- Role of business

-- Role of the poor */w/ready*

-- In a world of true social justice, what economic changes would be created?

-- What do you advise average person to do about all this?

29:15

OUTRO
