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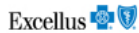


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## Film debut on 'lost years' of Jesus sparks discussion

Saturday, August 04, 2007

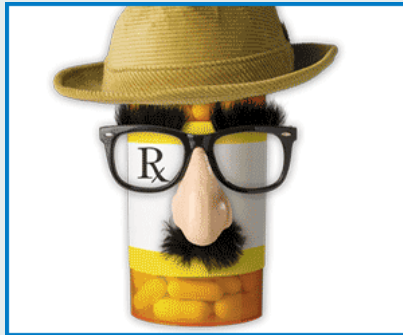
RENEE K. GADOUA  
RELIGION NOTEBOOK

Norman A. Miles greeted an enthusiastic crowd of viewers Monday after the American debut of "Jesus: The Lost Years" at Carousel Center's Regal Cinemas.

Miles, a financial planner in Syracuse, created Bent Pyramid Productions to produce the documentary, which describes what its creators say was a five-year trek through Egypt by the Holy Family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They were fleeing King Herod's soldiers, who vowed to kill Jesus.

Although historians and archeologists confirm little, if any, of the movie's claims, Miles is a believer.

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"We have a duty now to reveal what we learned," he said. "The oral traditions have to be respected. It's very convincing."

A small red carpet was taped to the sidewalk at the mall's entrance, and several attendees wore dressy clothes. Others dressed casually and carried popcorn and Milk Duds into the theater.

The audience of more than 150 people included Paul Perry, the documentary's author and host, and John de Bry, a historian who accompanies Perry during much of the movie's journey.

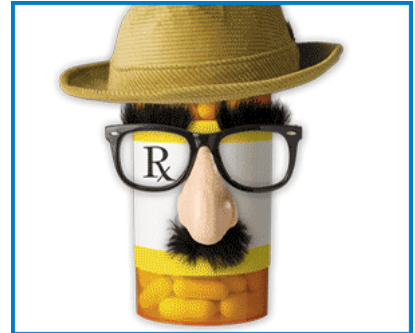
The movie is based on Perry's book, "Jesus in Egypt." He also co-wrote several books, including "Saved by the Light," which chronicles a man's near-death experience. De Bry directs the Center for Historical Archaeology, a nonprofit organization based in Florida.

Perry draws heavily on oral tradition of Egyptian Coptic Christians as he visits sites including a field of fallen idols said to have been knocked down by an angry child Jesus and a stone said to have been Jesus' bed at one time.

The screening began about 10 minutes after the 7 p.m. scheduled start. Byron M. Jones, managing partner of Pure Flix Entertainment, which is distributing the film, spoke briefly about the project.

"This is a unique film that is opening up a side we never knew of Jesus Christ," he said.

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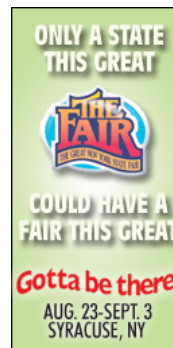
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"It's the greatest story never told," the movie's narrator says early in the film.

### DVD release set for Nov. 13

Moviegoers glanced curiously at the display outside the theater where "Jesus: The Lost Years" played. Most people at the screening had advance tickets, and a few bought them for \$12 each.

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"I would have liked to go to that," a woman said as she headed for a 6:50 p.m. showing of "I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry."

"Too bad it's just today," another woman said before entering a theater where "No Reservations" was showing.

Not to worry.

While the Syracuse screening was a one-time deal, Jones said it will premiere in nine national markets this month and is expected to be released Nov. 13 on DVD.

### Matthew's, viewers' views

For another account of the journey the movie describes, turn to the New Testament account by Matthew.

"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him,'" reads Matthew 2:13.

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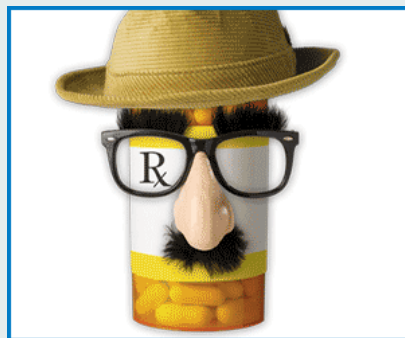
"Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod."

So is Paul Perry right about the Holy Family's journeys in Egypt?

Lula

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and Chris Lemonides, who attend St. Sophia's Greek Orthodox Church, found his premise interesting.

"He seemed to follow the clues," Lula Lemonides said.

"It's a missing piece of the puzzle," said John Alberts, of Camillus.

He attended the premiere with his wife, Sue Alberts. They attend Holy Family Roman Catholic Church in Fairmount.

"There's something to it," Sue Alberts said. "The oral tradition is very believable."

Perry makes that point in the movie.

"Yes, this trail is authentic, this trail is real," he says.

Renee K. Gadoua covers religion and spirituality for The Post-Standard. Reach her at rgadoua@syracuse.com or 470-2203.

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