

Don't Believe These 'Slanderous, Libelous' Statements About IHOP's Mike Bickle

(I encourage my readers to lovingly contact The Times of Israel, asking for an apology at and to share this with your friends. We appreciate the and are not seeking to turn folks against them. Let's give them the opportunity to make things right.)

Dear Times of Israel,

I am a big fan of your website. It is a excellent news resource for Israel supporters around the world. However I was disheartened to see the recent article by Eric Cortellessa regarding Mike Bickle. I contacted your site but there was no response. Hence the open letter...

This was a case of sloppy journalism, resulting in slanderous, libelous conclusions. From the amount of likes, comments and shares, it is clear that Mr. Cortellessa achieved his goal. However at the cost of soiling someone's good name (which can be documented in the comments section, as folks assume the quote is accurate, and make negative judgments of Mr. Bickle.)

Mr. Cortellessa asserts that Mile Bickle, "notoriously said God sent Hitler to hunt Jews for not accepting Jesus as Messiah." When did Bickle say this? I found no footnote and I noticed that there are no quotes around Mr. Cortellessa's supposed citation. Furthermore, the use of the word "notoriously" would cause one to conclude that this is something he is known for, and yet neither I nor my colleagues (who work closely with Mr. Bickle) had ever heard of this accusation.

My colleagues and I read the entire article looking for this quote or something close to it but the author did not present it. Neither did we find such a “notorious” quote in the video. The reason he did not present it is because it doesn’t exist. Let me be clear, Mike Bickle has never said nor taught that, “God sent Hitler to hunt Jews for not accepting Jesus as Messiah.” This is a fictitious quote that Mr. Cortellessa either invented from his interpretation of other things Mr. Bickle has said or simply lifted it from elsewhere. Either way, it is a gross act of dishonest journalism. In a court of law, it would be called libel.

This is indeed a serious case of defamation of character as any one of the millions who may read your article will see Mr. Bickle as an anti-Semite, when the exact opposite is true—he loves our nation and our people.

Quoting from the article:

“For Bickle, [Jews not accepting Jesus] is what explains Nazi Germany’s murder of more than six million Jews. In a 2011 sermon, Bickle cited a passage from Jeremiah 16:16 to elucidate the attempted extermination of European Jewry.”

Mr. Cortellessa badly misinterprets Mike Bickle’s use of Jeremiah 16:16, which states:

“Behold, I will send for many fishermen,” says the Lord, “and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.”

First we must ask who is ‘I’? And then, who are ‘they’? ‘I’ is the God of Israel and ‘they’ are the Israelites. Now, what is the context? It is the restoration of Israel as a nation. The verses that precede it speak of a new exodus from the ‘land of the north’ (v. 14-15) that will overshadow the Exodus from

Egypt. Biblical scholars believe it refers to the Russian Jewish ingathering that took place in the nineties.

The context of this verse is clearly Aliyah (Jewish immigration to Israel)—not Jews embracing Jesus. And Mr. Bickle understands this, as he speaks clearly about God “bringing [the Jews] back” to the “land” in the posted YouTube clip.

So to be clear—Bickle did not say nor has he ever said that God sent Hitler to hunt Jews for not accepting Jesus as Messiah as Mr. Cortellessa claims in his headline. The headline is more than misleading—it is a lie.

Mike Bickle is a man who supports Israel and prays and fasts for our protection and encourages millions of others to do so, and you have sadly, wrongly presented him as an enemy, in the most libelous, illegal and sensational attack. Don't we have enough real enemies, why must we make fake ones from those who support us?

I strongly encourage you to retract this article and issue a public apology to a man who loves our nation.

Ron Cantor is the lead pastor of Tiferet Yeshua congregation in Tel Aviv, a Hebrew speaking outreach to Israelis. He is also the author of *Identity Theft*, *Leave me Alone—I'm Jewish*, and his newest book coming out this spring, *The Jerusalem Secret*, a novel about the first Jewish believers. Ron blogs at .