

Hollywood Is in *Da Vinci* Mode

by Alex McFarland



On May 19, Sony Pictures will release a movie based on Dan Brown's best-selling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. Brown is not a meticulous historian. His book is rife with errors. Having said that, I believe the film's release presents an excellent opportunity for us to share the solid, compelling, truthful grounds on which Christianity rests.

The Da Vinci Code begins with a murder followed by a frantic search for the Holy Grail. Informed by a literary twist, we come to learn that the Grail was not the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper, but the very womb of Mary Magdalene, which carried descendants of the royal bloodline.

However intriguing this theory might've been to the millions who bought Brown's book, there's no historical evidence to suggest such a thing. The author also proposes that Mary's tomb contains documents capable of destroying Christianity. It's all presented as part of a virtuous quest to return to a more holistic spirituality constructed around a divine goddess. Although the dubious documents from Mary's tomb are never revealed, the story still takes a dim view of Christianity and distorts doctrine.

The Da Vinci Code is acknowledged as fiction. Still, Brown begins the book by asserting that his characters and historical claims are factual. He sows seeds of doubt about the Christian faith and challenges important core truths:

The identity of Jesus: Christians know Jesus to be God's Son and the promised Messiah based on the testimony of Scripture, the claims of Christ and empirical historical data. Brown depicts Jesus as a mere man.

The deeds of Jesus: Although Jesus was the sinless Savior, Brown portrays Him throughout the novel as the mystical husband of Mary Magdalene.

The mission of Jesus: Brown misrepresents the Lord's true mission by claiming that procreation, not eternal salvation, was Jesus' primary purpose.

The origin and content of the Bible: *The Da Vinci Code* presents outright falsehoods regarding the

origin of Scripture and recklessly casts doubt on the Bible's trustworthiness.

The origin of the church: Brown says Peter and other males hijacked Jesus' plan to have His "wife" lead the movement. To learn the true origins of the church, read Matthew 16 and the book of Acts. Even secular historians have called Luke, the writer of Acts, "an historian of the first rank."

The message of the early church: Worship of the "sacred feminine" supplants the true message of the first-century church, which was salvation, authenticated by the physically risen Jesus—an event corroborated by early eyewitness testimony.

The motives of early church leaders: Brown questions the intentions of trailblazing saints, ignoring the conviction and accounts that led many of them to pay the ultimate price—their very lives—to spread and defend the truth of the gospel.

The relevance and trustworthiness of the church today: Given what he considers to be Christianity's devious motives and baseless origins, Brown feels the best hope for the modern world is the elimination of this corrupt, centuries-old institution.

With so much buzz surrounding *The Da Vinci Code*, Christians must be prepared to defend the truths we hold dear against Brown's onslaughts. Half truths. Faulty logic. Revisionist history. I find it interesting that the author claims that Constantine

was the first to conceptualize Jesus as deity. Anyone even remotely familiar with the Gospels knows that's ridiculous; Jesus asserted His *own* divinity on many occasions (Matt. 6:64; Luke 24:25, etc.). Much the way Anne Rice speculated about Jesus' boyhood years in *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* (a novel written about and narrated by a 7-year-old Messiah), Brown, too, has been inspired by an unreliable muse.

My intent is not to condemn readers of the book or those who plan to see the movie. Rather, I hope Christians inclined to check out the film will go armed with the knowledge that Brown is a fiction writer with an apparent agenda, and an unhealthy one at that.

Author and speaker Alex McFarland is Focus on the Family's director of teen apologetics. For more insight on this topic from a biblical perspective, visit go.family.org/davinci.

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Brown

the ask editor

Why do you bother reviewing R-rated movies, M-rated video games and CDs with parental advisory stickers? Don't those labels tell us everything we need to know?

Yes and no. While such warnings may give us enough info to decide that a product isn't welcome in our home, it still can be helpful to know what those cultural voices are saying. For example,

parents who nix an R-rated movie can lovingly explain *why* it fails to meet their biblical family standard. Upon learning what's actually in such a film, teens often feel relieved to have dodged a bullet.

Also, even if your clan isn't directly impacted by no-brainer media, it is empowering to know what it's communicating to the culture. Your teen may not

be playing *Grand Theft Auto*, but his peers are. We often hear from youth pastors and teachers who see kids wearing T-shirts for "stickered" artists and want to know what those singers are preaching. Being armed with specifics is an adult's best hope for countering destructive messages and engaging teens intelligently about the voices of their culture.