

Deciphering Fact and Fiction in Da Vinci

by Michael Cassidy

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“‘What I mean,’ Teabing countered, ‘is that almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false.’”

So says author Dan Brown through the mouth of the character Leigh Teabing in *The Da Vinci Code*, now a global phenomenon, first in book form selling some 40 million copies worldwide, and as a movie being released across the planet on May 19th 2006.

I have only just read the novel myself, and am also seeking to digest material by Christian authors, both Protestant and Catholic, seeking to set the record straight. This is necessary because *The Da Vinci Code* operates at two levels. On the surface, it is a compelling suspense thriller. If this was all it was, then it probably still would have sold many millions of copies, might well have been made into a movie anyway, and no doubt would have contributed to Dan Brown’s well deserved ranking among thriller writers, because the guy sure can write!

However, *The Da Vinci Code* can be confusing and misleading for people of faith, as well as for spiritual seekers because distortion and gross factual error trundle along side by side with snippets of historical fact or Christian truth. This makes the story a pretty lethal spiritual cocktail, brilliant though it is as a thriller. So let’s try to do a little sorting out.

FICTION/DECEPTION: *The story is a harmless thriller.*

FACT/TRUTH: *No, it is a serious attack on historic Christianity.*

The Da Vinci Code operates at a level beyond that of the normal thriller, and this is what has caused it to become such a controversial phenomenon. This is of most concern to us as Christians, for it calls into question some of the foundational pillars of our faith. As it does this, however, I believe it also gives us one of the best opportunities since Mel Gibson’s film *The Passion of the Christ* to “be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks [us] a reason for the hope that is in us. (1 Peter 3:15). “Seek the Truth” many of the *Da Vinci Code* movie ads admonish us. That, in fact, is exactly what our aim should be. But the problem is that Brown’s blurring of fact and fiction is enough to trip up believers and others unacquainted with the truth.

Fact or Fiction?

On the title page of the book, it says: *The Da Vinci Code – A Novel*. Notes the blurb in the publisher’s front flap: “In this work of fiction, the characters, places and events are either the product of the author’s imagination or they are used entirely fictitiously.”

Okay, so why the hubbub surrounding the story? After all, it’s only fiction. On the other hand, Brown states as “Fact” on the page before his prologue three things: 1) that “The Priory of Sion – a European secret society founded in 1099 – is a real organization”; 2) that “Opus Dei is a deeply devout Catholic sect”; and 3) that “All descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.”

Actually Brown seems to want to have it both ways. On his website, in answer to the question “How much of this novel is true?” he replies: “*The Da Vinci Code* is a novel and therefore a work of fiction.” However, when asked on the U.S. TV show “Good Morning America” how his book would have been different if he had written it as non-fiction, Brown replied, “I don’t think it would have.”

In any event, whether the book was intended to be viewed as fictitious or not, the spiritually damaging effect it produces on people is what one needs to be most concerned about.

FICTION/DECEPTION: *Dan Brown is a reliable historical researcher.*

FACT/TRUTH: *His historiography is unreliable and erratic.*

The most erroneous assertions in *The Da Vinci Code* come through the character Leigh Teabing, who says to the wide-eyed Sophie Neveu: “Jesus’ establishment as ‘the Son of God’ was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea. [It was] a relatively close vote at that [and] until *that* moment in history, Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet . . . a great and powerful man, but a *man* nonetheless. A mortal.” Teabing then continues:

“Because Constantine upgraded Jesus’ status almost four centuries *after* Jesus’ death, thousands of documents already existed chronicling His life as a *mortal* man. To rewrite the history books, Constantine knew he would need a bold stroke. From this sprang the most profound moment in Christian history . . . Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s *human* traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned . . . Fortunately for historians . . . some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ’s ministry in very human terms. Of course, the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls. And why shouldn’t they? The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled by men who possessed a political agenda – to promote the divinity of the man Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base.”

Virtually everything written by Brown above is historically false, as we shall see as we go along in this essay. But we must go back to the origins of the Christian faith and the earliest Scriptures to discover why.

The Da Vinci Code is a pretty lethal spiritual cocktail, brilliant though it is as a thriller.

Perhaps the first item to establish is which gospels are likely to be the most accurate reflection of who Jesus was and what He did. Brown has Teabing assert that “More than *eighty*

gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion . . .” Says Ben Witherington III, professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky: “In fact, there were less than twenty documents that might be called Gospels (telling the story of Jesus’ life), and of those Brown’s book depends on, the *Gospel of Philip* and the *Gospel of Mary*, there is *no* credible evidence that they existed before or during the time that the New Testament Gospels were written.”

The Gnostic Gospels and the New Testament Gospels

The gospels Witherington mentions above are examples of what have been called the “Gnostic gospels”, many of which were discovered, as Brown asserts, at Nag Hammadi, in upper Egypt, in 1945. The best known of these is probably the *Gospel of Thomas* but there are also other documents such as the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, among many others.

More recently, and separate from Nag Hammadi, a *Gospel of Judas* has come to the world's attention. While these documents often used the name of a known follower or apostle of Jesus, this was done in order to convey an authority of authorship they didn't actually possess, for they were not written by the person whose name forms a part of their title. We know this because these Gnostic gospels were written late in the second century or even third century AD. In other words, long after the apostles were already dead. Some even come from the fourth century, three hundred years after Jesus' death. Many elements in them are fantastical or even absurd. No wonder the Church recognised their fraudulent nature and rejected them.

In contrast, the Gospel of Mark is considered by scholars to have been written between AD50 and 70, while Matthew, Luke and John were written sometime between AD70 and 90. That is, these accounts of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection that we have viewed as sacred Scripture for the past 1900 years were completed between 20 and 70 years after his life on earth. It is an obvious principle of sound historiography that documents closest to the source of an event or the genesis of a movement are likely to reveal the most reliable information. Documents by eyewitnesses or those in contact with eyewitnesses are clearly the best sources. For Christians, these documents are clearly the New Testament itself, plus a few other first century works, such as those of Ignatius (writing AD110), Polycarp (writing AD112-118) and Justin Martyr (born around AD100; martyred AD165). It is from early leaders and writers such as these that our most reliable teachings and history will come. In reality, the New Testament and its history, for example as we see it in the Luke-Acts document, can be safely relied on. Wrote the late Sir William Ramsay of Glasgow University, one of the greatest archaeologists of all time, "Luke should be placed along with the very greatest historians." Added classicist Professor E M Blaiklock of Auckland University, "Luke is a consummate historian."

The contrast in the message of the biblical Gospels and that of their Gnostic impostors is striking as well. Gnosticism was an early Greek religious movement that was influential in the second-century church. The word *gnosticism* comes from the Greek term *gnōsis*, meaning "knowledge". This inside-track special knowledge was only available to a spiritual elite. Gnostics emphasized the spiritual realm over the material, basically viewing the material as evil and therefore to be escaped. This dualism involved despising the body and matter while elevating the non-physical and spiritual. The way the New Testament affirms the material through God becoming flesh in Jesus was totally denied. Gnosticism rejected historic Christianity and Christianity rejected Gnosticism. "Christianity affirms," says Witherington, "the goodness of creation, the incarnation of Christ, the death and bodily resurrection of Jesus, salvation by grace through faith in the atoning death of Jesus, and the public proclamation of the gospel to all. Faith and salvation are more a matter of Who you trust than how much you know. Gnosticism affirms none of these." Yet Brown bases so many of his conclusions on these sources.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Brown also speaks of the Dead Sea Scrolls, referring to them (along with the Nag Hammadi scrolls written a century after the NT Gospels) as containing some of "the Gospels Constantine attempted to eradicate", but which "managed to survive". This is just plain wrong. These scrolls tell of the religious community of Qumran, dating from approximately 250BC and a few up to AD65. But, completely contrary to Brown's assertion, they do not speak of Jesus' ministry at all because they are a collection of about 850 mostly fragmentary scrolls of almost all of the Old Testament texts except Esther, as well as many non-biblical texts, including commentaries and paraphrases of other Old Testament books. Says the Orion Centre for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls: "The body

of the literature known as the Dead Sea Scrolls predates the time of Jesus by approximately 80 years, and as a consequence of this, there are no direct references to His life and teachings." Thus the Dead Sea Scrolls are not Gnostic, nor relevant to Jesus in any way other than that the Old Testament scriptures prophesy Jesus' coming.

FICTION/DECEPTION: *Constantine (reigned AD306-337) and the Council of Nicaea (AD325), after suppressing certain key documents, established the New Testament canon with a political agenda and then with dubious power-playing motives elevated and "upgraded" Jesus to deity for the first time.*

FACT/TRUTH: *Long before Nicaea, the canon of authoritative New Testament documents had been emerging. Nor did Nicaea deal with the canon. That was settled at a later Council. As to the deity and Messianic nature of Jesus, this was being proclaimed from the day of Pentecost (AD33) onwards and was clear in the earliest New Testament writings (from approx AD50).*

The Council of Nicaea was indeed called by the Emperor Constantine. But the main question before the Council was focussed on *how* Jesus' divinity and origin were to be understood and how he wrought our salvation. "No one at the council was contending that Jesus was a mere mortal or just a prophet, as Teabing asserts in the novel," says Witherington. "Rather, the dispute was over whether Christ had a created divine substance *like* the Father's or whether he shared the *same* eternal divine substance with the Father. The debate was certainly not about whether Christ was divine at all, nor was a vote taken about such a matter. The question was, in what sense was he divine?"

The main figures at Nicaea were Arius, who argued that Jesus was a created being within the godhead but not co-eternal with the Father, and Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, strongly backed by Athanasius, who argued that Jesus was indeed co-eternal with the Father, and of the same essence. Arius was declared heretical and the unity of the Godhead and the deity of Christ were affirmed at Nicaea with only two bishops dissenting out of 318. One need only read the Nicene Creed, finalised with its Trinitarian formula at the Council of Constantinople in AD381, to see that this was indeed the case.

Brown also misrepresents Constantine's role in the Council. Constantine blessed but did not direct or guide the deliberations of Nicaea, though he did suggest the Greek term '*homoousios*' (of the same essence) to describe Jesus' relationship with the Father. It is even open to debate as to what degree Constantine himself was truly a Christian. Certainly, he showed favour toward the Christian faith after its persecutions under Diocletian and other emperors. But he also continued to profess respect for assorted pagan gods and customs. He saw the Roman Empire as religiously pluralistic but recognised that Christianity, with its centuries-old claim of a divine Christ, was starting to carry the day. So he decided "to back the winning horse" as Teabing this time rightly asserts. However, the idea that he was trying consciously to fuse paganism and Christianity into a happy hybrid is probably wide of the mark. He was seeking to come to terms with the prevailing power of the Christians who had out-lived, out-loved and out-died the pagan world around them. Was Constantine's conversion genuine? We don't really know. But something deep, maybe even real conversion, undoubtedly moved him during a long process to issue the Edict of Milan (AD313) which ended all state-sanctioned persecution of religion and paved the way for Christianity to become the official religion of the Empire in AD392 by a decree of Theodosius I.

Finalising the Canon

As the early Christians sought to determine what documents should constitute holy scripture, or the "canon" of the New Testament, they considered, first, who wrote the Gospel or letter in question.

The biblical Gospels were completed within 20 to 70 years of Jesus' life – long before the so-called Gnostic gospels were written.

If it was one of Jesus' disciples or someone vested with obvious divine or apostolic authority – such as the apostle Paul, or else with apostolic closeness or authorisation such as Apollos, the friend of Paul and probable author of the letter to the Hebrews – then the document was a clear candidate for inclusion in scripture. (Canon is simply a Latin word for “rule” and the books of the biblical canon were those which had an obvious ruling authority and divine witness to them.)

The process whereby this happened was rather like that when an art connoisseur is seeking to establish whether a painting is a genuine Rembrandt or not. He does not confer authenticity on the painting. He only seeks to use his skills to discern whether indeed the painting is authentic. So the concern of Christian leaders in the early centuries was only to recognise and discern which documents were authentically apostolic or apostolically authorised. The church's task was to recognise the genuine and reject the spurious. Thus were the New Testament documents chosen as true and divinely inspired and the Gnostic gospels rejected as false.

The point was that by the end of the second century AD, there was a wide recognition of which books were genuine and authoritative and which were not. The canon then was a collection of books not imposed from above, but recognised in the life of the church from below. The church therefore did not create the canon. It simply recognised it.

In terms of *The Da Vinci Code* line on this, the key point to grasp is that the process of recognising the canon was pretty well complete by the time of Constantine. So the notion that Constantine somehow changed the Christian scriptures, by creating a new Bible while suppressing the old, is historically wrong. In fact, as mentioned, the canon was not under purview at Nicaea.

So we see that the four Gospels which we have had in our Scriptures for some 1900 years, along with the other 23 books of the New Testament, came to us not via some political power play or through a ‘relatively close vote’ (as per Teabing) in a church council in AD325. Rather they commended themselves to the early Christians as the authentic divine word, and the by and large eye witness testimony to Jesus' life, death and resurrection from the earliest days of Christianity, long before the rise of the Gnostic documents or the church councils. We can thus be absolutely confident that the Bible we have today is the true word of God to us.

Teabing, however says: “The bible is the product of man....not of God”. A most misleading and prejudiced half truth. Says Paul: “All Scripture is inspired by God” (2 Timothy 3:16). Writes Peter: “No prophecy of Scripture ... ever came by the impulse of men, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Peter 1:21). On this conviction of the dual authorship of scripture, both divine and human, all Christians must stand resolutely.

Likewise, true Christians must and will always stand on the deity of Jesus. The idea that Constantine and the Council of Nicaea invented the notion of the deity of Christ for the first time is sheer gobbledy-gook. The church, from day one, presented the deity of Christ. And it is everywhere in the New Testament which was almost certainly completed by AD90.

FICTION/DECEPTION: *Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and fathered a child by her, named Sarah. He intended Mary to lead the church after his death.*

FACT/TRUTH: *There is not a shred of reliable evidence anywhere to substantiate any idea so wild. The notion belongs emphatically under what the publisher calls “events either the product of the author's imagination or used entirely fictitiously”.*

Leigh Teabing says at one point to Sophie Neveu that this is “the greatest cover-up in human history. Not only was Jesus Christ married, but He was a father. My dear, Mary Magdalene was the Holy Vessel. She was the chalice that bore the royal bloodline of

Jesus Christ. She was the womb that bore the lineage, and the vine from which the sacred fruit sprang forth!” Teabing goes on to relate that “Mary Magdalene was pregnant at the time of the crucifixion” and then “secretly travelled to France, then known as Gaul. There she found safe refuge in the Jewish community” and “gave birth to a daughter. Her name was Sarah.” Teabing then tells of how the descendants of Jesus and Mary intermarried with French royalty in the fifth century “and created a lineage known as the Merovingian bloodline.” We are told that the Merovingians founded Paris.

The hard fact is that none of this intersects anywhere with real history or reliable historical sources. Says Dr Paul Maier, Professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University: “There is not one ranking scholar in the entire world who supports what Dan Brown has done with history”.

No Marriage Tradition Anywhere

While we concede that nowhere in the Bible does it explicitly say that Jesus was *not* married, there is similarly no place where it says he *was* married. There is just no tradition anywhere that he was married. According to Darrell Bock, research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas: “No early Christian text we possess, either biblical or extra biblical, indicates the presence of a wife during His ministry, His crucifixion, or after His resurrection. Whenever texts mention Jesus' family, they refer to His mother, brothers and sisters but never a wife. Furthermore, there is no hint that He was widowed.”

Brown asserts, again through Teabing, that “According to Jewish custom, celibacy was condemned, and the obligation for a Jewish father was to find a suitable wife for his son. If Jesus were not married, at least one of the Bible's gospels would have mentioned it and offered some explanation for His unnatural state of bachelorhood.” Bock, however, offers examples of singleness and celibacy being encouraged by such groups as the Essenes (considered to have been the keepers of the Dead Sea Scrolls) and others and concludes that,

while most Jewish men of Jesus' day did marry, “There was precedent for Jewish men to remain single . . . On the other hand, Jesus showed in other areas that He was willing to go against cultural convention so that even if it had been counter to Jewish practice, such a reason would not have stopped Jesus if He saw God's will being realized in going another way.” Bock observes that “Being always on the move was not a lifestyle conducive to marriage or a family life” and Witherington notes that, “In view of how controversial some of Jesus' actions and words were, it would not take a rocket scientist to realize that he would face a premature death. Under these circumstances it is perfectly understandable that Jesus would have chosen to abstain from marriage.” Indeed, there is no indication that John the Baptist was married, nor were Paul or Barnabas, as we see below.

Other Compelling Evidence

One of the more compelling pieces of evidence pointing to Jesus' singleness comes from the pen of Paul who, when writing about a minister's right to marry, did not cite Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 9:4-6, Paul says, “Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas [i.e., Peter]? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?” Says Bock: “It would have been simple for Paul to add that Jesus was married – had He been. Such a point would have sealed his argument . . .” Bock cites another interesting argument against the notion that Jesus was married: “With the very early veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, in Roman Catholicism, largely out of a desire to have a quasi-divine female figure along with God the Father, had Jesus ever been married, such a woman could scarcely have disappeared without a historical trace. She would have been celebrated and venerated instead, especially in the very strands of

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Catholicism that *The Da Vinci Code* pit against the revelation of ‘the truth’ of Jesus’ marriage.”

In regard to Jesus being married specifically to Mary Magdalene, Bock cites the *Gospel of Philip* 63:32-64:10 as being the “best potential case” out of “all the passages that could suggest Jesus was married.” Brown has Teabing quote this passage as follows: “*And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth.*” We note, first of all, that this is from a late Gnostic document. Possibly even more problematic than that, though, is the fact that the manuscript is so damaged that what we’re actually left with is the following, where brackets indicate gaps in the document or scholarly guesses at missing words: “And the companion of the [. . .] Mary Magdalene. [. . . loved] her more than [all] the disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [. . .].” So, contrary to Brown’s quote, we really don’t know what the text says. In any event, Paul can urge believers to greet one another with a holy kiss. Even if it does say what Brown claims, it doesn’t indicate that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married.

FICTION/DECEPTION: *The early church suppressed “the sacred feminine” dimensions of God, human life, and Christian worship, thereby seeking to subjugate women and convert the world from matriarchal paganism, to patriarchal Christianity.*

FACT/TRUTH: *The Da Vinci Code is ultimately an apologetic to pagan goddess worship and even ritualised sex. True Christianity honours and elevates women and celebrates the feminine and marriage. But it does not speak of goddess worship. However, in our Creator’s nature there must be both masculine and feminine or He could not have made us male and female. And in His plan male/female sex belongs within Godly marriage.*

Brown celebrates what he calls “the sacred feminine”. Robert Langdon explains to Sophie Neveu that “The Grail . . . is symbolic of the lost goddess. When Christianity came along, the old pagan religions did not die easily. Legends of chivalric quests for the lost Grail were in fact stories of forbidden quests to find the lost sacred feminine. Knights who claimed to be ‘searching for the chalice’ were speaking in code as a way to protect themselves from a Church that had subjugated women, banished the goddess, burned nonbelievers, and forbidden the pagan reverence for the sacred feminine.”

The Holy Grail, we come to discover along with Sophie, is not the chalice that Christ used at the last supper – the stuff, incidentally, of medieval legends and not historical fact – but rather Mary Magdalene herself, “the sacred feminine”. At the conclusion of the book, Langdon comes to find what he was looking for from the beginning, the Holy Grail, housed in the Louvre: “*The quest for the Holy Grail is the quest to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene. A journey to pray at the feet of the outcast one.* With a sudden upwelling of reverence, Robert Langdon fell to his knees. For a moment, he thought he heard a woman’s voice . . . the wisdom of the ages . . . whispering up from the chasms of the earth.”

Here we see that *The Da Vinci Code* is not just a gripping thriller which also manages to fabricate history, theology and art in order to undermine the central foundations of the Christian faith, it is ultimately a paean to pagan goddess worship, and ritualised sex. Witherington observes that “The irony is that the ancient Gnostics . . . would have found this utterly repulsive. . . The Gnostics of old would have denied the body and its pleasures. Brown’s unwitting mixture of Gnosticism and ancient goddess worship is a gumbo that none of the old Gnostics or the old pagan practitioners of fertility religion would have found palatable. Real students of history can only wince.”

As to the notion that Mary Magdalene is the figure next to Jesus in Da Vinci’s Last Supper painting, with the apostle John thereby unbelievably omitted, no credible art historian accepts this, nor is

it anywhere reflected in Da Vinci’s journals. In fact, Jack Wasserman, retired art history professor at Temple University, USA can even say: “Just about everything Dan Brown says about Leonardo is wrong.” And Bruce Boucher of the Art Institute in Chicago notes that Leonardo’s depiction of John is consistent with other similar portraits of him in Florence in that period.

Brown no doubt hopes that readers will identify with the sympathetic Sophie Neveu, whose name means “New Wisdom”. At the end of the novel we learn that Sophie is a descendant of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, the Holy Grail! For Witherington, “Sophie Neveu represents the modern public seeking insider knowledge (*gnosis*) so she can understand the secret of her own identity. And not surprisingly, the quest leads ultimately within rather than outside the seeker. This is a very different version of salvation than the apostle Paul’s, who says, ‘if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation’ (2 Corinthians 5:17). In Brown’s novel, salvation is a matter of getting to the bottom of our self to understand our own identity. In other words, the religious quest ultimately leads us back to our own self, an exercise in pure narcissism! The notion of Jesus’ being the Savior is repudiated.”

FICTION/DECEPTION: *Jesus is dead and buried.*

FACT/TRUTH: *Jesus is risen and alive and real today to multiplied millions of fully persuaded believers worldwide.*

Intellectual assaults on Jesus such as have come forth from Dan Brown are nothing new. Writes legendary German theologian Helmut Thielicke: “Again and again the package of divine truth has been opened and everything which did not suit was laid aside. Over and over the figure of Jesus has been horribly amputated until

Jesus is risen and alive and real today to multiplied millions of fully persuaded believers worldwide.

he fit ... what one particular age held to be ‘modern concepts...’ Through the whole history of the church, Jesus Christ has suffered a process of repeated crucifixion... he has been lowered into conceptual graves and covered with stone slabs so that he might not rise and trouble us anymore.”

But, asserts Thielicke, “no mere thought, you see, could ever have survived such strong medicine. No human idea could have endured such attacks, amputations and crucifixions.....but this is the miracle that from this succession of conceptual graves, Jesus Christ has risen again and again. None of them became his last resting place. No tombstone was ever heavy enough to hold him. Again and again, wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he steps into their midst and is present with his strength and consolation.”

So, he concludes: “Be comforted and unafraid, for I say to you now in his name, Jesus Christ himself is already far out in front of every age that attempts to come to grips with him ... he is always the newest and most up to the minute on this old fashioned earth, the Living One on the field of dead bones. For he said ‘Behold I am with you always, even until the end of the world’.”

Be sure. Jesus will more than survive the ephemeral contemporary phenomenon riddled with errors and untruth known as *The Da Vinci Code*. In fact, even through the debates raised by all this, He will still in His love bring thousands to Himself and into the glorious experience of eternal life. It is up to us now to use the opportunity presented by this book and movie to share our faith in, and experience of, Jesus as Lord and Saviour with those whose interest in Him has been raised through their encounter with an entertaining though fabricated story.

For further information, please see:

- <http://www.debunkingdavinci.com>
- <http://www.newmediaministries.org/Default.html>
- http://milano.arounder.com/da_vinci_last_supper/fullscreen.html
- <http://oak.conncoll.edu/rwbal/UnpublishedTalks/DaVinciCodeCritique.d13Page.doc>

I am much indebted to Jamie Morrison, my publications assistant, for his research work on this essay. – MC

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