

Web Site Counters 'Angels and Demons'

✖ **May 15, 2009**-- Just two days before *Angels and Demons*, the sequel to the blockbuster film *The Da Vinci Code*, hit theaters Friday, Westminster Theological Seminary launched a Web site designed to juxtapose the film's facts from its fiction.

The 2005 *Da Vinci Code* film, which claimed Jesus married Mary Magdalene and fathered a child with her, left many Christians and non-Christians questioning the existence of God and wondering whether the Bible could be trusted. Bible scholars expect director Ron Howard's adaptation of Dan Brown's 2000 novel *Angels and Demons* to have similar results.

"In *Angels and Demons* the focus is much more on the relationship between science and faith, science and Christianity, science and religion and where those two things meet," said David Garner, associate professor of systemic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. "[The movie] is the essential denial that Christianity is even relevant any longer because science has completely eclipsed the need for any sort of faith or religion."

The film follows Robert Langdon, a religion expert played by Tom Hanks, as he uncovers a plot to destroy the Vatican. Leaders of the Catholic Church had massacred a group of scientist called the Illuminati in order to silence their claims that science, rather than God, has the answers to life. Langdon must stop the group from enacting their revenge and save the Vatican.

"This Web site [] will help individuals sift through the mix of fact and fiction woven into the novel and presumably the film," said Bill Edgar, Ph. D., professor of apologetics at Westminster, which is based in Philadelphia. "By providing biblically sound facts and highlighting issues related to the intersection of religion and science that *Angels & Demons* presents, we hope to educate people and empower them to engage in conversation about the book and film."

The Web site includes in-depth articles about key elements of the film's claims, an interactive path of the Illuminati and answers to common questions that may arise from the film.

In 2005 Westminster launched a similar Web site, , to help answer questions that arose from the first film. The site drew 730,000 visitors the first month the movie released and is still ranked within the top 15 Web sites found when searching for the *Da Vinci Code*.

"Our aim with this new site is to follow the injunction of the apostle Peter, who encouraged the church to be prepared to gently and respectfully 'make a defense' to those who question the hope they have," explained Peter Lillback, president of Westminster and a contributor to the new Web site.

While the site is intended to help Christians defend their faith, Garner said it may also serve as an evangelistic tool, noting that some people became believers as a result of the *Da Vinci Code* Web site.

"We've had many, many interactions with people that claim that they have come to faith in Christ because of that [Da Vinci code] resource," Garner told *Charisma*. "And that has been really an exciting byproduct."

Lillback said he hopes that Christians use the resource to more effectively engage the culture.

"Whether an individual chooses to see the *Angels & Demons*

film, we trust this site will be a helpful resource and catalyst for people of faith to be better equipped to engage in spiritual conversation generated by this significant media and cultural event.”