

Novel Ideas

Though troubling, the Da Vinci phenomenon presents Christians with a unique opportunity.

More than 40 million people have read Dan Brown's conspiracy thriller *The Da Vinci Code*, and millions more are eagerly awaiting the release of the movie. Mr. Brown's story line features murder, intrigue and a quest for the Holy Grail spanning thousands of years of human history. Central to the plot are alleged revelations and historical discoveries—each of which, according to the author, played a role in “exposing” the supposedly fraudulent nature of Christianity.

Some have questioned why Christians are voicing objections to what is essentially a fictional story. Our concern stems from the author's claim—on the very first page—that *The Da Vinci Code* is based on “fact.”

Using confident and authoritative language, the novel takes aim at the Bible's most important teachings. It distorts several foundational tenets of the Christian faith, including the identity of Jesus, the accuracy of the books of the Bible, the origin of the church, the teachings of the earliest Christians and the relevance of Christianity to the modern world.

Though laced with drama and intrigue, *The Da Vinci Code* ultimately amounts to a venomous diatribe against Christianity, appealing to bogus “facts” and fraudulent data in support of its assertions. It is nothing more than an assemblage of tired objections that Christian apologists and secular historians soundly answered long ago. Readers are told that Christianity involves “the greatest cover-up in human history” (page 249) and that “almost everything our fathers

taught us about Christ is false" (page 235).

Indeed, the heroes in the book repeatedly insist that their views are supported by "religious historians," "art historians" and "well-documented history."

Unfortunately, many readers have accepted those erroneous claims on faith without bothering to examine the overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

The victims of The Da Vinci Code's deception are not Christians, but the uninformed readers who embrace Brown's faulty premise without question. What millions of unsuspecting fans have accepted as truth is, in reality, a vision of world history that is completely distorted.

Virtually every reputable historian—Christian and secular—accepts the well-documented, traditional understanding of Christian history. No serious scholar entertains the perverse assertions put forth in Brown's book.

From art and history to theology and literature, the experts have conclusively demonstrated that The Da Vinci Code's errors are legion. But sadly, many of the book's lay readers do not know this. Brown's 454-page polemic against Jesus Christ and the church leads them away from the one true source of healing and wholeness—the love and salvation of God.

Nevertheless, the Da Vinci phenomenon—troubling as it is—presents Christians with a unique opportunity. Suddenly, it is OK to talk about the origins of our faith. For a while, at least, break-room conversations and cultural dialogue will center around a book focused not on the stock market or the latest political scandal but on Jesus Christ.

Because readers and moviegoers deserve credible answers to their questions about The Da Vinci Code, Focus on the Family has commissioned a number of top scholars to address this issue through our Web site at [www.focusonthefamily.com/dvc](#). With clarity and grace, we must remind those around us that Christianity is relevant and true, and that the biblical documents upon which it is based are historically dependable and divinely inspired.

The answers to life's deepest questions are found not in secretly encoded paintings in the Louvre but in a living person—Jesus Christ. That is the message that needs to be unveiled to the world.