

A Review of **The DA VINCI CODE**, by Bill Bathman

Having traveled in our lifetime to most of the places the author describes, both in France and the British Isles, Harriett and I felt right at home with the setting of *The DaVinci Code*. The fact that we could easily visualize the landmarks and places involved with the story did much to establish initial credibility for this fast-paced yarn, that turned out to be decidedly undeserved.

Perhaps the most disturbing thing about the book is its barely hidden agenda. Brown is obviously a student – if not the instigator – of revisionist history. He has done a masterful job of confusing and deluding the reader by setting the story in a web of pseudo-information about art, history, symbolism, religion, cults and architecture. This is set against the background of the life of Christ, the doctrine of the early church and the formation of the biblical canon. The author mixes up a witch's brew containing a pinch of accurate information with a multitude of falsehoods and serves it up for the less discerning to swallow as "truth."

This is Brown's regular pattern. He makes an assumption and then proceeds as though it were a fact. He builds his case on these "facts" woven together into an intricate web. By this method the author outdistances Hegel's leap and he must hold the Olympic world record for jumping to conclusions.

In this sense the book is less a novel and more Gnostic propaganda. A glance at a few Googles reveals the book has fed the fires of Christian bashing. People are quoting it as a trustworthy source of factual information about Christian history. The *New York Daily News* reviewer said of Brown, "His research is impeccable" – (so much for the quality of research at the *NY Daily News*!). The world, generally speaking, seems to reserve all its skepticism for Christianity alone, and is ready to believe almost anything else no matter how fantastic or implausible.

The goal for this Babel of "facts" is the dream of every humanist – to build a kingdom on earth that is good and just, but without God. Jehovah must be excluded altogether from the world He created. The new kingdom must be reasonable and tolerant of virtually all evil where the only remaining sin of mankind is intolerance. The religion of humanism is self-centered. There is no room for a God who asks for repentance or obedience.

Communism is perhaps the most violent form of humanism. From my many years of working in communist countries, I recognized the plan early on in the book and noted that it was repeated frequently – history is twisted to suit the plot.

Brown's attack on Christianity is less than subtle and focuses on two principal issues: the Deity of Jesus Christ and the canon of Scripture. Re the former, his contention is easily refuted when one considers that *if* Christ had been married and fathered a child, it could not have been hushed up 400 years later at the Council of Nicaea. Nor was His Deity a later idea to be voted on. The fourth century Council was a time of formalizing existing beliefs and practices, witnessed to and established by men who were with Christ during His earthly sojourn and handed down from apostolic times.

To support his attack on the canon of the New Testament, Brown draws heavily on the Gnostic gospels. These were written in the second and third century and their authenticity is suspect. Such writings are known as *pseudepigrapha* – writings falsely credited to an important person to give the work credibility. The writers were less interested in history and more concerned with promoting an esoteric mystery religion. By contrast, there is firm evidence that the New Testament Gospels were written by those whom they claim for authorship. These accounts are confirmed by non-Christian historical sources.

The abundant evidence and true historic record of Jesus Christ, both secular and sacred, which supports His life, death and resurrection as we have it in the New Testament is much more compelling than any of the sources Brown relies on for his theory. He will, however, appeal to goddess-worshiping conspiracy buffs who enjoy weird theories of biblical interpretation.

Lastly, a word about the *sacred feminine*. This is Brown's major theme. While Jesus Christ is denied divinity in his book he seeks to promote Mary Magdalene as a goddess to be worshiped. His profane premise, that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had an affair that produced a daughter, needs only to be stated to be dismissed as unvarnished blasphemy.

In summary, the author exhibited an interesting blend of fact and fiction, but his homogenization of worldviews led to a flawed conclusion. Brown might be disappointed to discover that Christianity will never be "dead." However, I would be the first to admit that it is in need of doctors – spiritual doctors.

The "condition" of the patient has to some extent worsened in recent years due to the malpractice of some spiritual doctors. But it's not that Christianity has been "tried and found wanting." For the most part, it hasn't been "tried." The Psalmist, David, enjoins us to "*Taste and see that the LORD is good.*" Psalm 34:8