

***THE DA VINCI CODE* – BLASPHEMY HITS THE BIG SCREEN**

By Don Feder

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The Da Vinci Code -- which opened today -- might be subtitled “Religion for Morons” or “Gnosticism Meets The New Age.”

It’s fantasy posing as reality. The Sony Pictures film is blasphemous, defames the Catholic Church, and promotes neo-pagan Goddess worship.

I find it offensive, and I’m not even a Christian.

Director Ron Howard (who specializes in visual candy) assures us that Opie’s opus will be true to the novel – a pretentious, overwritten piece of trash that makes *Bridget Jones’s Diary* look like one of the 100 Greatest Books Ever Written.

The plot of Dan Brown’s mega-best seller (45 million copies sold) goes like this: Jesus married Mary Magdalene, who bore his children, who became the Merovingian monarchs of France, whose descendants are running around Europe today – being chased by Opus Dei or Mormon missionaries or Martians or someone.

Again, according to *The Code*, The Catholic Church has for centuries concealed the truth about Jesus to maintain its power. Mary Magdalene represents the “sacred feminine” – which supposedly predates monotheism – and which wicked patriarchalists have spent millennia trying to suppress, the better to deny man’s sexual nature and subjugate women.

The book (and presumably the film) even has a ritualistic orgy, where communicants dance with orbs and the grand master of the book's mysterious order gets frisky with a plump, middle-aged lady. The scene is described on page 311: "'The woman you behold is love!' The women called, raising their orbs again. The men responded, 'She has her dwelling place in eternity.'" (All I want is lovin' you, and music, music, music?)

Brown may have achieved the impossible -- devised a type of mumbo-jumbo that makes "healing" crystals seem serious.

Orthodox Christians are rightly offended by *The Code's* plot, denying as it does the divinity of Jesus and his mission.

People are free to believe, or not believe, in Jesus. Jews and Christians have been debating the identity of the Messiah, what God requires of us and how salvation may be achieved for almost 2,000 years. But to turn the life of a man almost a billion people on this planet worship into a soap opera beggars the term insensitive.

At least Christians can take comfort in the fact that their's isn't the only faith maligned and misrepresented by Brown's book.

On page 309, Brown writes of his protagonist: "Langdon's Jewish students always looked flabbergasted when he first told them that the early Jewish tradition involved ritualistic sex. In the Temple, no less. Early Jews believed that the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple housed not only God but also His powerful female equal, Shekinah. Men seeking spiritual wholeness came to the Temple to visit priestesses – or hierodules – with whom they made love and experienced the divine through physical union."

This would be amusing, were it not so disgusting. Jews daily pray for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple. For what – so men can "experience the divine" by getting a little nookie?

In Judaism, “Shekinah” refers to the Divine presence, at one time said to reside at the Temple. Because the Hebrew word is feminine, in Brown’s fevered imagining, it has morphed into a female deity.

There were no “priestesses” in the Temple. The Torah condemns the ritual prostitution practiced by the Canaanites as “an abomination” – its most severe censure.

It was Judaism that first related sexuality to morality. (Christian sexual ethics come from the Jewish Bible.) Where did Brown get his understanding of ancient Judaism – from that noted Kabbalist, Madonna? Did he discover Jewish polytheism among the documents hidden away in the Templars’ secret crypt, along with Jesus’ marriage license?

In an article on nationalreview.com, David Klinghoffer argues that Jews also should be concerned about *The Da Vinci Code* because of its disturbing parallels to “The Protocols of The Elders of Zion.”

“The Protocols,” a forged document, postulates a conspiracy of Jewish leaders to conceal the truth about their alleged control of humanity through various political movements. *The Da Vinci Code* claims the Catholic Church is involved in a massive cover-up to hide the real history of Jesus, in order to maintain its control of the faithful. In both cases, the public is invited to scorn the sinister conspirators -- Jews or Catholics.

As a Goddess-worshipping, neo-pagan, Brown seeks to reverse the Bible’s process of taming man’s erotic nature (by channeling it to fidelity and family), once again divorcing the sexual from the spiritual – freeing man’s hedonistic urges from

Judeo-Christian constraints. That Brown has so many admirers among Hollywood libertines is unsurprising.

But why all the fuss? After all, it's only a movie, right?

The novelist/philosopher Ayn Rand was once asked why she primarily wrote fiction, instead of works of philosophy. Rand explained that it's far easier to convey ideas through fiction than non-fiction – witness Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, witness *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, witness *Ben-Hur*, *The Screwtape Letters* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Novels and films aren't footnoted. The author or screenwriter can create a thoroughly convincing universe that powerfully projects his message. From *The Birth of a Nation* and *Triumph of The Will* to *Thelma and Louise* and *Brokeback Mountain*, films have told us how to think about the world around us.

Most movies present the world according to Hollywood (and the word became flesh – lots of flesh) – that the sex act is good in and of itself, that people should follow their feelings (which invariably will lead them to right conduct and happiness), that prayer is like throwing a penny in a wishing well, that God is within us, that God is love, that God makes no demands of us and that the followers of traditional religion are a bunch of uptight, puritanical, hypocritical killjoys.

Debunking Christianity – which is *The Da Vinci Code's* mission – advances this worldview.

All too many people read novels or see films and think they're experiencing reality. Their understanding of the complicated history of settlers and Indians comes from *Dances With Wolves*. They are informed about the crusades by *Kingdom of*

Heaven. Their understanding of the theory of global warming comes from *The Day After Tomorrow*.

According to a Barna Group survey, 24% of those who read *The Da Vinci Code* said it aided their “personal spiritual growth and understanding.” In other words, one in four of its readers believe the book’s thesis (as opposed to its storyline) is true. Our “personal spiritual growth” isn’t aided by what we believe to be a lie.

The best response to *The Da Vinci Code* – besides derisive laughter – is a boycott. Resist the urge to determine just how bad it is by buying a ticket. You’ll only be rewarding the perpetrators – perhaps encouraging *The Da Vinci Code: Part II*, wherein Dan Brown reveals that Jesus was really married to Lazarus.

This column originally appeared at www.GrasstopsUSA.org