



CATHOLIC EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

WHY THE CENTER? CERC PAMPHLET ADVISORY BOARD FEEDBACK CONTACT US

MAKE A DONATION



RECENT ARTICLES

The Democrats' New Bob Casey Problem

A disgusting portrait of an 'artist'

Without God We are Nothing

On the Road to Limerick

RELATED ARTICLES

Polluted Water, Polluted Culture

Vatican Sets Record Straight on Sexual Abuse

Why priests don't have kids



SHARE [social media icons] PRINT E-MAIL

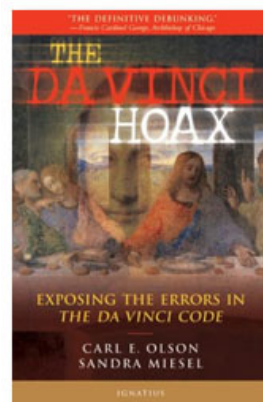
Exposing the Errors in *The Da Vinci Code*
 CARL E. OLSON & SANDRA MIESEL

Best selling author Carl Olson and journalist Sandra Miesel answer all the important questions raised by *The Da Vinci Code*. Their painstaking research into *The Code* and its sources reveals some surprising truths. No one who has read or heard about *The Da Vinci Code* should miss this provocative and illuminating new book.

(Note: Footnotes for these selected excerpts have been removed.)

Introduction: *The Da Vinci Code* Phenomenon

The immense success of *The Da Vinci Code* and its strong language about early Christianity and the Catholic Church has resulted in substantial controversy over many of the "facts" within its pages. Not only is the novel influencing the views of non-Christian readers, it is raising difficult questions in the minds of many Christians, some of whom are being asked about Brown's interpretation of Church history and theology. One such reader recently wrote to us, saying: "I own a Catholic bookstore. We are getting bombarded daily by people who are buying into the garbage in this book. You cannot believe how many people have been exposed to this book. . . . We even had an elderly aunt talking about Opus Dei tonight and yelling at us that the book is true or it couldn't be printed." Another reader openly admitted the doubts that *The Da Vinci Code* has raised in his mind:



"Honestly, [reading the book] shook my whole faith. I realize that the book is fiction, but much of what he wrote about seemed like it was based on historical facts aside from the characters. Since I am not a Christian scholar I don't even know where to begin to refute these claims. As the Catholic church holds much of the evidence that would refute the drivel in *The Da Vinci Code*, I was wondering if you could point me in the right direction to a scholarly non-Christian book that might help me make better sense of the whole historical chain of events. If Christianity is nothing more than a big accommodation, it becomes relegated to a lifestyle choice and not a religion, which I do not want to believe."

We've heard many similar stories in recent months and expect to hear more, which is the main reason this book has been written. Just as the *Left Behind* books have been used to promote a premillennial dispensationalist understanding of Scripture and the end times, *The Da Vinci Code* has proven to be an effective tool for attacking Christian doctrine and undermining the faith of those uncertain of how to respond to the many accusations leveled against the Church.

Sadly, it's not surprising that a work of fiction has produced confusion among some Christians about Church history and doctrine at a time when catechesis and basic knowledge of the Faith are so poor. It is even less surprising that non-Christian readers would be taken in by Brown's revisionist history of the Church. After all, it's a demonstrated fact that most Americans are illiterate about major events in the history of their own country. For example, one recent study of historical literacy among young Americans found that most "College seniors could not identify Valley Forge, words from the Gettysburg Address, or even the basic principles of the U.S."

SEARCH CERC...



Constitution". So why should we expect them to be able to discern fact from fiction when it comes to early Church history and the complex debates over the divinity and person of Jesus Christ that took place in the first four centuries of the Church? An example of this is a recent online article about a Catholic discussion group meeting to discuss *The Da Vinci Code* at a Catholic parish. The author of the article, David Rotert writes:

"I queried several in the audience why they were there, and what their reaction was to the book and the evenings' discussion. One woman told of her teenage son who was reluctant to go through the sacrament of Confirmation, yet after reading the book found a more believable, understandable, even human Jesus. That actually inspired him to continue the path. Another person said that such material added to the mystery, and in doing so served to strengthen her faith. For one it called into question the credibility of the teaching of the Church, yet felt that faith needs to be challenged to be pursued. Others voiced the idea that this book reinforced a disenchantment with the Church."

This group, and others similar to it, obviously emphasize opinion and feelings over careful and objective study. This ambivalent approach to the claims of the novel are summarized well in Rotert's remark: "Fortunately the evenings [sic] participants did not come expecting Yes/No answers". The same remark could be made about religious education in many parishes and churches today, again highlighting the need for a more rigorous approach to popular works such as *The Da Vinci Code*.

Fiction, especially best-selling popular fiction such as *The Da Vinci Code*, has become a major means of "educating" the masses about many, varied topics, but especially issues that are controversial and can be easily sensationalized. The belief that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, had children, and was not divine has existed for several decades in American pop culture and can even be traced back to feminist groups in the nineteenth-century. Yet many, if not most, readers of Brown's novel seem unaware of this — even though the novel provides the titles of several books written in the last two or three decades proposing such beliefs.

Chapter 1: Gnosticism: The Religion of the Code

A serious question ignored by *The Da Vinci Code* is this: Why should the writings of the Gnostics be considered more dependable than the canonical writings, especially when they were written some fifty to three hundred years later than the New Testament writings? It's easy for writers such as Brown, who are sympathetic to the gnostics (or at least to some of their ideas), to criticize the canonical Gospels and call many of the stories and sayings contained in them into question. But without the canonical Gospels there would be *no* historical Jesus at all, *no* meaningful narrative of his life, and *no* decent sense of what he did, how he acted, and how he related to others.

As we pointed out, the "gnostic gospels" aren't gospels at all in the sense of the four canonical gospels, which are filled with narrative, concrete details, historical figures, political activity, and details about social and religious life. Contrary to Teabing's assertion that "the early Church literally *stole* Jesus" and shrouded his "human message . . . in an impenetrable cloak of divinity", and used it to expand their own power (233), the Church was intent, from the very beginning, on holding on to the humanity and divinity of Christ and on telling the story of his life on earth without washing away the sorrow, pain, joy, and blood that so often accompanied it. The Church fought to keep Christianity firmly rooted in history and fact "rather than the random mythologies reinvented at the whim of each rising Gnostic sage. The church was struggling to retain the idea of Jesus as a historical human being who lived and died in a specific place and time, not in a timeless never-never land."

A serious question ignored by *The Da Vinci Code* is this: Why should the writings of the Gnostics be considered more dependable than the canonical writings, especially when they were written some fifty to three hundred years later than the New Testament writings?

The Jesus of the gnostic writings is rarely recognizable as a Jewish carpenter, teacher, and prophet dwelling in first century Palestine; instead, he is often described as a phantom-like

creature who lectures at length about the "deficiency of aeons", "the mother", "the Arrogant One", and "the archons" — all terms that only the gnostic elite would comprehend, hence their secretive, gnostic character. One strain of gnosticism, known as docetism, held that Jesus only seemed, or appeared, to be a man. Adherents believed this because of their dislike for the physical body and the material realm, a common trait among gnostics. The tendency towards a docetist understanding of Jesus — if not a fully formed docetist Christology — existed in the first century and was addressed in some of the later writings of Paul (Colossians and the pastoral Epistles) and John (cf. 1 Jn 4:2; 5:6; 2 Jn 7). In the second century, docetism became a developed theology and made its appearance in various Gnostic writings, including the *Acts of John*, written in the late second century:

"Sometimes when I would lay hold on him, I met with a material and solid body, and at other times, again, when I felt him, the substance was immaterial and as if it existed not at all. And if at any time he were bidden by some one of the Pharisees and went to the bidding, we went with him, and there was set before each one of us a loaf by them that had bidden us, and with us he also received one; and his own he would bless and part it among us: and of that little every one was filled, and our own loaves were saved whole, so that they which bade him were amazed. And oftentimes when I walked with him, I desired to see the print of his foot, whether it appeared on the earth; for I saw him as it were lifting himself up from the earth: and I never saw it."

If the material realm is evil, as almost all gnostic groups believed, why would a being such as Christ have anything to do with it? And why should we be concerned at all with history and the common life of ordinary people? The gnostic Christ is not interested in earthly, historical events as much as freeing the spirit from the entrapment of the body. In many gnostic texts, Christ and Jesus are posited as two separate beings — Christ being from above and Jesus, the bodily vessel that Christ dwelled in for a time on earth, from below. "This kind of Christology could be called 'separationist,' in that it saw two clear and separate persons, the human being Jesus and the divine aeon Christ who temporarily dwelled in him", notes Ehrman. "According to some forms of these Gnostic views, the Christ descended into Jesus at his baptism, empowering him for his ministry, and then left him prior to his death. Thus it was that the divine Christ escaped suffering. Jesus, in this view, suffered alone."

Gnosticism was exclusive, elitist, and esoteric, open only to a few. Christianity, on the other hand, is inclusive and exoteric, open to all those who acknowledge the beliefs of the Faith handed down by Jesus and enter into a life-giving relationship with him. Jesus Christ of the canonical Gospels is a breathing, flesh-and-blood person; he gets hungry, weeps, eats and drinks with common people, and dies. Jesus Christ of the gnostic writings is a phantom, a spirit who sometimes inhabits a body and sometimes doesn't, and who talks in ways that very few could understand. Once again, *The Da Vinci Code* has it backwards.

Chapter 2: The Magdalene: Saint, Sinner, or Goddess?

Any supposed attempts to rid the Church of Mary Magdalene or ban her name from being mentioned did not succeed, simply because they didn't exist. In fact, many of the early Church Fathers remark about the Magdalene, and she is described by Hippolytus (c. 170-c. 236) as "the apostle to the apostles" in his commentary on the Song of Songs. Even feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, hardly a supporter of the Catholic hierarchy, scoffs at the notion of a conspiracy against Mary Magdalene, pointing to the positive treatment she received from the early Church Fathers:

"This high regard for Mary Magdalene continues in the fourth- and fifth-century Latin fathers of the church. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, associated Mary Magdalene with the New Eve who clings to Christ as the new Tree of Life, thereby reversing the unfaithfulness of the first Eve. Augustine maintains this view, pairing Mary Magdalene with Christ as symbol of the New Eve and the church in relation to Christ as the New Adam. Her faithfulness reversed the sin of the first Eve."

By the eighth century the Western Church was celebrating a feast day for Mary Magdalene, the twenty-second day of July. By the ninth century there were specific prayers for her feast

This high regard for Mary

day, and by the eleventh century there was "a complete mass dedicated to the saint (with introit, gradual, offertory, communion, and lessons)". It was also in the eleventh century that devotion to the Magdalene began to noticeably increase. The cult of Mary Magdalene was established at Vézelay, the Romanesque church in Burgandy that had been founded in the ninth century and was originally dedicated to the Virgin Mary. During the abbacy of Geoffrey (1037-1052) Mary was recognized as the patron of that church in a papal bull dated April 27, 1050, by Pope Leo IX. At the same time, relics of the Magdalene were being sought and gathered in earnest, and soon Vézelay became a major destination for pilgrimages.

Numerous stories, almost all of them fanciful and legendary in nature, were created to explain how Mary's remains had arrived at Vézelay. A leading tradition in the West held that Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus were expelled from Palestine following the crucifixion of Christ. Floating in an oarless boat, they eventually arrived at the southern coast of France. In the East, a tradition stated that Mary had been the companion of the Apostle John and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and that they had all settled in Ephesus. According to *The Golden Legend*, the Magdalene and John were betrothed. Some legends depict Mary living her final days in a cave in France, a hermit covered only by her long hair; these stories probably date back no farther than the ninth century.

During the late medieval era it was common to hear sermons about Mary Magdalene and how she fulfilled the apostolic life. She was also a model for Christians seeking to leave behind a life of sensuality and luxury, an encouragement to monks and nuns, as well as an exhortation to prostitutes. "But most of all a Magdalene sermon was the vehicle by which preachers called people to penance and offered them the hope of salvation. . . . We must not forget that it is our own age that officially memorializes Saint Mary Magdalene as a disciple; it was the 'Dark Ages' that honored her as a preacher and apostle of the apostles."

the high regard for Mary Magdalene continues in the fourth- and fifth-century Latin fathers of the church. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, associated Mary Magdalene with the New Eve who clings to Christ as the new Tree of Life, thereby reversing the unfaithfulness of the first Eve. Augustine maintains this view, pairing Mary Magdalene with Christ as symbol of the New Eve and the church in relation to Christ as the New Adam. Her faithfulness reversed the sin of the first Eve.

Chapter 3: The Christ and the Code

So what about Teabing's claim that until A.D. 325 — nearly three centuries following Jesus' time on earth — nobody believed that Jesus was anything more than "a mortal prophet" and "a great and powerful man"? Notice that Teabing does not personally reject the divinity of Jesus (many people do reject it), or claim that certain modern day scholars deny that Jesus was somehow divine (many scholars do deny it), but that the early followers of Jesus — the Christians of the first three centuries following Jesus' time on earth — believed that he was not divine at all, but "a mortal" only. For one thing, this seriously undermines the credibility of Teabing's character, for any historian, whether Christian or not, knows that the early Christians most definitely believed that Jesus of Nazareth was somehow divine, being the "Son of God" and the resurrected Christ. In fact, the central issue at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 was *not* whether Jesus was merely human or something more, but how exactly his divinity — which even the heretic Arius acknowledged — was to be understood: Was he fully divine? Was the Son equal to the Father? Was he a lesser god? What did it mean to say that the Son was "begotten", as the Gospel of John states in several places (Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18)?

Even *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and *The Templar Revelation*, two of Brown's main sources for his statements about Jesus, Constantine, paganism, and the Council of Nicaea, do not propose that prior to A.D. 325 nobody believed Jesus was divine. In fact, the authors of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* do not even deny the possibility that Jesus was divine; their main interest is insisting that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene: "And while we ourselves cannot subscribe to Jesus' divinity, our conclusions do not preclude others from

Even *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* and *The Templar Revelation*, two of Brown's main sources for his statements about Jesus, Constantine, paganism, and the Council of Nicaea, do not

doing so. Quite simply there is no reason why Jesus could not have married and fathered children while still retaining his divinity."

propose that prior to A.D. 325 nobody believed Jesus was divine.

The authors of *The Templar Revelation* have a different perspective; although they admit that Jesus was called the "Son of God" by his early followers, they write that this was a mistake, and that "Jesus was not so much the Son of God as a devoted son of the Goddess." Their central thesis is that Jesus was "essentially an Egyptian missionary" intent on promoting the pagan religion of the Isis/Osiris mystery cult of Egypt. "Christianity was not the religion founded by the unique Son of God who died for all our sins", they write, "it was the worship of Isis and Osiris repackaged. However, it rapidly became a personality cult, centered on Jesus." Both books agree that Jesus' main goal was the establishment of political power, that he did not die on the cross, and that his resurrection was a clever and elaborate hoax, all of which is either stated directly or hinted at in *The Da Vinci Code*.

The essential point is that Teabing's statements, which apparently reflect Brown's beliefs as well, are not only false, they aren't even supported by Brown's main sources. What *The Da Vinci Code* does share with *The Templar Revelation* and *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* is the conviction that historical, creedal Christianity is a lie, an elaborate ruse born out the thirst for power and a violent desire to suppress the truth about Jesus: that he was a mere mortal, or a married man with lofty political goals, or the high priest of an Egyptian mystery religion. In their own ways, each denies the death and resurrection of Jesus, his salvific work, and the establishment of a unique people — the Church — bound not by ethnicity or gender or social status, but by the unique work of Jesus Christ, the God-man. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus", the apostle tells the Christians in Galatia, "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:26-28).

Chapter 4: Constantine, Paganism, and Nicaea

Constantine's move from paganism to Christianity was not immediate or always consistent. But over the course of several years he increased his support of the Church and implemented laws against certain pagan practices and activities. "For a time it seemed as if merely tolerance and equality were to prevail", states *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Constantine showed equal favour to both religious. As *pontifex maximus* he watched over the heathen worship and protected its rights. The one thing he did was to suppress divination and magic; this the heathen emperors had also at times sought to do. Thus, in 320, the emperor forbade the diviners or haruspices to enter a private house under pain of death."

Some scholars argue that the chasm between the monotheism of Christianity and the cult of *Sol Invictus* was not as wide as it might initially appear. The cult of *Sol Invictus* was not polytheistic or even pantheistic, but monotheistic; it was "the worship of the divine spirit by whom the whole universe was ruled, the spirit whose symbol is the sun; a symbol in which this spirit in some way specially manifests itself. . . . The whole cult is penetrated with the idea of an overruling divine monarchy. Moreover, the cult was in harmony with a philosophical religion steadily growing, in the high places of the administration, throughout this same [fourth] century, the cult of *Summus Deus* — the God who is supreme."

For Constantine — a man without concern for theological precision — there was probably little, if any, distinction between the pagan and Christian notions of God (even though he surely recognized the differences in worship and morality). "The transition from solar monotheism (the most popular form of contemporary paganism) to Christianity was not difficult", writes Henry Chadwick. "In Old Testament prophecy Christ was entitled 'the sun of righteousness' [Mal. 4:2]. Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 200) speaks of Christ

William Durant, hardly partial to the Catholic Church, writes, "His Christianity, beginning as policy, appears to have graduated into sincere conviction. He became the most persistent

driving his chariot across the sky like a Sun-god. . . . Tertullian says that many pagans imagined the Christians worshiped the sun because they met on Sundays and prayed towards the East."

The Da Vinci Code implies that Constantine was baptized against his wishes (232). This was not the case. He had desired to be baptized in the waters of the Jordan River, where Jesus had been baptized, but it was not to be. Not long after the Easter of 337 he called together some bishops, removed his purple robe, and put on the white garments of a catechumen, then was baptized by Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia. He died a few days later. It was common for Christians at the time to put off baptism until their deathbed. Serious sins committed after baptism would require severe penance, so some considered it safer to wait until the end of life to be baptized. This practice was mentioned by Augustine in his *Confessions*; as a child he nearly died of illness and his mother considered having him baptized. Augustine writes that once he recovered, however, "my cleansing was deferred, as if it were inevitable that, if I should live, I would be further polluted; and, further, because the guilt contracted by sin after baptism would be still greater and more perilous."¹⁸ This approach to baptism would have fit Constantine's case since he undoubtedly understood that many of his actions were considered grave sins by the Church: "It was common at this time (and continued so until about A.D. 400) to postpone baptism to the end of one's life, especially if one's duty as an official included torture and execution of criminals. Part of the reason for postponement lay in the seriousness with which the responsibilities were taken."

preacher in his realm, persecuted heretics faithfully, and took God into partnership at every step. Wiser than Diocletian, he gave new life to an aging Empire by associating it with a young religion, a vigorous organization, a fresh morality."

Constantine did see Christianity as a unifying force — and he was correct in his assessment that Christianity, not paganism, had the moral core and theological vision to change society for the better. He may not have been a saint, but neither was he simply a political operator without concern for truth and goodness. William Durant, hardly partial to the Catholic Church, writes, "His Christianity, beginning as policy, appears to have graduated into sincere conviction. He became the most persistent preacher in his realm, persecuted heretics faithfully, and took God into partnership at every step. Wiser than Diocletian, he gave new life to an aging Empire by associating it with a young religion, a vigorous organization, a fresh morality." Constantine was not a life-long pagan or a cynical manipulator, as *The Da Vinci Code* suggests. "[Dan] Brown has turned him into a cartoonish villain", states Dr. Mitchell. "That Constantine the emperor had "political" motives (*The Da Vinci Code*, p. 234) is hardly news to anyone! The question is how religion and politics (which cannot be separated in the ancient world) were interrelated in him." The "answers" that Brown gives to that question are less than satisfying as we'll see in his explanation of how Constantine supposedly "created" a "hybrid religion" of paganism and Christianity.

Chapter 5: Myths of the Holy Grail

The object of a successful Grail quest is "to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene", (257) something Brown's hero — but not his heroine — actually gets to do at the novel's sodden climax. (454). On the other hand, the villainous Vatican's Grail quests were secret missions to kill the Magdalene's descendants who continue the holy blood of Jesus (257). The hierarchy has always tried to destroy the Grail to keep its ill-gotten patriarchal power (268). As another negative example, Brown's villain Teabing is a quester so murderously obsessed that the Grail has become his spiritual mistress and therefore he fails for unworthiness.

Brown's version of the Priory of Sion not only guards the secret of the Magdalene-Grail equation but also her relics, her bloodline, and four huge chests full of documents verifying same. Significantly, he adds another feature to the society, goddess-worship, which had not featured at all in the program of the modern Priory.

To this degree Brown fuses the principal tenets of *Holy Blood*, *Holy Grail* with *The Templar Revelation's* emphasis on the goddess and the mystical feminism of Margaret Starbird.

Brown makes large

Brown's characters worship the fusion of masculine and feminine divinity through the ancient pagan rite of *hieros gamos* "sacred marriage" but he doesn't specifically identify Jesus and Mary Magdalene as lovers who performed this ritual. They are properly wed, just like his heroine Sophie's grandparents in *The Da Vinci Code*, and their cultic functions are discreetly unmentioned. Starbird has the Magdalene as Christ's Bride in *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar*, but Picknett and Prince have Jesus and Mary Magdalene unmarried — and uncongenial — participants in the sexual worship of the Egyptian goddess Isis. Picknett's recent solo book, *Mary Magdalene: Christianity's Hidden Goddess* depicts her as a Jewish-Ethiopian goddess-worshipping priestess-preacher of Johannite Christianity. Whatever happened to the signature red hair? Perhaps Brown realized that he'd better stick to prettier theories.

Brown makes large claims for the Grail story, calling it "the most enduring legend of all time" (249). Never mind that it was unknown until the late twelfth century. He wonders why none of the other Passion relics have attracted such a mystique, apparently unaware of the stories of the True Cross which are more than seven centuries older and connected with widely dispersed visible relics. Brown says that the Grail has been the object of wars and quests — as if these were real and not literary events.

Brown makes large claims for the Grail story, calling it "the most enduring legend of all time" (249). Never mind that it was unknown until the late twelfth century. He wonders why none of the other Passion relics have attracted such a mystique, apparently unaware of the stories of the True Cross which are more than seven centuries older and connected with widely dispersed visible relics. Brown says that the Grail has been the object of wars and quests — as if these were real and not literary events.

To universalize the Grail, Brown connects it with a V-shaped figure called the "chalice". It is supposed to be the most ancient symbol of femininity while the reversed figure termed the "blade" represents masculinity. Turned into triangles and superimposed, they become the familiar Star of David or Seal of Solomon, which supposedly means a conjunction of gender principles. Brown is taking these ideas from Riane Eisler's *Chalice and the Blade* which Neo-Pagan writer Margot Adler calls "a provocative, feminist reinterpretation of history". Dipping a blade into a chalice is in fact a detail in Gardnerian Wiccan ritual.

Incidentally, one paragraph of Alder's own summary of common Neo-Pagan beliefs wouldn't have sounded out of place in *The Da Vinci Code*: "In our culture which has for so long denied and denigrated the feminine as negative, evil or, at best, small and unimportant, women (and men too) will never understand their own creative strength and divine nature until they embrace the creative feminine, the source of inspiration, the Goddess within." The incompatibility of these notions with Christianity should be obvious.

The Star (more properly the Shield) of David wasn't used by Jews in biblical times but entered Jewish culture as a protective sign via Islamic magic practices around the tenth century. It became a heraldic symbol in early modern Prague and finally emerged as the universal emblem of Jewishness among nineteenth century Zionists, hence its use on the Israeli flag.⁴ Granted that anything concave is "feminine" and anything convex is "masculine" in a Freudian sense, if the so-called chalice and blade were as primordial and universal as Brown claims, they would be easy to detect in the most ancient human societies. But an examination of a work by pagan-friendly archeologist Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*, on Neolithic divine imagery reveals many kinds of sexual symbols, but no chalices or blades. Going farther back in time to Ice Age Europe, two pages of Paleolithic signs reproduced by Alexander Marshak in *The Roots of Civilization* show a variety of female and male signs but only one possible chalice.

On the other hand, recognition of the female body as a container is a basic mythological insight simply extrapolated from observing the functions of breast and womb as vessels. *The Great Mother* by Erich Neumann is a notable analysis of the worldwide maternal archetype from a Jungian perspective. Neumann connects the grail with the breast as an "open" symbol of nourishment, transformation, and fertility.

These traits will be met in the legendary Holy Grail. But it's worth noting that Mary Magdalene

is essentially a *transformed* rather than a *transforming* person: in the Bible she goes from possessed to free; in tradition she goes from sinner to saint. In neither the canonical nor the Gnostic gospels is she physically fertile; her impact is spiritual only. The Grail-as-Magdalone is a poor fit. Our Blessed Lady as Virgin and Mother — Neuman analyzes her in both roles — makes the perfect living Grail because she is the "container" par excellence of Christ's own blood.

Chapter 6: The Real Templars

Brown picked up the supposed heterodoxy of round churches from *The Templar Revelation*, which cites no Church document as evidence. Yet round churches have never been forbidden nor cruciform ones imposed by ecclesiastical authorities. Not all the great churches of the Middle Ages were shaped like a Latin cross. Teabing's allusion to the Pantheon (later repeated by Langdon) refers to a temple of all the gods in Rome that was rededicated as a Christian church in 609 in honor of St. Mary and the Martyrs. There are also round churches in Rome built by Christians, S. Costanza (ca. 350) and S. Stefano Rotundo (ca. 475). The shape has been revived in recent decades, see for example the Catholic Cathedral of Liverpool, designed in the 1950s and St. Louis Priory in St. Louis, Missouri, completed in 1962. Are we to imagine that all the architects were crypto-sun worshippers? If there's an intrinsic connection between roundness and paganism, the ancient Greeks and Romans never heard of it, inasmuch as their temples were almost always rectangular.

The true inspiration for distinctive Templar churches was the Anastasis Rotunda, a high-domed circular structure that Constantine ordered built over the Tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, adjacent to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (in use by 350). Muslims adapted its double-walled design, building a circular core within an outer octagonal shell for their famous Dome of the Rock on Temple Mount (ca. 690). This shrine was reclaimed as a church during Crusader occupation and named the Temple of the Lord. Medieval depictions of the original Temple of Solomon were often modeled on the re-christened Dome. It gave the Templars their name and appears on the reverse of their seal. The image stuck: a domed, polygonal Temple appears in *Raphael's Espousals of the Virgin*, painted in 1504.

Brown picked up the supposed heterodoxy of round churches from *The Templar Revelation*, which cites no Church document as evidence. Yet round churches have never been forbidden nor cruciform ones imposed by ecclesiastical authorities. Not all the great churches of the Middle Ages were shaped like a Latin cross.

Few Templar churches were circular. St. Sepulchre's in Cambridge, England (1130) is a rare surviving example. The church within their huge Holy Land fortress Chateau Pélerin (ca. 1220) is imperfectly round but echoes the contours of the Anastasis Rotunda. The twelfth century Paris and London Temples had circular naves with oblong choir sections added later. Teabing's claim of perfect circularity misrepresents the building's actual appearance. And Brown appears so unfamiliar with churches that he can't tell one end of it from another. Brown's hero Langdon thinks the "boxy annex" of the oblong portion is the nave of the church (343). The oblong part is in fact the choir, not the nave. (How did he overlook the opportunity to read an oblong part conjoined with a circular part as a pagan symbol of coition?) But not all round churches were built by Templars and not all centrally-planned Templar churches were round. Some were polygonal, recalling the Dome of the Rock.

Brown's depiction of the London Temple is defective, although detailed descriptions exist in one of his sources, not to mention ample data and photographs available on the Internet. Brown's characters are by turns too knowledgeable and too ignorant, as well as oblivious to what's in front of their eyes. For instance, the building's random patches of dark and light stonework caused by post World War II repairs aren't noticed. The central arcade of columns somehow becomes a room-encircling stone bench. The characters count ten tomb effigies of stone knights before they notice that one tomb lacks an effigy. Teabing the expert historian wrongly assumes that the sculptures depict Templars when he should have known that they are figures of Templar admirers, including the famous Sir John Marshall and two of his sons.

The reason for belaboring these points is that fantasies about the Knights' intellectual and artistic achievements loom large in *Holy Blood*, *Holy Grail* and *The Templar Revelation*. Brown had the chance to learn the facts from Peter Partner's book *The Murdered Magicians*, which he lists in his bibliography, but he chose to ignore them. Brown's bibliography contains no standard reference works on medieval architecture — a poor basis for his pretensions to scholarship. But then, Brown distorts the fate of the Templars even worse than their buildings.

Chapter 7: The Templar Myth

The Templar myth started with an off hand remark by a Renaissance expert on magic. When German scholar Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim wrote *De occulta philosophia* (1531), he happened to mention "the detestable heresy of the Templars" as an example of evil magic alongside witches, dualist heretics, pagan sex rites, and Gnostic abominations. The idea was picked up in France and embellished with lurid details about ancient Gnostic orgies and infant sacrifice. From this unpromising spark, a durable fire would kindle.

But several developments had to occur before the Templars could light up the occultist world. Freemasons had to emerge, a well as taste for various types of "illuminated" mysticism. "Speculative" Freemasonry, as distinct from the "operative" craft of working stone, coalesced in Scotland in the 1590s when lodges of actual stoneworkers began to enroll outsiders who were interested in the symbolic possibilities of architectural knowledge. David Stevenson's *Origins of Freemasonry* traces the gradual process whereby guild practices habits of secrecy evolved into a secret society.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, the turn towards human reason so dear to the Renaissance and subsequent eras flowed beside an opposite current attracted to mysticism. Then as now, some intelligent people dipped from both streams.

Freemasonry was nourished by intellectual enthusiasms first unleashed during the Italian Renaissance: Neo-platonist philosophy, Hermetian wisdom derived from Hellenistic Egypt, Christianized Cabala, alchemy considered as spiritual transformation, and Rosicrucianism that sought the renewal of all arts and the mastery of nature. "The occult striving" says Stevenson, "was in essence an attempt to penetrate beyond the world of experience to the reality which underlay it and as such paralleled or overlapped with the artistic use of symbols and emblems.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, the turn towards human reason so dear to the Renaissance and subsequent eras flowed beside an opposite current attracted to mysticism. Then as now, some intelligent people dipped from both streams. Sir Issac Newton worked at alchemy as well as mathematics and physics; contemporary computer programmers may practice Wicca. This double stream was especially prominent in the eighteenth century, for the Age of Reason was also an Age of "Illuminism" that longed to be "enlightened" by secret wisdom. French historian A. Viatte observes: "Rather than obey the dictates of the real, and adjust himself to his reduced limits, late eighteenth century man took refuge among phantoms; satisfying his nostalgia with the marvels offered by imposters and necromancers." Partner himself says, "The Age of Reason was an age of runaway superstition." Not coincidentally, the same century saw Freemasonry attain its modern form — and the Lodge brought back the Temple. Freemasonry had already traveled from Scotland to England in the seventeenth century and created an aura of profundity around itself. Even members of Britain's Royal Society, the earliest organization of scientists, became Freemasons and absorbed Rosicrucian ideas.

The failure of Scotland's rebellion against English rule in 1715 sent Scottish refugees to France. Some of these leading "Jacobites" were Freemasons and spread their Craft among the French nobility. In 1736, one of these men, the Chevalier Ramsay, preached that Freemasons were heirs of Masonic crusaders who had learned biblical, Egyptian, and Greek wisdom during their service in the Holy Land. Building the Temple was a metaphor for self-development. Ramsay's talk played to French taste for chivalric pageants and honors. (Although early Freemasonry enrolled many Catholics, including Ramsay himself, Pope Clement XII strongly condemned the

Craft in 1738 for Deism and religious indifferentism. This prohibition has been repeated by subsequent popes and Catholic are still forbidden to join Masonic organizations.)

The advanced "Scottish Rite" (sometimes called Red Lodge) degrees were developed to satisfy this taste. In its final form, the twenty-nine degrees of this rite repeatedly refer to Solomon's Temple and include a Knight Rose Croix ("of the Rosy Cross", for that Rosicrucian touch). The parallel York Rite, which originated in the later eighteenth century, has the Knight Templar as its highest degree.

Chapter 8: The Priory of Sion Hoax

First publicized by French writer Gérard de Sède in the 1970s, the Priory was revealed to English speakers by the 1982 best-seller *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, co-authored by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. So fundamental is this book to *The Da Vinci Code* that Dan Brown borrowed two of the authors' names for his character Leigh Teabing (whose surname is an anagram of Baigent). Both Baigent and Lincoln are Masonic historians, while Leigh is a fiction writer. They fully accept the Templar myth connecting the Knights to Freemasonry and believe that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, leaving descendants who survive to this day under the Priory's protection.

Brown borrows the *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* theses with both hands. His fictional Priory likewise guards the "Grail Secret" of the Holy Blood — with documents to prove it — as well as the precious bones of the Magdalene. Coily, the Priory's initials P.S. also stand for "Princess Sophie", the nickname of his heroine Sophie Nevue, born into the sacred bloodline. Brown's Priory continues the practice claimed in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by enrolling the best and brightest of the day. Sophie's personal attractions are presented as typical of the breed. Her brilliant, multi-talented grandfather Jacques Saunière is both a curator at the Louvre and Grand Master of the Priory. And as clinching proof of excellence, Priory members drive expensive cars to a gathering for worship of the divine feminine (140).

But so high-minded is Brown's Priory that it won't lift a finger to flick its ancient enemy the Catholic Church into well-deserved oblivion. Rather than using its secret documents to blackmail the Church or unmask the falsity of her claims, the Priory will wait for imminent liberalization in Rome and let belief in the divine feminine re-emerge spontaneously.

But so high-minded is Brown's Priory that it won't lift a finger to flick its ancient enemy the Catholic Church into well-deserved oblivion. Rather than using its secret documents to blackmail the Church or unmask the falsity of her claims, the Priory will wait for imminent liberalization in Rome and let belief in the divine feminine re-emerge spontaneously. This is why the millennium passed without the overturning of altars.

This forbearance is a departure from the arguments of *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, which outlined the ambition of the Priory's then-Grand Master Pierre Plantard to restore the French monarchy with himself as king. Four years later *Holy Blood, Holy Grail's* 1986 sequel *The Messianic Legacy*, modified these plans to encompass a new (and counterintuitive!) European order based on popular enthusiasm for elite rule.

Because Plantard died in 2000 with "earth-shaking secrets" still unrevealed, Brown dropped the political angle but kept the Priory's pretensions as the ultimate secret society, more powerful than the Jesuits, the Holy Office, Opus Dei, the Mafia, the Freemasons, the Bilderbergers, and the Trilateral Commission. He does simplify the Priory's list of rivals, making its great enemy Opus Dei instead of the Knights of Malta, which *The Messianic Legacy* views as the Vatican's intelligence service. (The Knights' medical apostolate is dismissed in that book as mere cover for spying.)

Brown does cling to the following historically ludicrous claims made by *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*: Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and intended his Church to be led by her, not St. Peter. They were the parents of at least one child. After the Crucifixion — which is not followed by a resurrection — the Magdalene fled to southern Gaul with Joseph of Arimathea. There they

found safe refuge among the local Jewish community. Some fifth century descendant injected the Holy Blood into the Merovingian dynasty that took power in what is now France after Rome's fall. (The Merovingians were already themselves derived from the Hebrew tribe of Benjamin, transplanted to Greece, then Germany.) Although the last Merovingian king was deposed in 751, the lineage persisted in secret and linked up with various noble families, including the House of Lorraine, which produced the famous crusader Godfroi de Bouillon, Defender of the Holy Sepulcre.

Godfroi's election as civil ruler of the crusaders' Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1099 was supposedly arranged by the mysterious Abbey of Notre Dame du Mont de Sion, which *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* claims was also behind the founding of the Cistercians and the Knights Templar. The Abbey — afterwards the Priory of Sion — did this in order to have the Knights excavate under the ruins of the ruined Jewish Temple to retrieve damaging documents relating to the Magdalene and perhaps the bones of Jesus or the Ark of the Covenant as well.

The Priory and the Templars shared the same Grand Master until 1188 when the Priory severed ties following a curious incident involving a felled tree at Gisors in France. Thereafter the roll call of Grand Masters includes high nobility, the alchemist Nicholas Flamel, painters Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci, scientist-mathematician Sir Isaac Newton, writer Victor Hugo, composer Claude Debussy, and filmmaker-artist Jean Cocteau. (St. Joan of Arc and Nostradamus are also supposed to have been members.) A number of the Grand Masters are female. Women take the code name Jeanne and men Jean for St. John, apparently meaning St. John the Baptist, who is seen by some occultists as the founder of an alternative "Johannite" Christianity.

Chapter 9: The Code Puts On Artistic Errors

When interviewed for ABC's "Jesus, Mary and Da Vinci", Brown repeated the character Teabing's belief that people see what they are told to see: "Our preconceived notions of this scene are so powerful that our mind blocks out the incongruity and overrides our eyes" (243). The person to Jesus' right, Brown declared, is "clearly a woman", echoing his novel: "It was, without a doubt . . . female" (243). It is ironic that Brown insists that we see what we are told to see — and then tells them what to see. Does that only apply to those who disagree with his claims, or are his remarks held to the same dismissive standard?

The identity of the three apostles to Jesus' right has never been in doubt. In *The Last Supper*, Steinberg writes, St. Andrew (from left to right) "is followed by Peter, Judas, and John, the three whose identity in the mural was never doubted." These three have distinctive qualities: Peter's intense movement forward and wielding of the knife (prefiguring his use of a sword in the Garden), Judas recoiling and grasping the bag of money (he was the treasurer for the group — see Jn 13:29), and John's youthful appearance and contemplative pose. There is also physical evidence. A parish church of Ponte Capriasca near Lake Lugano contains a mid-sixteenth-century fresco copy of *The Last Supper*. On that fresco are the names of the twelve apostles, left to right.

The grouping of John, Judas, and Peter is purposeful. The group [of three] at Christ's right, John, Judas, and Peter", Steinberg points out, "clusters the three who are destined for roles in the Passion." Judas betrays Jesus, Peter denies Jesus, and John — "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn 13:23;19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) — was the only apostle to stand at Jesus' cross (Jn 19:26-7). Steinberg states that there are also "significant pairs" in the painting, including Peter and John, and Jesus and John. Peter and John are often companions (cf. Lk 22:8), and personify "the active and contemplative life" and are "shown putting their heads together". Hearing the prophecy of impending betrayal, Peter lunges forward, his hot temper and desire to defend his Master evident. John is the quiet, reflective contemplative who internalizes the distressing news, his

The figure *is* undoubtedly effeminate, as Leonardo depicted the youthful John in the early-sixteenth-century Florentine style. This approach can be seen in other paintings of the period, including Leonardo's own *Saint John the Baptist* (c. 1413-16), which depicts a young man who is quite effeminate in appearance and also has flowing hair and delicate hands.

hands folded in a prayerful manner appropriate to the coming death of Jesus. These two true apostles frame Judas, the traitor, who personifies greed and disloyalty. Although Jesus and John are depicted as being apart from each other, their mirrored images indicate that they are "soulmates . . . matched in outline, in (original) hue of garment and tilt of head."

Viewing a reproduction of the painting, Sophie sees "flowing red hair, delicate folded hands, and the hint of a bosom" (243). The figure *is* undoubtedly effeminate, as Leonardo depicted the youthful John in the early-sixteenth-century Florentine style. This approach can be seen in other paintings of the period, including Leonardo's own *Saint John the Baptist* (c. 1413-16), which depicts a young man who is quite effeminate in appearance and also has flowing hair and delicate hands. As for the "hint of bosom", it can only be found in the feverish imagination of those subscribing to Brown's theory — Leonardo's painting reveals no "hint" at all, unless viewers are willing to see what Brown suggests they see, despite lack of visual evidence.

There is no suggestion, in Leonardo's sketches or writings, that the figure is Mary Magdalene. There is, however, evidence that is the apostle John. In a sketch for the painting, Leonardo depicts John "leaning over, face down; Christ resting one arm on John's back as he turns toward Judas . . ." Gombrich describes the sketch in detail:

"It is well known that the description of that text of the apostle St. John 'leaning on Jesus' bosom' is explained by the ancient habit of lying on couches during meals, though this had largely been forgotten and the apostles were usually represented sitting at table. But tradition still had St. John leaning against Christ, and the only rapid sketch we have by Leonardo for this composition indicates that he originally meant to adopt this tradition as well as the action of Christ reaching across the table to give the sop to Judas, who was generally placed there in isolation from the others."

Always searching for a new way to explore character and interrelationships in his paintings, Leonardo opted to show the Apostle John as a mirror image of Christ (for the reasons noted by Steinberg) and to dramatically isolate Christ against the open window behind him.

Teabing states that a "V" shape representing the Grail and the female womb is "at the focal point" of *The Last Supper*, (244) but this doesn't hold up to an examination of the painting. The figure of Christ is clearly the focal point of the painting; the entire composition is based around his figure and his silhouetted head. Likewise, the "M" shape (244-5) is a brilliantly conceived compositional motif, with the three open windows providing a field of perspective and sense of depth.

Chapter 10: More Errors and Final Thoughts

Imagine a novel based on the premise that the Holocaust had never happened, but was the invention of a powerful group of Jewish leaders who have used that "myth" to garner themselves power and fortune. Or consider a theoretical novel claiming that Muhammad was a not a prophet at all, but a drug-addled homosexual who married multiple wives in order to hide his deviant behavior and who killed non-Muslims in fits of rage against heterosexuals. Needless to say, such novels would be immediately and rightly condemned by a majority of critics and readers. Yet *The Da Vinci Code*, a novel claiming that Christianity is fraudulent, the Catholic Church is a violent, misogynist institution run by murderers and liars, and androgyny is the answer to life's problems is not met with condemnation, but incredible success and even significant critical acclaim.

Just as important, the novel's dubious and often ridiculous claims about historical events and persons are taken seriously by many readers and members of the media. Brown has drawn upon the old stereotype of the Catholic Church as blood-soaked, evil institution, an image that has sold well in the U.S. for decades, even centuries. As Philip Jenkins notes in *The New Anti-Catholicism*, "Most contemporary attacks on Catholicism or the Catholic Church draw heavily on history, or at least on a kind of mythic history that has become deeply imbedded in popular thought." And so *The Da Vinci Code* is

Some readers, puzzled by the concern over *The Da Vinci Code*, insist that it is "just a book" or "only a novel." However, what we read says much about who we are, both individually and as a culture. G.K. Chesterton

imbedded in popular thought. And so *The Da Vinci Code* is filled with talk of murder, intrigue, hatred of women, sexual repression, mass murder, religious oppression, and intolerance. "Today, likewise", Jenkins explains, "hypercritical examinations of Catholic misdeeds are intended to support contemporary political positions, commonly in debates over morality and sexuality."

once wrote, "Truth, of course, must of necessity be stranger than fiction, for we have made fiction to suit ourselves".

Some readers, puzzled by the concern over *The Da Vinci Code*, insist that it is "just a book" or "only a novel." However, what we read says much about who we are, both individually and as a culture. G.K. Chesterton once wrote, "Truth, of course, must of necessity be stranger than fiction, for we have made fiction to suit ourselves". *The Da Vinci Code* is custom-made fiction for our time: pretentious, posturing, self-serving, arrogant, self-congratulatory, condescending, glib, illogical, superficial, and deviant. It has managed to tap into a deep reservoir of spiritual longing, restlessness, distrust, suspicion, and credulity. But how ironic is it that a novel that continually advocates distrust of authority is so easily trusted by millions of readers? How strange is it that a book so bent on criticizing religion in general and Christianity specifically is so overtly religious in preaching the gospel of the "sacred feminine"?

It is also strange that the novel is presented as a thriller but is rarely, if ever, thrilling. We estimate that over twenty percent of the book consists of lectures, almost all of them directed at the character Sophie, who first appears with "a haunting certainty to her gait" (50) and with a striking boldness (64), but is soon little more than an empty-headed and helpless student in the impromptu classrooms of Langdon and Teabing. Symbologist Robert Langdon is hardly any more believable than Sophie, a sort of emasculated pseudo-intellectual who is continually surprised that others know anything at all and constantly offering up lectures that are as flawed as they are unbelievable.

The novel brings to mind Mark Twain's classic essay, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses", in which the great wit dryly complains that Cooper violated eighteen of the nineteen rules — "some say twenty-two" — governing literary art in domain of romantic fiction. Many of the same criticisms can be applied to Brown's novel: "a tale shall accomplish something and arrive somewhere", "the talk shall sound like human talk, and be talk such as human beings would be likely to talk in the given circumstances", "the author shall make the reader feel a deep interest in the personages of his tale and in their fate", and "avoid slovenliness of form." The effusive praise that many readers have for the book's "plot" is puzzling, for there really isn't much of a plot, save a set-up and twist that is more in keeping with *Days of Our Lives* than it is with best-selling thrillers such as *The Bourne Identity* or *Eye of the Needle*. It is standard romance novel fare: boy meets girl, they get into a bind, they get out of the bind, and they kiss. Characters stand around and loiter endlessly, very little ever happens, and the ending is a bust. The "story" is simply a vehicle for a lengthy indictment against Christianity and the Catholic Church and an excuse, much like the *Left Behind* books, for endless lecturing and proselytizing. Brown appears to have little respect for his readers — and many of them don't seem to mind, or to notice.

Selected Bibliography

- Adam, Karl. *The Christ of Faith*. Pantheon Books: New York, 1957.
- Baigent, Michael, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, New York: Dell, 1982, 1983.
- _____. *The Messianic Legacy*. New York: Holt, 1986.
- Bleeker, C.J. and S.G.F. Brandon, eds. , *The Savior God: Comparative Studies in the Concept of Salvation Presented to Edwin Oliver James*. Manchester University Press, 1963.
- Boucher, Bruce. "Does 'The Da Vinci Code' Crack Leonardo?" *New York Times*. August 3, 2003.
- Brizzio, Anna Maria, Maria Vittoria Brugnoli, and André Chastel, *Leonardo the Artist*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980.
- Brown, Dan. *Angels & Demons*. New York: Pocket Books, 2000.
- Brown, Raymond El, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds. *New Jerome*

- Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.
- Brown, Raymond. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Doubleday, 1996.
- Carroll, Vincent and David Shiflett. *Christianity On Trial*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002.
- Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. Penguin Books, 1967, 1973.
- Clifton, Chas S. *Encyclopedia of Heresies and Heretics*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1992.
- Conway, Msgr. J. D. *Times of Decision: Story of the Councils*. Notre Dame, IN: Fides, 1962.
- Costen, Michael. *The Cathars and the Albigensian Crusade*. Manchester UK: Manchester U P, 1997.
- Cross, F.L. and Livingstone, E.A., ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Oxford: New York, 1997. Third edition.
- Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.
- _____. *Gyn-Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.
- Danielou, S.J., Jean. *The Bible and the Liturgy*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1956.
- _____. *Myth and Mystery*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968.
- Davis, Philip G. *Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality*. Dallas: Spence Publishing Company, 1998.
- Decker, Ronald, *Thierry Depaulis, and Michael Dummett. A Wicked Pack of Cards: The Origins of the Occult Tarot*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996.
- Eherman, Bart D. *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament*. Oxford University Press, 2003.
- _____. *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faith We Never Knew*. Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Favier, Jean. *The World of Chartres*. New York: Abrams, 1998, 1990.
- Field, D.M. *Leonardo Da Vinci*. Regency House Publishing, 2002.
- Forey, Alan. *The Military Orders: From the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Century*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 1992.
- Freedman, David Noel, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.
- Groothuis, Douglas. *Searching for the Real Jesus in an Age of Controversy*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996.
- Haag, Herbert, Caroline Ebertshauer, Joe H. Kirchberger, Dorothee Solle, and Peter Heinegg. *Mary: Art, Culture, and Religion Through the Ages*. Crossroad/Herder & Herder, 1998.
- Hauke, Manfred. *God and Goddess: Feminist Theology: What Is It? Where Does It Lead?* San Francisco: Ignatius, 1995.
- _____. *Women in the Priesthood? A Systematic Analysis in the Light of the Order of Creation and Redemption*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988.
- Herrick, James A. *The Making of the New Spirituality: The Eclipse of the Western Religious Tradition*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2003.
- Hitchcock, Dr. James. "Fantasy Faith", *Touchstone*. December, 2003. 14-16.
- Hughes, Philip. *The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils, 325-1870*. New York: Image, 1964.
- _____. *The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils, 325-1870*. New York, Image, 1964.
- James, Edward. *The Franks*. Oxford UK: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- James, E.O. *The Ancient Gods: The History and Diffusion of Religion in the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1960.
- _____. *Christian Myth and Ritual: A Historical Study*. New York: Meridian Books, 1965.
- _____. *The Cult of the Mother-Goddess*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1994.
- James, John. *Chartres: The Masons Who Built a Legend*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Jansen, Katherine Ludwig. *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages*. Princeton NJ: Princeton U P, 2000.
- Jacob, Margaret C. *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in*

- Eighteenth Century Europe*. New York: Oxford U P, 1991.
- Jenkins, Philip. *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. Oxford University Press, 2003.
- _____. *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way*. Oxford, 2001.
- Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*. Harper SanFrancisco, 1996.
- _____. *Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel*. HarperCollins, 1999.
- Johnson, Paul. *A History of Christianity*. New York: Atheneum, 1976.
- Jonas, Hans. *The Gnostic Religion*. Beacon Hill: Boston, 1958, 1963.
- Jones, A.H.M. *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*. University of Toronto Press, 1978.
- Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1960; revised edition, 1978.
- _____. *Early Christian Creeds*. England: Longman, 1972. Third edition.
- King, Karen L. *What Is Gnosticism?* Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Kreeft, Peter and Ronald K. Tacelli. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Kreeft, Peter. *Fundamentals of the Faith*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988.
- Lebreton, S.J., Jules and Jacques Zeiller. *The Emergence of the Church in the Roman World*. New York: Collier Books, 1962.
- _____. *Heresy and Orthodoxy*. New York: Collier Books, 1962.
- Lacy, Norris, et. al. eds. *The Arthurian Encyclopedia*. New York: Peter Bedrick, 1986.
- Levack, Brian P. *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*. Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 1995. Second edition.
- Loomis, Roger Sherman. *The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol*. Princeton NJ: Princeton U P, 1963, 1992.
- Malory Thomas. *Le Morte D'Arthur*. ed. Janet Cowen. 2 vols. New York: Penguin, 1969.
- Metzger, Bruce M. *Historical and Literary Studies: Pagan, Jewish, and Christian*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.
- _____. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.
- Miesel, Sandra. "Who Burned the Witches?" *Crisis*. October, 2001. 20-26.
- _____. "Dismantling *The Da Vinci Code*". *Crisis*. September 2003. 18-23.
- _____. "Medieval Architecture: A Prayer in Light and Stone". *Catholic Twin Circle*. February 5, 1995. 10-11.
- Molnar, Thomas. *The Pagan Temptation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmann Publishing Company, 1987.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo, ed., *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.
- Nash, Ronald H. *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2003. Second edition.
- _____. "Was the New Testament Influenced by Pagan Religions?" *Christian Research Journal*. Winter 1994.
- Neumann. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of an Archetype*. trans. Ralph Manheim. Bollingen Series xlvii. Princeton NJ: Princeton U P, 1963, 1972.
- Newman, John Henry Cardinal. *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, Reprint 1996.
- Nuland, Sherwin B. *Leonardo da Vinci*. New York: Penguin, 2000.
- Olson, Carl E. "The Cardinal and the Code". *National Catholic Register*. February 22, 2004.
- _____. "Jesus, Mary, and Da Vinci". *National Catholic Register*. November 16, 2003.
- Olson, Carl E. and Sandra Miesel. "Fact: *The Da Vinci Code* Is Worse Than Fiction". *The Catholic Answer*, forthcoming. 2004.
- _____. "Cracking the Anti-Catholic Code, part one". October 2003. Accessed at www.envoymagazine.com.
- _____. "Cracking the Anti-Catholic Code, part one". January 2004. Accessed

at www.envoymagazine.com.

Partner, Peter. *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth*. n.p.

Crucible- Aquarian. 1981, 1987.

Picknett, Lynn. *Mary Magdalene: Christianity's Hidden Goddess*. New York: Carrol & Graf, 2003.

_____. and Clive Prince. *The Templar Revelation: Secret Guardians of the True Identity of Christ*. New York: Touchstone-Simon & Schuster, 1997, 1998.

Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979, 1989.

_____. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003).

Previte 'Orton, C.W. *The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History, Volume II: The Twelfth Century to the Renaissance*. Cambridge at the University Press, 1952.

The Quest of the Holy Grail. trans. P. M. Matarosso. New York: Penguin. 1969.

Rahner, S.J., Hugo. *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*. London: Burns & Oates, 1957.

_____. *Church and State in Early Christianity*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992.

Raschke, Carl A. *The Interruption of Eternity: Modern Gnosticism and the Origins of the New Religious Consciousness*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1980.

Read, Piers Paul. *The Templars*. Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1999.

Robinson, James M. gen. Ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1979, 1988. Third revised edition.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.

Rubin, Miri. *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*. New York: Cambridge U P, 1991, 1992.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*. London: Cornell University Press, 1972.

Scott, Robert A. *The Gothic Enterprise: A Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*. Berkley CA: U California P, 2003,

Seward, Desmond. *The Monks of War: The Military Religious Orders*. rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1995.

Starbird, Margaret. *Tarot Trumps and the Holy Grail: Great Secrets of the Middle Ages*. Boulder CO: WovenWord, 2000.

_____. *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar: Mary Magdalen and the Holy Grail*. Rochester VT: Bear, 1993.

_____. *Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Company, 1998.

Steichen, Donna. *Ungodly Rage: The Hidden Face of Catholic Feminism*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991.

Steinberg, Leo. *Leonardo's Incessant Last Supper*. New York: Zone Books, 2001.

Stevenson, David. *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century 1590-1710*. New York: Cambridge U P, 1988, 1990.

Stoyanov, Yuri. *The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*. Yale University Press, 2000.

Struder, Basil. *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993.

Turner, Jane, ed., *The Dictionary of Art*. New York: MacMillian, 1996.

Ulansey, David. *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*. Oxford University Press, 1991.

Veith, Jr., Gene Edward. *Postmodern Times*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994.

_____. *Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990.

Vezzosi, Alessandro. *Leonardo Da Vinci: The Mind of the Renaissance*. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1997.

Walker, Barbara G. *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983.

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. *The Long-Haired Kings*. Toronto: Toronto U P, 1962, 1982.

Warner, Marina. *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*. New York: Vintage-Random House, 1976, 1983.

Whitehead, Kenneth D. *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: The Early Church Was*

the Catholic Church. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000.
 Wright, N.T. *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996.
 Yamauchi, Edwin M. *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences*.
 Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973.
 _____ . *The World of the First Christians*. England: Lion Publishing,
 1981.
 Yates, Frances A. *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*. Boulder CO: Shambala, 1972,
 1978.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Carl E. Olson & Sandra Miesel. "Exposing the Errors in *The Da Vinci Code*." Excerpted from *The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003).

Reprinted by permission of Ignatius Press. All rights reserved.

THE AUTHORS

Carl E. Olson is the editor of IgnatiusInsight.com. He is the co-author of [The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code](#), [The Da Vinci Hoax: DVD](#) and author of [Will Catholics Be "Left Behind"?](#) He has written for numerous Catholic periodicals and is a regular contributor to *National Catholic Register* and *Our Sunday Visitor* newspapers. He resides in a top secret location in the Northwest somewhere between Portland, Oregon and Sacramento, California. Visit his personal web site at www.carl-olson.com.



Sandra Miesel is the co-author of the best selling [The Da Vinci Hoax: Exposing the Errors in The Da Vinci Code](#). She holds masters' degrees in biochemistry and medieval history from the University of Illinois. Since 1983, she has written hundreds of articles for the Catholic press, chiefly on history, art, and hagiography. She regularly appears in *Crisis* magazine and is a columnist for the diocesan paper of Norwich, Connecticut. Sandra has spoken at religious and academic conferences, appeared on EWTN, and given numerous radio interviews. Outside the Catholic sphere, she has also written, analyzed, and edited fiction. Sandra and her husband John have raised three children.

Copyright © 2003 Ignatius Press.