

**Pastoral Perspective – *On Engaging Our Culture in Dialogue*  
*On the Da Vinci Code's Delusion***

Last month, as we initiated several weeks in celebration of the Easter season, I began to write about how we might consider engaging the current popular culture with regard to the imminent release of the movie *The Da Vinci Code*. The film's opening this week, showing in theatres worldwide, can at once be viewed in at least two ways. It can be regarded by some as the broad onslaught of an insidious attack on Christianity. At the same time, it can also be seen by others as a singularly monumental window of opportunity for Christians to enter into dialogue with interested seekers all over the planet. I believe that, just as Christians witnessed in the aftermath of the event of the tsunami in Asia, there will be many people whose spirits, after seeing this movie, may somehow become radically open to considering the actual truth of the gospel and the genuine possibility of an encounter with the authentic, risen and living Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. Here are some excerpts from various thoughtful Christians in conversation concerning *The Da Vinci Code's* delusion...

Culture critic and writer Craig Detweiler described it this way in a recent forum discussing *The Da Vinci Code*: "We have to realize there's a reason a book sells millions of copies – and we can't just dismiss it as a bad thing. This is really significant here. We can protest and criticize all we want, but the truth is, I'm more interested in finding out why the culture is so fascinated by a book that claims to have discovered a cover-up by the church that potentially could challenge the validity of the Christian faith."<sup>1</sup>

Phil Cooke, Ph.D. in Theology  
President & Creative Director of Cooke Pictures

Given the misunderstandings concerning Jesus that the book has caused among uninformed readers, it is important for [some] Christians to take the time to see the movie and then engage in dialogue about the film with their neighbors. Such conversation might provide the opportunity for Christians to offer alternatives for erroneous impressions found in the film. It might also be the occasion for honest sharing as to what the story of Jesus has meant to them. Conversation can begin with this "Christian-themed" popcorn movie and extend to something far more significant.<sup>2</sup>

Robert Johnston  
Professor of Theology and Culture  
Fuller Theological Seminary

One of the problems is that the average Christian in the average church who listens to the average Christian broadcasting has such an oversimplified understanding of both the Bible and of church history. ...if *The Da Vinci Code* causes people to ask questions and Christians have to dig deeper, that's a great thing, a great opportunity for growth.<sup>3</sup>

Brian McLaren  
Pastor/Writer

Next month, ***[on a rescheduled date to be announced]***, your Christian Education committee is arranging to provide for a viewing of a DVD/video produced by Coral Ridge Ministries entitled, *The Da Vinci Delusion*.<sup>4</sup> The program features authors, theologians and historians who test *Da Vinci Code* claims against evidence from history and the Bible. Please plan to participate with others as we endeavor to engage in conversation with our culture so that others along with us may come to know the Truth Who would set them free.

In Christ,

Pastor Rex

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thedavincialogue.com/expert.cfm?e=208>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thedavincialogue.com/expert.cfm?e=207>

<sup>3</sup> <http://63.134.216.19/index.cfm?action=sojmail.display&issue=060509>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.davincidelusion.tv>