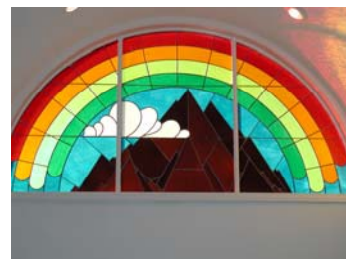


Christian Church of God Newsletter



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Guest Columnist

Down with Da Vinci

I can't think of a better way to respond to the upcoming movie, *The Da Vinci Code*, than with mass boycotts, angry protests, and noisy picket lines. That is, unless I hear some better ideas . . .
by **Mark Moring** | posted 04/18/06, **Christianity Today**.

Well, Hollywood is at it again. The evil entertainment empire is loading its guns and taking aim at us Christians, determined to undermine our faith and bring us down.

They're making a movie of *The Da Vinci Code*, which we all know is full of lies. All lies! I mean, Jesus and Mary Magdalene getting *married* and having kids?? Give me a break!

To top it all off, they're doing it with a couple of Good Guys we've come to know and *trust*—Tom Hanks and Ron Howard. Hanks, who brought us the heroes in *Saving Private Ryan* and *Apollo 13*, and our favorite CGI toy cowboy, Woody! And Howard, the guy behind *Cinderella Man*, *Apollo 13*, and *Cocoon*. Plus, he was Opie AND Richie Cunningham. How can you *not* love these guys!

I'm feeling betrayed—by Hanks, Howard, and Hollywood. The three lethal H's. They're a threat to me and my faith—and to anybody who claims to be a Christian.

So I have a brilliant idea. When the movie hits theaters on May 19, let's organize a mass boycott and picket lines in front of the theaters. That'll teach 'em. I can't think of a better way to ...

Hang on a sec. I just got an urgent e-mail ...

Um, that was from Josh McDowell, the famous Christian author and apologist. He says I should actually *read* the book instead of just dissing it. *And* consider going to see the movie. *What??*

McDowell says he's even written a book urging us to *engage* all things *Da Vinci*. His e-mail says, "The main purpose of my book is to reinforce Christians' belief and placate their skepticism. If you look carefully, truth will always stand. I look at the book and the movie as a platform for evangelism. A little controversy can be a marvelous tool." Man, is *he* naïve! Everybody knows that if it comes out of Hollywood, it's more powerful than anything we Christians can possibly counter with. We don't stand a chance! But we've got to fight anyway!

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Special points of interest:

- *Angry with Da Vinci?*
- *Local Chorus Wins Awards*
- *Our sermons broadcast on KGRO Radio 9:05 AM Sunday. www.pan-tex.net*

*Our Home Page:
www.christianchurchofgod.org*

Inside this issue:

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“Unless you assume a God, the question of life’s purpose is meaningless.”

—
Bertrand Russell, atheist



FROM RUTH AND GENE WERTZ:

I wanted to share the following article (a true story) that I wrote for our family newsletter, "The Hertz Herald".

WHAT IS THAT ODOR??

One Saturday I noticed an unpleasant odor in the kitchen, and decided to empty the waste basket and put a new liner in it. The next day, the odor was noticed again, so we began to investigate. It seemed to be coming from under the sink next to the refrigerator, so I took everything out of it, I pulled up the contact paper, and scrubbed all the surfaces with pine oil. There was a separation between the back wall and the floor of the cabinet, and when the odor persisted, we began to think a dead mouse might be in there. YUCK!! I sprayed down into the crevice with some kind of deodorant and then left the kitchen to work on cleaning the garage. . . .

When we came back the odor seemed worse then ever, so I took everything out of the cupboard next to the one under the sink, and scrubbed these shelves and walls, too. Leaving the pots and pans on the kitchen floor, we resumed cleaning the garage. . . .

When we came back in from the garage, the smell was still there and we were resigned to putting up with it until that mouse completely dried up and the odor dissipated. As I was putting the pans back into the cabinet, I got an extra strong whiff of the odor. There was an omelet pan, one of those hinged pans that can be flipped over when the omelet is almost finished, and in it was half an omelet, which had been there since two weeks prior, when we had a houseful of company. Some of the guests always helped cleaning up the dishes and the kitchen, and it was my job to put away the clean dishes. I guess when I saw that closed omelet pan sitting there with the rest of the clean dishes, I just put it where it belonged.

We laughed so hard with relief to know we didn't have to wait for the dead mouse to disintegrate!

Take care.

Love, Ruth



PRAYER REQUESTS: "... The prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up: ... Pray for one another that you may be healed." — James 5:15-16.



- Sheri Bartlett:** Julia McKinney's daughter, having serious health problems.
- Eric Booth:** Jeff's brother, diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- Sandy Booth:** Sister-in-law of Jeff. The ovarian cancer has recurred.
- Amber & Dylan Clark:** Grandchildren of Betty Clark, cerebral palsy. Amber now has strep throat.
- Vickie Crevoi:** Sister of Linda Booth, Chronic Progressive MS.
- DeAnne DeLuna:** Larry Lyles' stepdaughter, breast cancer.
- Velvet Green:** Gary's wife, schizophrenia.
- Randy Gnessett:** Friend of Candace Sellers has received a lung transplant. Pray that his body will not reject the transplant.
- Jeffrey Hertz:** Brother of Ruth Wertz, bladder cancer.
- Anna Law:** Lupus & kidney failure.
- Dollie Meil:** Cerebral palsy. She is growing weak.
- Glenda Rankin:** Niece of Rudolph, Hodgkins Lymphoma, undergoing more chemo so she might be strong enough for stem cell transplant.
- Ted Rankin:** Undergoing physical therapy, following back surgery. Still in pain and having eye sight problems.
- Brenda Roberts:** Josh Sursa's mother-in-law, has colon cancer.
- Kathryn Scott:** Friend of the Baileys; severe MS, losing use of arms and swallowing ability.
- Beverly Wertz:** Juvenile arthritis (and hip replacement) in remission for years, now reoccurring in knees, hips, wrist and shoulders. Sometimes happens after giving birth.

Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Rom. 12:15.

CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays:

Glennis McAlister	5-4
Linda Sehorn	5-16
Jessica Lujan	5-18
Jeff Booth	5-19
Joe Kirkpatrick	5-19
Thomas Vines	5-19
Janet Voss	5-27

Anniversaries:

Shannon & Russ Stephens	5-20
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Congratulations

To the Sweet Adelines, local metro chorus of barbershop style. Glennis McAlister, long-time member of the group, attended state competition with them at Richardson, Texas. They won three awards: Overall Most Improved Small Group; First Place Small Chorus; Fourth Place Overall. And SPECIAL KUDOS to Glennis who was voted this year's favorite of the Amarillo chapter. She was given a nice plaque and specially designed charm bracelet.

Down with Da Vinci!

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So, as I was saying, we should make a big stink about *Da Vinci*. Remember how effective we were back in '88, when they released *The Last Temptation of Christ*? We screamed and yelled and wielded our signs: "Blasphemy!" The studio *says* they got a lot of free publicity when we did that; they claim that our protests actually gave them a boost at the box office. But you know these Hollywood studios. They're always lying!

So, when it comes to *Da Vinci*, I say we should ...

Just a moment. The phone's ringing ...

Um, that was Robert K. Johnston, Professor of Theology and Culture at Fuller Seminary. He's telling me, "Belligerence seldom works. It is more for the speaker than the listener."

Yeah, what does *he* know? Just because he wrote a couple of books (*Finding God in the Movies* and *Reel Spirituality*), he thinks he's some kind of "expert" on engaging pop culture. The nerve!

Anyway, back to my point: Remember how we boycotted Disney all those years? Boy, we really showed them! And now they're really trying to kiss and make up. I mean, what *other* reason could they possibly have for doing *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*? See how effective boycotts are? We get the movies we want! Belligerence *does* work!

Therefore I propose that we ...

Excuse me, I'm getting an IM here ...

Sorry for the interruption. That was George Barna, the Christian pollster. He's rambling on about some "thoughtful and strategic reaction" to *Da Vinci*. He says maybe we can "use the movie as a springboard for conversation and exploration regarding the roots of the Christian faith." He writes that "66 percent of adults"—George always resorts to *statistics* to try to "prove" his point!—"say that in a typical week they dialogue with friends and work associates about the content of movies and TV shows they have recently seen. The reach and slant of *The Da Vinci Code* will raise countless opportunities for open discussion of such matters. Christians who recognize and engage those moments of opportunity can do much to advance the cause of truth."

Sheesh, he's *got* to be kidding! Nothing is more effective than a picket line for "advancing the cause of truth." I've just finished painting my favorite sign for our picket down at the megaplex: "Dan Brown is a Big Fat Liar!" And on the back side: "So is Ron Howard!" Isn't that great! When people come up to me and ask about it, then I'll really stick it to 'em with the TRUTH of the gospel!

Barna, Shmarna. Forget those pop culture conversations around the water cooler, which just involve a few folks. But a picket will get the attention of *lots* of people. We might even be on TV!

For all these reasons, when it comes to *The Da Vinci Code*, I urge my fellow believers ...

Rats! Another interruption! My cell phone is ringing ...

That was Darrell L. Bock, *another* one of those head-in-the-sand seminary profs. He teaches at Dallas Theological Seminary. But he *did* write a book called *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*; now *there's* a title I like! I figured at least *he* would be tracking with me.

But NO-O-O-O! Bock actually says we shouldn't view the movie as a threat. He says it's only a threat "if its facts are right, or it could simply persuade by making its claims."

OK, fine. So I told him that *everybody* doesn't have to picket. They can just pretend it doesn't even exist.

"Neither can you ignore it," Bock said. "The novel has sold 30 million copies, and 100 million people have probably read it or at least know its plot. It is a cultural phenomenon already. This topic will be on the cultural radar screen for a key portion of 2006."

continued

He's right about that, because we Christians will make sure of it. We'll make so much noise with our boycotts and pickets that *everybody* will know about it. We'll run Sony Pictures out of business! We'll make sure Ron Howard AND Tom Hanks never work again! We'll ...

1. AARRGGHH! Another interruption! But it's not the phone or my PC. It's a still, small voice inside ...

"I'm not afraid of *The Da Vinci Code*," the voice says. "Sure, it's full of lies, but I've had worse things said and written about me, and I've come out just fine. And besides, I love Ron Howard, Tom Hanks, and everyone associated with this movie. You've seen the tagline on their trailer and poster: *Seek the truth*. They're all just seeking the truth, and I *am* that truth. They're looking for me. I can still be found."

I started to say something, but decided to shut up for a change.

"Besides," the voice continued, "if lies about me were such a threat, why would I have allowed so many of them to make it into your Bible? All those nasty things people said about me. And the things they did to me—mocked, scorned, beaten, bloodied, crucified. But I bounced back pretty well, don't you think?"

Good point.

"Do you really think the lies of a book and a movie will bring me down? I don't like it when people lie about me, but I can take it. The question is, what will you do about it? Please don't attack them—and certainly not in *my* name. Talk to them; talk to anybody who believes those lies. But first, you'll have to study up and know *why* they're lies. You'll have to know what you're talking about.

"My man Peter got it right when he wrote, 'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.' Good words, those. Remember them.

"Ron and Tom aren't bad people; neither is Dan Brown, and neither are the millions who buy into his book or this movie. They're just looking for the truth. So help them find it ... with gentleness and respect. Can't you do that? For me?"

Thankfully, that was the last interruption of the day. But it was a good one.

I'm calling off the boycott. And the picket.

Editor's note: We are not suggesting that Christians necessarily should watch *The Da Vinci Code* when it comes to theaters; skipping it is certainly a viable option. We are only suggesting that the Christian community be willing to take part in the overall cultural discussion about the film and the book, rather than take a reactionary approach with noisy protests and organized boycotts—just as we would hope secular culture would take part in the discussion of "our" movies, like *Narnia* and *The Passion of The Christ*.



Pentecost



Special Holy Day Service

June Fourth

Regular Class and Service Times

Christian Church of God

PRAISE THE
LORD. PRAISE
GOD IN HIS SANCTUARY;



PRAISE HIM IN HIS
MIGHTY HEAVENS.
PSALM 150:1

"The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones." —Henry Ward Beecher
"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."
—Jesus, Matthew 18:20
"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
—Hebrews 10:25

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CHART YOUR
COURSE



WITH PURPOSE