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## What is Valley Station Church?

It is a group of Christians determined to be pleasing to God. How do they do this? They do all in their power to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ with no changes, additions, subtractions or alterations.

It is a group of Christians that claim no human denominational affiliation — just Christians working and worshipping together at the Lord’s word teaches.

If you need Christ as your Lord and Savior, we believe you will find him among the Christians at Valley Station.

**Come and see.**

The **VALLEY TIDINGS** is published monthly by the church of Christ, meeting at 1803 Dixie Garden Drive, Valley Station, Kentucky 40272

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### Assemblies

Sunday Bible Class 9:30 A.M.  
Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 A.M.  
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00 P.M.  
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:30 P.M.  
Ladies Class, Thursday 10:00 A.M.

Dudley Ross Spears, Editor and Evangelist

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# Valley Tidings

**Set For The Defense of the Glad Tidings**

Volume VII, July 2006, Number 6

## Are You an American?

If you were asked, “Are you an American,” what would your answer be? Suppose you were not born in this country? Maybe you came in as an “illegal alien.” Could you be accurately described as an American citizen? What does it take to become a citizen of this nation? If you were born here your citizenship is automatic. If you immigrated from another nation and went through legal naturalization you are an American.

As an American you are obligated to respect the constitution and laws governing this country. So, again, if you were asked, “Are you an American citizen,” how would you reply?

## Are You a Christian?

If you born into God’s family you are a Christian. Christian means “one who is of, or belongs to Christ.” Just as the children born into our families are ours by birth, so a person who is born again becomes part of the Lord’s family. It is written, “know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20). As a Christian you are obligated to respect and obey the constitution and laws of Jesus Christ.

When a sinner submits to Christ and is willing for the Lord to be the ruler of life, that one may become a Christian. How? By obeying the Lord without reservation. What does that require? First there is faith (John 8:24) and then there is reformation of life in repentance (Acts 17:30). That is followed by the new birth of “water and spirit” (John 3:5). Paul was the one who brought the Corinthians to the new birth by preaching the gospel to them (1 Cor. 4:15). Those in Corinth who became Christians were baptized (born of water) into Christ (Acts 18:8). Less than that never made anyone a Christian. So, once more, “Are you a Christian?” If not, become one while you are living and able.

We don’t have all the answers to everything, but we believe the Bible. It will lead you to salvation in Christ and that will make you a Christian? Just give us the chance to study it with you. We don’t mean to brag, but we believe we can study the Bible with anyone with more objectivity and less bias than anyone else — because the Bible is our only book of instruction.

**Please study with us.**

# Da Vinci, Schma-Vinci

By Cloyce Sutton II

If you have never heard of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, I would suggest that you immediately check your pulse — you may have expired.

Since its release in 2003, Brown's novel has sold over 40 million copies worldwide, and has spawned numerous TV specials and a movie (released this weekend). It has also stirred a big pot of religious controversy. The religious controversy has spawned about a dozen books in reply to some of the book's claims.

The story involves Harvard symbolologist (an expert in religious symbolism) Robert Langdon. He is summoned to the Louvre in Paris where its chief curator has been brutally murdered. The police suspect that Langdon may have been involved in the murder. The victim leaves behind several clues, in the form of secret codes and a treasure hunt, that lead Langdon and Sophie Neveu (his police-woman-cryptologist-curator's-granddaughter-sidekick) around Paris and England.

It turns out that the murdered curator is a member of a highly secret Catholic sect, the Priory of Scion, whose centuries-old task is to protect the identity and location of the Holy Grail. We learn that the Holy Grail is not what people think it is. We also discover that the murderer, and several others in the story, are members of Opus Dei, another secretive Catholic society, whose job it is to uncover and destroy the Grail, as well as anyone in their way. As these two forces collide, Langdon and Neveu are caught between them as they try to unravel the clues and find the truth about the curator's murder and about the Holy Grail.

As the story develops, the chief characters share their views on the history of "Christianity". The characters affirm that virtually all of Christianity as we know it is a lie. Brown makes the claim on the first page of his novel (and in subsequent interviews) that the historical details of his work are true (and by implication, the charges against historical Christianity). This is where the controversy lies. To these controversies, we now turn our attention.

The bulk of these false claims come from a lengthy conversation between the novel's three main characters — Langdon, Neveu, and British Grail historian Leigh Teabing. The exchanges are found mainly in chapters 54-56, 58, 60-62, and 64.

The Da Vinci Code (DVC) claims that Jesus was not divine. Later followers (most notably Constantine at the first Council of Nicaea) invented his divinity and suppressed any documents that supported the notion of his humanity. The truth is that Jesus affirmed his own deity while on earth, and his followers, from the beginning, recognized it (John 1:14; 8:58; 20:28; Philippians 2:5-11). The Council of Nicaea did condemn the beliefs of Arius and his followers who denied the deity of Jesus, but only two of 300 leaders refused to sign the Nicene Creed. This document affirmed that Jesus was "true God from true God." Constantine did not make Jesus God.

DVC claims that the Bible did not come from God; it is purely human. It claims that there was never a definitive version of the Bible; that it was edited to suit Constantine's agenda; that references to Christ's humanity were omitted from the Bible. The truth is that while human authors were involved in the composition of the Bible, it ultimately came from God — and it

says so (2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Luke knew (around AD 60) of multiple accounts of Jesus' life (Luke 1:1-4), and Peter knew of a collection of Paul's writings (around AD 64; 2 Peter 3:14-16). The NT has always included references to Jesus' humanity as well as his deity (John 1:14; 4:6; 11:35; 19:28, 30; Hebrews 2:14; Philippians 2:5-11).

Constantine did order 50 high quality editions of the Bible to be copied and put into the churches. In fact, there is some evidence the two oldest complete Greek Bibles in our possession (the Sinai and Vatican manuscripts) were among them. In the second century (AD 140) a Gnostic teacher named Marcion drew up a list of books he thought should comprise the NT. His NT had a truncated *Luke* and ten of Paul's letters in an altered form. About 30 years earlier than this, Papias (a Christian) had already mentioned the existence of all four of the gospels. By the end of the second century, every book in our present NT was known, circulated, and accepted as authoritative.

DVC says that originally 80 gospels competed for acceptance, and that the true gospels were Gnostic texts. The truth is that from the beginning, the four gospels we have now were always the front-runners, and by a large margin. We have only a handful of Gnostic texts, none earlier than the mid-second century. Even the so-called *Gospel of Mary Magdalene* dates to the third century, 150 years or more after she lived! How can documents written 100 to 250 years after the fact be considered credible eyewitness testimony?

DVC says that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married and had a child. Mary and this child eventually fled to Europe where their descendants married French royalty and established the Merovingian dynasty. The bones of Mary Magdalene are the real Holy Grail. The quest for the Holy Grail is really to bow before her bones (which, according to the book, are somewhere beneath the Louvre).

The truth is that the only document that purports that they were married is a vague reference in the Gnostic text of *The Gospel of Philip*. It was written between AD 200-350 in Coptic (a derivation of Egyptian) as a translation of an earlier Greek text (contrary to the DVC claim that it was Aramaic). It only says that they were "companions".

Catholic tradition asserts that the bones of Mary Magdalene were discovered in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and since 1295 have been preserved in the Basilica of Ste Madeleine in Maximin in France by a Dominican order. Her skull is perpetually on display, and her celebration day in that town is July 22.

These are a small handful of the book's more outlandish claims.

The final scene reminds the reader that the quest for the Holy Grail is a quest to kneel before the bones of Mary Magdalene. This sets into sharp relief the difference between authentic Christianity and Brown's mangled version.

After nearly 500 pages, countless murders, and a complete rewriting of two millennia of history, the ultimate quest is to bow before the bones of a dead woman!?

Dear reader, you will bow, not before a rotting corpse, but before the living Lord from heaven, Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:5-11). Your only decision is whether to bow today as his ally; or to bow in judgment as his conquered enemy. That's the truth!

Via *Eastland ebulletin*