

Who are we?

Dromore Reformed Presbyterian Church comprises a group of people from all walks of life who believe the Bible to be true and relevant for every day life.

We have come to know that Jesus has made it possible for man to go to heaven.

We want everyone in our town to know this too. We don't want you to miss out.

What's On?

Sunday

Worship

11.30am & 7.00pm

Sunday School 10.45am

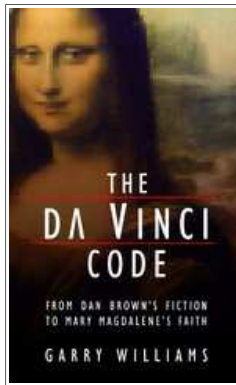
Prayer Meeting 11.00am

Wednesday

Fellowship Meeting

8.00pm

We invite you to come along. You will be made most welcome.



FREE BOOK!

This book answers seven of the key claims raised by Dan Brown's book and points you towards a story even more intriguing - and more firmly based on fact.

If you would like one contact us using the details below.

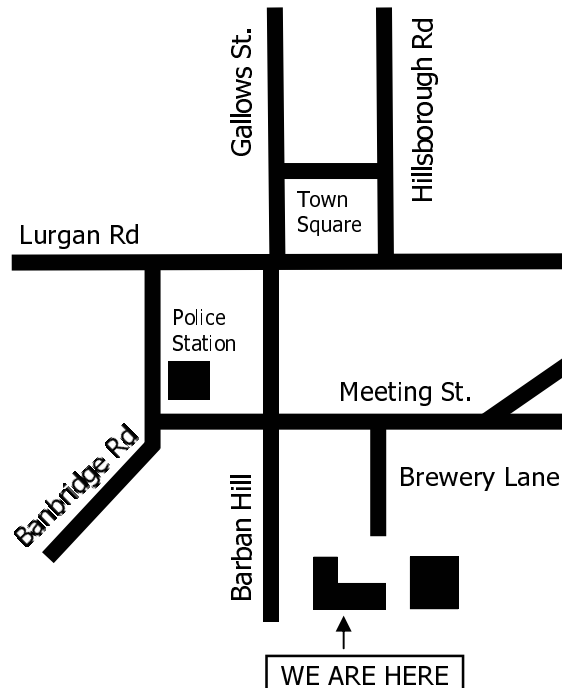
Contact details :

Address: Dromore Reformed Presbyterian Church
c/o David McCullough,
9, Barronstown Court,
Dromore, BT25 1FB

Phone: 028 92690155

Email: minister@dromorerpc.org

Visit our website: www.dromorerpc.org



THE WORD TODAY

speaking to the issues of today from a Christian perspective

May/June 2006

Breaking the Da Vinci Code

4 4 9 8 3 5 1 7. No, it's not a code from one of Dan Brown's novels, but rather the estimated number of copies his bestselling *The Da Vinci Code* has sold since publication three years ago. There is no sign of any slow down either—it has been firmly planted at the top of the fiction chart since its release. Ron Howard's movie version has just hit cinemas across the world.

It is a publishing phenomenon, and no wonder. *The Da Vinci Code* is a gripping thriller—an exhilarating blend of suspense, mystery and revelation.

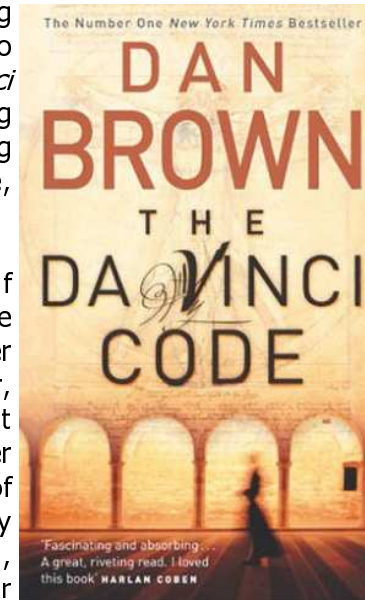
In the course of unravelling the bizarre circumstances of her grandfather's murder, French cryptologist Sophie Neveu, together with Harvard professor of religious symbology Robert Langdon, discovers that her

grandfather was killed for a centuries-old secret he was guarding. The secret? Jesus of Nazareth was not in fact the Son of God, but a perfectly ordinary man who married Mary Magdalene and fathered a

daughter, whose descendants are still alive today. This secret was protected down through the ages by an ultra-secret society called the Priory of Sion, whose members included such figures as Leonardo da Vinci and Sir Isaac Newton.

Dan Brown certainly knows how to write an exciting story, and in a

sceptical age that thrives on conspiracy theories, a story like this one has instant appeal. But it is just a story—isn't it? Perhaps what gives the novel its extra edge over rivals is the illusion of truth. The author seems to want to give the impression that what is described in the novel is actually true. The book begins with a page headed "Fact", claiming that the Priory of Sion is a real organisation founded in 1099, and



Produced by Dromore Reformed Presbyterian Church

that “all descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents and secret rituals in this novel are accurate.” Many of Brown’s claims need to be challenged however, because the fact is he has got his facts wrong. This is serious, because much more is at stake here than academic accuracy. A great many of those who read *The Da Vinci Code* find its startling claims far more appealing than the familiar old version learnt in Sunday School. Few people are equipped to spot the blunders that litter *The Da Vinci Code*, and even fewer are inclined to take the trouble to investigate the truth.

It’s an impossible task to answer a 600-page novel in so short an article as this, but there are several claims it makes that need to be answered.

1. The Theory of Sion

Dan Brown claims that the Priory of Sion is a real organisation founded in 1099, but this is *not* true. It was a clever hoax invented in 1956 by a Frenchman called Pierre Plantard who nursed delusions of grandeur—he believed he was the rightful king of France and invented the Priory story to

support his claims to the throne. The secret documents of the Priory (“les dossiers secrets” mentioned in *The Da Vinci Code*) were forged by his friend Philippe de Cherisey. One of Plantard’s co-conspirators, Gerard de Sède, a journalist who in 1967 reported the hoax story, later wrote a book admitting to the fraud.

2. Phoney Info

The Da Vinci Code claims that the four Gospels of the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) are not the earliest or most reliable accounts of Jesus’ life, but that there are (around eighty) *other* Gospels that give a more truthful picture of Jesus. This is blatantly false. No reputable scholar in the world believes the Gospels in the Bible were written later than about 100 AD. The “other”

Gospels Brown refers to (no more than twenty in number) date from the late second century or early third! The Bible’s account of the life of Jesus is much earlier and perfectly reliable, since it is based on eyewitness testimonies. The “other” Gospels are largely fanciful inventions. *The Da Vinci Code* claims that the other Gospels

were suppressed because the truths they described were heretical. In fact they were never suppressed by anyone—they were simply never taken seriously, for the same reason that many crackpot religious books today are not taken seriously: they were recognised for what they were—spurious, convoluted nonsense.

3. Married to Mary?

The Da Vinci Code’s central claim is that Jesus married Mary Magdalene. But the New Testament, the earliest and most reliable source about Jesus, is completely silent about any such marriage. There is not a hint anywhere that she was anything more than a faithful disciple. To make these claims about Jesus and Mary, Dan Brown has to resort to fanciful interpretation of the “crackpot” Gospels written in the second or third century—and even they don’t claim Jesus and Mary were married!

But does it all really *matter*? “What a lot of fuss over a *novel*! Chill out and relax—it’s no big deal.” But the tragedy is that the vast majority of people who read *The Da Vinci Code* have never and will never read the Bible—the earliest and only reliable account of Jesus’ life. Their entire opinion and understanding of Jesus is based on the Gospel according to Dan Brown. And that *is* serious, because Jesus is not just a great figure of history. He is *not* a

These claims of "The Da Vinci Code" are far from trivial. The eternal destiny of every human being depends on Jesus being who the Bible says he is.

purely human man who said and did some extraordinary things. He is what the New Testament says he is—God in the flesh.

Why did God become a man? The answer of the Bible is that God became a man to stand in our place—to live a perfect life of obedience that we can’t live and to die on the cross to take the punishment we deserved. Only someone who was fully God and fully human could do this. Only by trusting this God-man,

Jesus Christ, can we be forgiven by God and accepted by him.

So these claims of *The Da Vinci Code* are far from trivial. The eternal destiny of every human being depends on Jesus being who the Bible says he is. If Jesus was just an ordinary man, the Christian faith crumbles and salvation is impossible.

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