



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Da Vinci Colby

Area preachers respond to book's, movie's controversy

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

Media storm doesn't even begin to cover it.

Worldwide, the release of the theatrical version of "The Da Vinci Code" today is creating a furor with everything from demands for banning the film and protests. The controversy stems from the novel's premise Jesus Christ was married and had children.

In Colby, however, the film and the book are being greeted much more quietly.

Ministers at local churches have done sermons on the book and its subject matter, or have chosen to deal with it with less fanfare.

Father Dana Clark of Sacred Heart Catholic Church had dealt with the book.

"I don't see a need to read it," he said. He chose to focus on the truth instead of the lies put forth in the book.

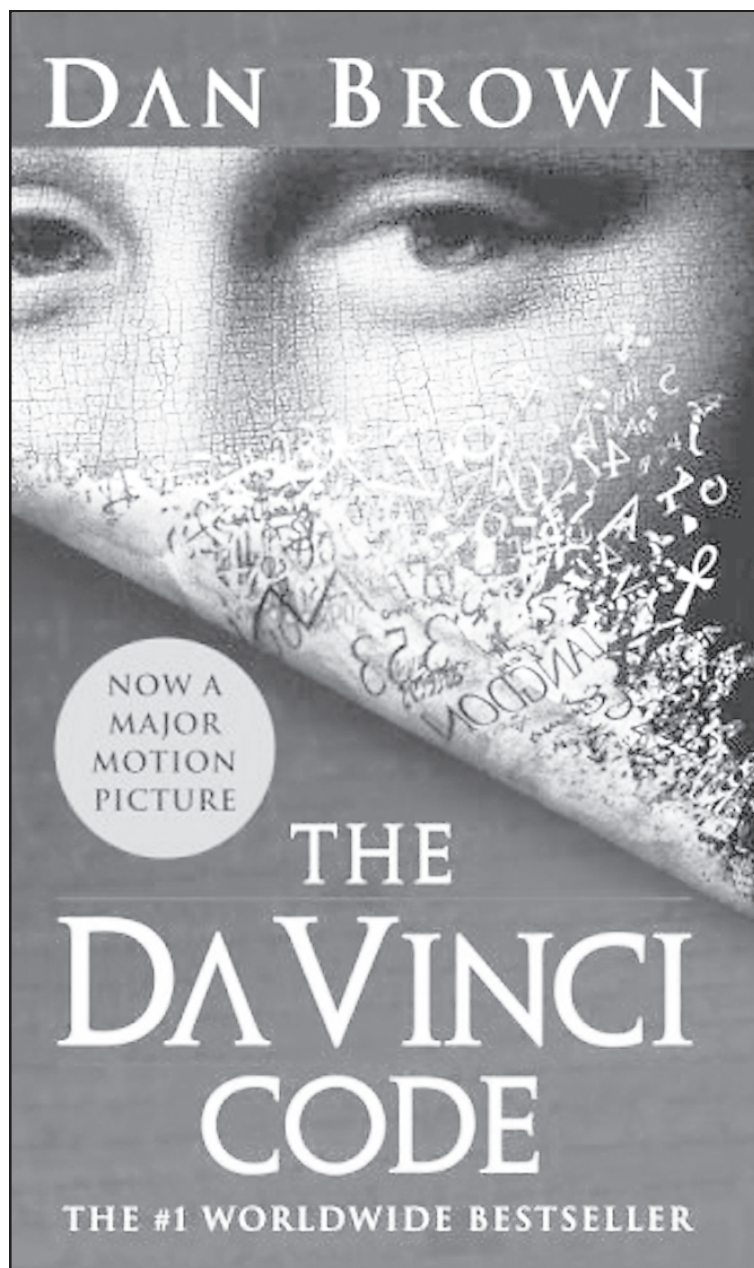
Clark did a sermon on the book Sunday, and talked about the truth of Jesus. He said he knows what the book is about because he read other materials about it.

He shared parts of his sermon.

"Truth is always reasonable and sound," Clark said. "It is a rock that will stand, and the lies the book is based on has a foundation of sand."

He said the hype will die and the truth will remain. He said the book is an attack on the Catholic Church. "People sometimes want to believe that stuff," he said. "There is truth in faith, and there is a desire for truth."

Pastor Gene Rothfuss at Colby Wesleyan Church said he isn't doing anything publicly in church to address the book. However, he has made materials from Pastor Jim



Garlow to help answer questions people might have.

Rothfuss did read the book, and said he agreed with Garlow that the book was "a good read, bad theol-

ogy."

"Dan Brown intended it to be a work of fiction," he said.

Pastor Jim Mardock of Colby United Methodist Church did a ser-

mon on the book Sunday.

"I looked at some of the errors that he (author Dan Brown) made and attempted to correct some of those," he said. "And it is not the first time."

When the book came out three years ago, a people from the congregation at the Methodist and Presbyterian churches formed a discussion group to talk about the errors in the novel.

"We addressed it that way," Mardock said.

"I don't discourage people to go see it," he said "I didn't get the sense people were terribly, terribly upset by it, but maybe they have questions though," Mardock said.

He's seen a lack of understanding about church history and people accepting assertions that sound truthful.

"They sound plausible," he said.

Mardock said many people are curious about the book and he hopes that curiosity carries over into wanting to learn more about the church's past.

"We can learn church history," he said.

He said the book was written to an audience that doesn't know the history of the church, or the Bible well.

Mardock guessed in the past three years, more people have read "The Da Vinci Code" than the Bible. He said people shouldn't accept the book's premise.

"I hope more people question it," Mardock said. He said he likes to question things and said people should be aware of how culture sometimes distorts things.

Mardock said he will probably see the movie and expects congregation members to go as well.

"It was a good mystery," he said.

Original college employee retires

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

It's not often Colby Community College board of trustees give a standing ovation during their meeting, but they did Monday.

Joe Mildrexler announced his retirement as dean of community services.

Mildrexler has been at the college from its inception more than 40 years ago, serving as an instructor and administrator.

"There is no way we can express our appreciation for the wonderful contributions Joe has made over the years," said Chairman Don Kready. "He is leaving a wonderful legacy."

When the college opened in August 1964, Mildrexler was hired as a math teacher and taught for 11 years.

"He was the interim dean of instruction for two years from 1975-77 and then accepted the job as dean of admissions and registrar from 1977-79," said Public Information Director Debbie Schwanke

In the fall of 1979, Mildrexler changed positions by becoming the college's dean of community services — a position he holds until June 30.

Interim President Skip Sharp said Mildrexler was recognized statewide for his commitment to adult education.

In May 2000, Mildrexler was awarded the Missouri Valley Adult Education Associations Founder's Award, which is the highest honor the association can give one of its members.

"This award is given only to individuals who have served the association and the adult and continuing education profession with such distinction that their achievements are widely acknowledged by the seven-state region served by the organization," Schwanke said.



Mildrexler

In addition to his founder's award with Missouri Valley, Mildrexler also held many offices within the Kansas Adult Education Association including president in 1980. He was honored in 1987 with that group's achievement award.

He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Fort Hays State University and earned additional postgraduate hours from the University of Missouri at Rolla.

Mildrexler and wife, Mella, have two adult daughters and two grandsons.

No replacement will be named for Mildrexler as the dean of community services. The three remaining deans will absorb the position. In other trustee news...

Trustees unanimously approved the reorganization of the administrative areas using the three remaining deans Kris Bishop, Dan Ebert and Skip Sharp.

Bishop, who was the dean of instruction, will now be the vice-president of academic services and will be in charge of outreach course-

work and in the 14 counties served by outreach.

Ebert, who was the dean of fiscal affairs, was renamed vice president of business affairs.

In his former position, Ebert was chief financial officer and will now assume the grant-type work that had been part of the community service position.

Sharp, who serves as interim president and as the dean of student services, will return to his former capacity once new president, Dr. Lynn Kreider, arrives July 1. However, Sharp will then be the vice-president of student services and marketing encompassing all student organizations, campus security, admissions, and all areas that impact students.

Chris Ellison, adult education coordinator, will become the director of outreach and continuing education. In her new capacity, she will work 12 months rather than nine months and will be in charge of the RSVP program, which was also under Mildrexler's position.

Heartland names new administrator

By John Van Nostrand

Colby Free Press

Jesse Vincent is going to get a new work out.

Vincent, who has taught physical education the past four years at Colby High School, has been named administrator at Colby's Heartland Christian School.

"One door closed after another. I didn't know if it fit me but I applied," Vincent said.

Vincent replaces Richard Roberts who has been administrator at Heartland for eight of its 10 years in operation. Roberts accepted an administrator position at a Christian school near McPherson.

Christian is nothing new to

Vincent. His father is the minister at Levant Community Church. Before working in Colby,

Vincent lived in Abilene and pastored a small church in the area for a year.

He is a licensed pastor. Vincent will use that experience, along with his physical education knowledge, to teach classes at Heartland.

But Vincent, 28, said he will need to know more about leading a Christian school.

"I have some good resources who

are administrators," he said. Vincent has a relative who leads a Christian school in metro-Kansas City. "I have family close enough who can help."

Vincent said his sister, Andrea Wyrick, sends her child to Heartland. Vincent learned about the school through Wyrick.

"I didn't have clue on what went on behind those doors," he said. "It's incredible, the amount of education in a Biblical view."

Heartland will also assist Vincent in training. Heartland is a member of Association of Christian Schools International that provides a variety of services to its members. In the past few years, Heartland has developed high

school courses and created athletic teams. Heartland Christian School Board President Craig Myers said Vincent has the right approach to his new job.

"He is young, has energy and has ideas," Myers said. "He has a good attitude about education."

Myers admits the board was concerned with Vincent's lack of administration experience, but is confident he will develop those skills.

"We did think long and hard about that. You don't know what they can do until they do it, and that also goes for the people with a degree," Myers said.

Vincent and wife, Dolly, have three children, Jordan, 4, Trey, 2, and Jett, 1.

Utah couple are awaiting charges in Colby

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

A man and woman from Utah alleged to have lured a 16-year-old Sharon Springs teenager into running away by using Internet communications are currently in the Thomas County jail pending charges.

Shannon Kay Macki, 33, and Daniel Fletcher Jones, 25, both of West Jordan, Utah, are both charged with contributing to a child's misconduct.

The two were arrested in Limon, Colo., Friday, May 12, and brought back to Thomas County Tuesday.

The circumstances leading to Macki and Jones arrest in Limon started 10 days prior when the boy's parents and stepparents became aware of some chat room conversations alleging Macki and Jones were talking to the youth about running away from home.

After learning of the conversations, Wallace County Sheriff Larry Townsend was made aware of the situation and last Sunday said he contacted the sheriff and undersheriff in Utah, who in turn, alerted the Internet task force authorities, also in Utah about the two adults.

"We had the names and were ready to have Utah officials go and interview them," Townsend said.

By Friday, Macki and Jones were alleged to have already been on their way to meet up with the teenager.

Unbeknownst to the teenager's parents, the family planned a shopping trip Friday to Colby's Wal-Mart from their home in Sharon Springs. While at the store, their son disappeared.

Frantic, the parents called the Colby Police Department and Thomas County Sheriff's office.

About three hours later, the boy called his mother from Limon.

“Parents who allow children to use the Internet unsupervised are setting themselves up for heartache.”

Larry Townsend,
Wallace County Sheriff

Townsend said she kept him on the phone while another member of the family called Colby police.

Police in Limon traced the call to the gas station and rescued the boy, said Limon Police Sgt. Russell Lengel.

"The two abductors were trying to get away when (Lengel) pulled up and he took them into custody," Townsend said in an earlier interview.

The boy, described by the sheriff as "scared and confused," was brought back to Sharon Springs.

One thing that continues to remain unclear is where Macki and Jones picked the boy up.

"We're assuming they drove to Colby and picked him up there," he said. "Parents who allow children to use the Internet unsupervised are setting themselves up for heartache," Townsend said. "It's unknown at this time what the abductors' plans were, but we suspect it may not have been pleasant."

The boy was returned to Sharon Springs late Friday night after returning home from Limon and was placed into protective custody.

Questions about the couple in custody and what charges are pending went unanswered today by Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick.

Bargains!



TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Bev Anderson sorted through items Thursday she was donating for the Heartland Rural Counseling Services garage sale today and Saturday. The event is being held the old Hot Topics building on Franklin Ave.