

GUESS WHO BELIEVES “DA VINCI CODE” FABLE

According to Reuters, those in England who read the Dan Brown novel are twice as likely to believe the tale that Jesus had children with Mary Magdalene. Perhaps the most astounding figure is the 30 percent who believe this and haven't read the book, not the 60 percent who read it and believe it to be true. To explain this, consider the data in the U.S.

In a *USA Today/Gallup* poll taken this month, 72 percent of Americans said that no movie had ever had a profound effect on their religious beliefs in any positive or negative way; 21 percent said they saw a movie that strengthened their beliefs; and 4 percent said they saw a film that caused them to question their religious beliefs. A Barna Group survey reported yesterday that 24 percent of those who read the book said it was helpful in relation to their “personal growth or understanding.” And only 5 percent said they changed any of their religious beliefs because of the *Da Vinci Code*.

Why the disparity between England and the U.S.? There is an inverse correlation between religiosity and belief in the *Da Vinci Code*'s thesis: the more likely one is to attend church, the less likely he or she is to believe the book's thesis. For example, the 2001 British census revealed that 72 percent consider themselves Christian, but only 8 percent regularly attend church services. Now consider that in the 2004 presidential election, 59 percent of regular churchgoers voted for Bush and only 35 percent of regular attendees went for Kerry. Couple this with the Barna data which found that liberals were twice as likely as conservatives to have altered their religious beliefs after reading the book, and the implications are obvious: those most likely to swallow the *Da Vinci Code*'s moonshine are those with the weakest faith, and those who are liberals (often one and the same).

“In other words,” Bill Donohue said, “it’s always easy to seduce liberals—just invite them to reject religion, especially Christianity—and watch them lap it up.”