

The author has a keen interest in biblical studies, history and treasure hunting. He utilizes a Bible Code program to unravel historical details which have been enshrouded in mystery for years, retracing the steps of key biblical figures.

KEY of GOD
By Charles A. LaFleur

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KEY OF GOD

Charles A. LaFleur



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Et In Arcadia Ego

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A Short History of the Author

I grew up in Fall River Massachusetts where I graduated from high school before joining the United States Air Force at age 18. I served 15 years in the Pacific Area of Operations, namely Japan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and lastly, at various bases in Vietnam. I retired from a career in the military after 20 years of active service. I received the Bronze Star medal for my service in Vietnam.

Immediately thereafter, I joined the U.S. Postal Service, starting at the Postal Data Center in Minneapolis Minnesota, working in Payroll Operations, followed by Retirement Data Operations processing postal retirement accounts. Enticed by warmer climes, I moved to Florida where I finished my 20th year with the Postal Service before retiring for the second time.

Having time on my hands, I began some interesting reading about Bible Code research conducted by Michael Drosnin, a newspaper reporter with the Wall Street Journal. He wrote two books on the subject. I was inspired to do my own inquiry and obtained the necessary programs from Israel based on the research of world-famous mathematician, Dr. Eliyahu Rips, and his associates. It enabled me to delve into data that the Lord Himself coded into biblical text.

A Treasure Hunter's Mentality

Since I was a young boy, I've had dreams of hunting for buried treasure, to seek those things which are hidden from sight and conjure up a spirit of adventure. I loved literature dealing with buccaneers who roamed the sea, pillaging galleons of the Spanish treasure fleet. When opportunity allowed, I'd try my own hand at digging for treasure, seeking that dream of realizing great success.

While attending classes at the University of the Philippines at Clark Air Force Base, I met a Filipino man who inherited a large tract of mountainous land from his grandfather. He told me a story that had been passed down to him about wagons loaded with ill-gotten loot from the Japanese invaders. He said local farmers witnessed deep tracks up the mountainous trail created by wagons drawn by teams of four water buffalo. Those deep tracks indicated the transport probability of heavy loads of gold and silver.

The Japanese officer in charge of that military detail had soldiers dig a deep hole at the base of a huge banyan tree into which they unloaded the contents of their wagons. Then one of the soldiers was instructed to climb the tree and carve a six-letter inscription, written in Japanese Kanji, into a large overhanging branch that could not be seen from below. This was believed to be a clue to a part of the hidden treasure of General Yamashita, the military commander of Japanese

forces in the Philippines. He was known as the Butcher of Malaya. Yamashita had stripped much of Southeast Asia of its golden treasures. He brought all this loot to the Philippines. After the American forces had landed on Luzon in the Philippines, he was anxious to hide his treasure before the Americans closed in on him.

Upon hearing this wartime tale, it didn't take much convincing for me to gather a treasure hunting party, and off we went into the tropical mountains of the Philippines. This was my first big adventure with treasure hunting and it turned out to be a muddy mess.

I drove my trusty 1950 VW Bug, along with two friends, as far as we could go up a winding mountain trail. We were accompanied by a local farmer with a big bolo machete and hacked our way through the jungle terrain until we reached a huge banyan tree that we believed held the inscription. The rainy season had begun and the dense jungle foliage was drenched. I braved climbing the tree, and saw a Kanji carving, as well as indentations that appeared to be rope burns on the branch. It appeared as though something heavy had been lowered into the ground below.

I unceremoniously got myself down from the tree, half sliding and half falling. As I tumbled, I heard a loud chattering of monkeys in the trees nearby, seemingly poking fun at my climbing abilities. I was badly bruised, but not beaten.

We started to dig. About ten feet down, my shovel hit a woven straw mat. I started pulling the mat out when a heavy torrent of monsoon rain came down. Soon I was up to my ankles in water, and the walls of the muddy hole I was standing in started to crumble. My friends hauled me out just in time. That was the end of that.

I didn't find a treasure that day, but I got a taste of adventure and was determined to return, but never could. The ensuing conflict in Southeast Asia had me visiting sites in Vietnam and Thailand. I worked as a budget analyst in the Air Force and was required to travel often. Time would not be kind to me. My thoughts of returning to the treasure site were dashed when the eruption at Mount Pinatubo had its impact on that area in the Philippines. I'll never know if treasure was buried in that spot, but the exhilaration I experienced was worth every minute of the soggy search.

Great euphoria morphed at a much later date in my life. In early May of 1986 I married a beautiful lady named Christine. We started out on our honeymoon from Fort Lauderdale Florida and traveled south on U.S. Highway 1 until we ran out of road at the southernmost part of the country in the quaint little town of Key West Florida. The ambience of the island paradise was blissfully relaxed. The weather was gorgeous and the sounds of Jimmy Buffet could be heard in the distance.

Key West was the home of Ernest “Papa” Hemingway and his bevy of six-toed cats. A large, comfortable writing gazebo still has his typewriter at the ready, as if waiting for the big man to return from having libations at Sloppy Joe’s, to sit down and create another of his literary masterpieces. The environs of his garden, with its saltwater pool, lent itself to a peaceful air, which he must have felt when writing some of his best work.

Key West also holds the distinction of being the home of the Summer White House of former President Harry S Truman. Residents there still remember him, cane in hand, wearing a smart Panama hat with a floppy brim shading him from the intense sun, taking his brisk morning walk through town.

One can walk from the Atlantic Oceanside of Key West to the Gulf of Mexico in less than an hour. Docks are located at the Western edge where the townspeople and tourists gather to celebrate the end of each day by viewing the beautiful sunsets, while sails of passing schooners billow in the breeze along the horizon. Quaint shops hawk shells and sponges, interspersed with Cuban cigar makers and a busy sandal shop where Latin ladies assemble footwear to the smell of fresh leather and glue.

While passing the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum in Key West, my interest was heightened by a sign denoting a newly opened display of phenomenal treasure, found in local bay

areas by Mel Fisher and his team of family and friends, after a long and persistent search. The exhibit was titled, “Treasure of the Nuestra Señora de Atocha,” and it was something I had to see.

The Atocha, a Spanish treasure galleon, went down during a violent hurricane. The remains of the ship were spread over a large area of the ocean bottom. The main part of the treasure was believed to have been housed in the forecastle of the ship and the hunt continues to this day. The main room of the museum was filled with silver ingots that Mel had recovered. There were also gold coins and gold chains. A brilliant golden cross inset with large emeralds lay surrounded by gold ingots and loose gems of all types. The sight dazzled my eyes.

Mel Fisher had, through great effort and personal sacrifice, fulfilled his dream. I wondered how he must have felt the moment he discovered that rich bounty and I envied that feeling of exhilaration that he surely experienced.

Reflecting back on those treasure-hunting experiences, I feel that I must now pursue an even greater treasure. As a young boy of seven, I took Sunday afternoon walks with my dad to visit my French grandmother (Grandmere) who lived in the Flint section of Fall River Massachusetts. It was four miles each way. I enjoyed these jaunts because it was somewhat of an adventure. It gave me a chance to see Grandmere’s mysterious book and to listen to her stories

about France, as told to her by her grandmere. Most of the stories dealt with the historical aspect of simple village life. She said that life was hard and children were expected to do their chores early, attend daily Mass, and excel in studies at school. She said she loved her studies, particularly French history. Joan of Arc was her champion and she begrudged the English for burning her at the stake.

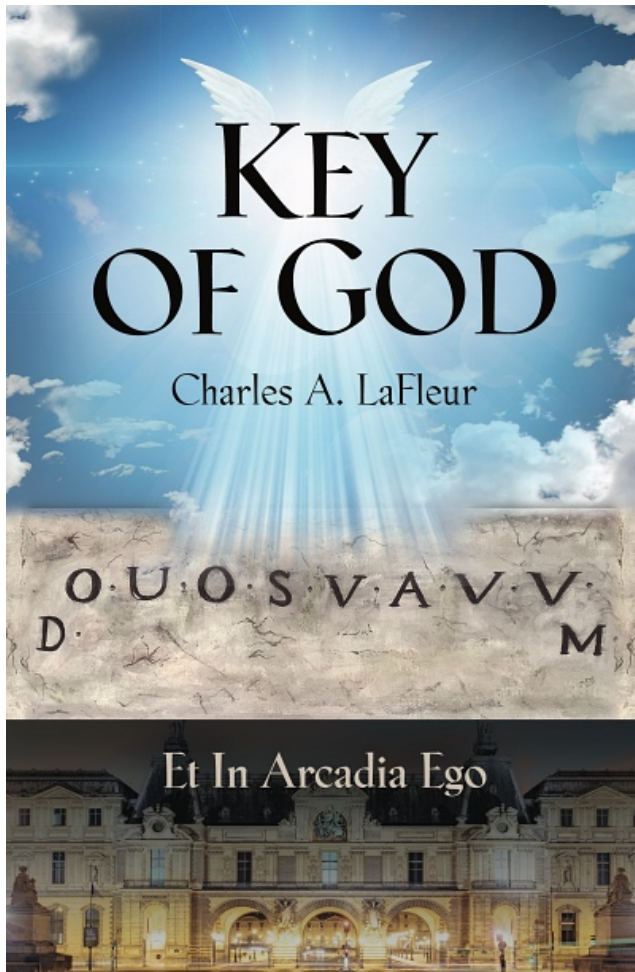
The book she showed me portrayed pictures of many saints. It described how they lived and died. One of the images in the book was a rendition of “Les Bergers d’Arcadie,” the famous painting by Nicolas Poussin that hangs in the Louvre. It depicted a sarcophagus (stone coffin) on which was carved ten letters. She was told that the letters were a key to finding the Cup of Christ. The letters appeared as follows: D. O.U.O.S.V.A.V.V. M. and included a Latin phrase, “Et in Arcadia Ego,” meaning, “I am in Arcadia also.”

I managed to memorize these ten letters, and I made a boyish boast to my grandmere at that time, that someday I might be able to solve this riddle. I remember the big smile I received in return as she warned me that many great men had tried and failed, but she encouraged me by saying, “If God wills it, anything is possible.” I spent many a night thinking the impossible, for who was I to succeed in this grand quest when so many noble souls have tried and failed.

Many years have passed since my jaunts through the meadows, and my father and grandmere have long since gone to their rewards, but the memories are still with me. Through my boyhood memories and a simple newspaper article that I stumbled upon years later, I have been given a charge to pursue the seemingly impossible. The article told of an enigmatic pursuit that has teased the best of minds for over 250 years. It described a group of letters that were carved on a stone and marble monument standing in the gardens at Shugborough House in central England. My interest was immediately aroused as I recalled my grandmere's book and the letters I had memorized as a boy. As it turns out, they were the same letters but in reverse order, as if looking at them in a mirror.

According to the article, the carving was based on a painting by Nicolas Poussin with some significant changes. On the carving, a shepherd is shown pointing to a different letter on the sarcophagus than in the painting. There was also a second sarcophagus depicted on the carving. These small changes may be significant when analyzing its meaning. The fact that these same letters appear on a painting that hangs in the Louvre in Paris, France, and carved on a garden monument at Shugborough House in England, expanded the parameters of this mystery to me, as I was unaware of the garden monument prior to reading the newspaper article.

Teams of mathematicians, linguists, and cryptanalysts at Bletchley Park, a famed intelligence center code-named Station X (which broke the famous German “Enigma” code used by Nazi submariners during World War II) have tried to solve the riddle of the ten-letter encryption: D. O.U.O.S.V.A.V.V. M. or its accompanying Latin phrase, “Et in Arcadia Ego.” So far, they have been unsuccessful. When I read the newspaper article, I felt as if a gauntlet had been thrown at my feet. This was an unprecedented challenge that I couldn’t let pass. I proceeded slowly and methodically to seek meaning to this mystery. I strongly believed that to be exposed to the riddle once is of informative value, but twice, presents a challenge. I was off to do some in-depth study of the Shugborough site to further my understanding of why this carving appears in an English garden.



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