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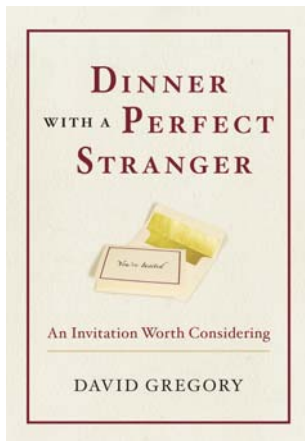


## For Immediate Release

**Joel Kneeder, Publicity Manager**  
800/603-7051, ext. 895661  
jkneeder@randomhouse.com

**Stephanie Mayabb, Broadcast Publicist**  
800/603-7051, ext. 895678  
smayabb@randomhouse.com  
**Katie Schroder, Print Publicist**  
800/603-7051, ext. 895695  
kschroder@randomhouse.com

## Hungry for more than tortellini? New book offers a meal that could change your life



**Colorado Springs, CO**— You're invited to dinner with Jesus of Nazareth. No reservations required, and no strings attached.

When successful Cincinnati businessman Nick Cominsky receives an invitation to join Jesus of Nazareth for dinner at a local restaurant, he's convinced that his friends at work are pulling a prank. But the man sitting across from him appears to be quite serious, introducing himself as "Jesus. My family called me Yeshua."

A provocative novella set almost entirely in a modern-day Italian restaurant, *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* (July 2005, WaterBrook Press/Random House, Inc.) presents the opportunity to listen in as a skeptical young professional confronts Jesus with challenging questions about the claims of Christianity. Their fascinating conversation covers everything from world religions and the accuracy of the Bible to life's purpose and the existence of heaven and hell.

As the evening progresses, Nick confronts his own unfulfilled longings, spiritual uncertainties, and anger with God. He begins to wonder how it's possible that the man across from him seems to hold all the answers to his deepest questions...and why this man who calls himself Jesus appears to know such a disturbing amount about Nick's personal life. At the close of the book, Nick faces the decision of whether to continue with his outwardly successful, inwardly unsatisfying life or to allow his life to be changed forever by what he learned during *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger*.

Also available in Spanish (September 13, 2005) from Vintage Español, *Cena con un perfecto desconocido* (0-307-27484-5). Contact Samuel Perwin: 212.572.2420, [sperwin@randomhouse.com](mailto:sperwin@randomhouse.com) for more information.

David Gregory and *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* have already gained national media attention, including *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, NPR's *Day to Day*, and Billy Graham's *Decision* magazine.

**David Gregory** is the coauthor of two nonfiction books and a frequent conference speaker. After a ten-year business career, he returned to school to study religion and communications, earning two master's degrees. David lives in Texas, where he works for a nonprofit organization.

*For members of the media only:  
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## David Gregory, author of *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger*

**Colorado Springs, CO**— David Gregory's life has come full circle. Despite a love for writing and liberal arts in high school and college, David opted for a "more practical" business degree that launched him into a successful ten-year career in

compensation management with three consulting firms and Texas Instruments. After a decade of spreadsheets, however, he was ready to look for a career offering more personal meaning.

David returned to graduate school, earning a master's degree from the University of North Texas with concentrations in communication and sociology. During that time, he began creative writing in the form of two short screenplays, one dramatic and one science fiction. He also started a periodic newsletter before joining a Christian ministry as staff writer and editor. While there, he co-authored two Christian nonfiction books. The first, *The Marvelous Exchange*, examined part of the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. David began a self-publishing business to sell the second, *The Rest of the Gospel: When the Partial Gospel Has Worn You Out*. He has sold 35,000 copies out of his home.

While earning another master's degree from Dallas Theological Seminary, David entertained what was for him a new craft: writing fiction. He decided that in a culture dominated by sound bites, reality TV, and the Internet, communicating through story could reach otherwise untapped audience. Taking some material on worldviews that he had planned to put into nonfiction form, he began writing *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger*.

David's current study focuses on the postmodern worldview and how it intersects with the Christian conception of God, meaning in life, and the process of knowing (epistemology). He is currently writing his second novel. David lives in Texas with his wife and two children, where he works for a nonprofit organization.

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## An interview with **David Gregory**, author of *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger*

**A provocative novella, set almost entirely in a modern-day Italian restaurant, *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger* presents the opportunity to listen in on an intriguing discussion of life between Jesus and Nick, an ordinary guy.**

### **Where did you get the idea for writing the book?**

The idea germinated from a graduate class I took which logically examined different world views. I envisioned weaving the material into a larger context. After some time, I found that what I truly wanted was a book that would present the person and work of Jesus Christ in a way that people would find engaging and entertaining—something I personally would want to hand to family or friends. There wasn't anything on the market that did that to my satisfaction.

### **Why did you choose the particular setting?**

It was a natural way for the two main characters to have a long, uninterrupted conversation. Also, it was patterned after one of my favorite restaurants in Dallas.

### **As you were writing, what were the pitfalls of putting Jesus in a contemporary setting?**

The contemporary setting wasn't as much of a challenge, I think, as simply portraying Jesus in writing. I had several aims. First, I wanted to show Jesus as a real person, as someone who the reader could relate to and actually like being with, rather than a "religious" person. In the Gospels, Jesus was criticized for partying with the riffraff of Jewish society. He was anything but a stuffed shirt. Second, I wanted Jesus's dialogue to be true to the New Testament text without being stilted. And third, I wanted Jesus's tone and body language to reflect a heart of love rather than a pious air. I wanted him to come across as someone who actually enjoyed being with people—as I believe God enjoys us.

### **Were you trying to stir up controversy by dismissing other major religions?**

Not at all. My intention is to make people aware of some of the problems inherent in the major belief systems in the world. Typically, Americans' attitudes toward others' religious beliefs are very accommodating—if that's what Joe believes, and it works for him, great. We don't usually investigate whether there is any historical basis for anyone's beliefs (including our own), or whether someone's belief system breaks down when it is analyzed closely. I am simply encouraging people to critically evaluate different world views, including Christianity, rather than blindly accepting them all as OK. If a belief system is false, it's not OK to adhere to it. Anyone has the right to do so, of course. What I mean is that false belief systems always produce negative outcomes in the real world. That's what we're witnessing now with radical Islam. It's important that what we believe in is true.

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### **Is there a reason you did not mention Judaism when you refer to other religions?**

Yes, I see Judaism very differently. Unlike the other religions I mention, I do not regard Judaism as having serious logical or historical inconsistencies. I accept the historical validity of the Hebrew Scriptures, and therefore believe that the Jews have always worshipped the true God.

In addition, I do not see Judaism and Christianity as two distinct religions. Rather Christianity is merely an extension of Judaism. Despite the extremely unfortunate and misguided persecution of the Jews by Christians, Christianity is deeply rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures. Christians have the exact same hope that Jews have, based on God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures and the promises that he made to his chosen people, the Jews.

Christians believe that some of these promises have already been fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, whom they believe is the promised Jewish Messiah. The Messiah was always intended to be the hope of the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Isaiah 11:1-10 and elsewhere). However, Christians believe many of God's promises to the Jews (and, secondarily, to the rest of the world) are yet to be fulfilled, so they await their fulfillment, just as Jews do.

So, in a real sense, I see the book as an affirmation of both historic Jewish faith and historic Christian faith.

### **How are you feeling about the positive response to the book?**

I am amazed, grateful, excited, and somewhat humbled by how the book has been received. I am hopeful that the book will get into the hands of many people who are searching or have questions that the book addresses, and will make people think more critically of their own belief systems, whatever those may be.

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