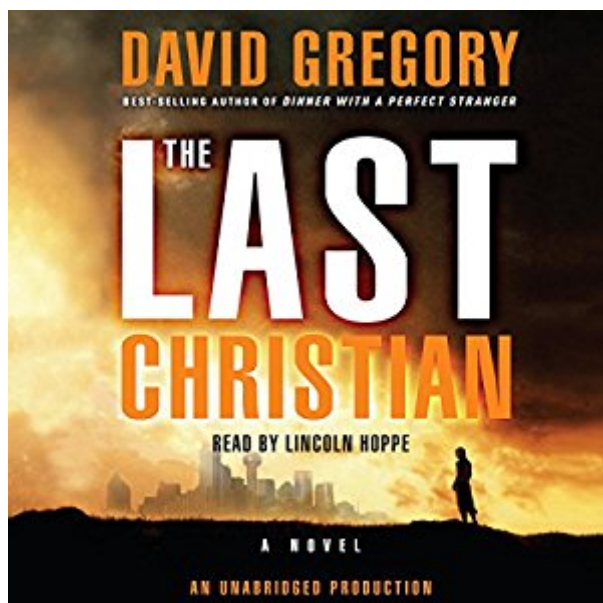


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The Last Christian: A Novel



Synopsis

In the future, it's possible to live forever—but at what cost? A.D. 2088.

A Missionary daughter Abigail Caldwell emerges from the jungle for the first time in her thirty-four years, the sole survivor of a mysterious disease that killed her village. Abby goes to America, only to discover a nation where Christianity has completely died out. A curious message from her grandfather assigns her a surprising mission: re-introduce the Christian faith in America, no matter how insurmountable the odds. But a larger threat looms. The world's leading artificial intelligence industrialist has perfected a technique for downloading the human brain into a silicon form. Brain transplants have begun, and with them comes the potential of eliminating physical death altogether—but at what expense? As Abby navigates a society grown more addicted to stimulating the body than nurturing the soul, she and Creighton Daniels, a historian troubled by his father's unexpected death, become unwitting targets of powerful men who will stop at nothing to further their nefarious goals. Hanging in the balance—the spiritual future of all humanity. In this fast-paced thriller, startling near-future science collides with thought-provoking religious themes to create a spell-binding "what-if?" novel. From the Trade Paperback edition. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let me add my two cent's worth to many other voices. I enjoyed the plot, I think personalities were

well developed, and point of view was handled correctly most of the time. The story has many characters and I reread some early passages to keep them straight. It's a thought provoking read. What will technology develop in the next 60 years and how will that affect our culture? I found myself reading and putting the book down awhile to chew on the story. As I read, I thought I would give it a 4 or 5 star review, but three stars is for the totally unfortunate and unsatisfying conclusion. I can recommend *The Last Christian* as an interesting approach to contemplating our future as well as the Christian theology it espouses, but read knowing you probably won't like the ending.

In David Gregory's *"The Last Christian"*, Abigail Caldwell is the daughter of Christian American missionaries in Papua, New Guinea. After spending all of her 34 years in the jungle, she travels to America and modern civilization for the first time. She discovers a world that is not only in huge contrast to her life in New Guinea, but also to life in our present-day America. The year is 2088 and technology has exploded, inundating every aspect of culture. Virtual Reality (VR) has become a prime residence for many American minds. Post modernism has run roughshod over religion, making it "hate speech" to share the Christian Gospel to others. However, this is not a problem in general, as the country has become predominantly atheist. Within this culture are those who desire to take VR to the next level: transplanting human brains in order to give people silicon ones that would enable their consciousnesses to live seemingly forever. As physical bodies wear out, minds are incredibly "uploaded" into VR to then be downloaded into new bodies. Abby comes to this transhuman reality with a special mission that will not only affect the lives of those around her, but also the lives of the entire culture. I was attracted to *"The Last Christian"* not only for its science fiction theme, but also because of the technological and worldview issues surrounding the story. David Gregory's America seems so far removed from our current way of life, but it's easy to see how we could easily venture down the same road. The Christian worldview is becoming an object of disdain for many, and technology is advancing at an incredible rate. *"The Last Christian"* was a fun and entertaining read. It's a science fiction thriller with Christian apologetics mixed in. Although it was certainly a page-turner, it also caused me to really think about some serious issues in our culture today. This novel would be great for those studying apologetics or for those simply considering the Christian faith. Parents should also know that while no explicit details are given, there are occasional mentions of Virtual Reality sexual issues. As a blogger, DVD reviewer and iPod user, I'm not one to overly malign technology. But as with most things in life, it's very easy for good things to be warped and used in detrimental ways. *"The Last Christian"* illustrates how things could go horribly wrong if we aren't careful with the choices we're making in technological advances.

David Gregory also shares the real (and not Virtual) life we can have with Christ living within us. Through Him will we find not only eternal life, but a fulfilling reality as well.*****This title was provided to me by Random House/WaterBrook Multnomah. No obligation other than an honest review was required.

I do think this book is well written but it has been difficult for me to read. The vision of Christianity coming to such an end is heart breaking. I have not finished this book because I just could not get into it. I need to try again.

Very enjoyable story. Good character development and plot line. At one point in the story, the author made a great comparison between an unborn baby's dependence on its mother for life and the Christian's dependence on Christ for spiritual life; I've never associated the two but it is the perfect illustration of how a Christian's relationship should to Jesus.

Some bottom lines:1. The artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and technological futurism is handled quite well - i.e. with enough solid scientific basis to make it "science" and enough fantastical vagueness to make it "fiction." There are a few long, convenient speeches, but in general the information is presented in an easy to understand way. With dubious references to Battlestar Galactica in the marketing blurb, it is nice to find that this is an integral part of the story, rather than a bolted-on gimmick.2. The evangelism - especially in the dialog - is not as bad as most Christian fiction, but still does not quite escape from that "forced" feeling - i.e. that one nice robot is asking nice formulaic questions about Jesus, and another nice robot is giving the nice formulaic answers. To be fair, probably the hardest thing in Christian fiction is to write solid, believable, natural evangelism dialog, and anything short of full-on cringeworthy can be considered a success.3. The central plot is more artificial than intelligent. It becomes increasingly frustrating to read two characters engage in protracted discussions about meanings and motivations that are glaringly obvious. Apparently, despite having instant access to all the information in the world, people in the future don't watch enough TV to know how all the pieces inevitably fit together. At least one of the characters has the excuse of having lived in the jungle all her life.4. The internet has been transformed into the Grid. This is almost, but not quite, as bad as calling it the Matrix. Authors really need to stop using cliché meshy-sounding words with capital letters for this purpose.5. There's some nice future history explaining the reasons why Christianity dies out in America. All plausible and not too far removed from current events. And credit to the author for slipping in a few

pointed fingers at the megachurches and secular social club mentality that somehow passes for "Christianity" even now.⁶ The gospel "epiphany" that is the only real reason for the fabricated "mystery" plot to exist is unfortunate - in that it becomes simply the other extreme to the extreme that the author is apparently trying to combat. In other words, in rightly trying to move away from the legalistic, self-help, self-centered "gospel," we are led all the way to a fluffy, inoffensive, sit-back-while-God-does-everything, no-worries style of "gospel." Where the Bible is used directly, there are clearly elements of truth and the actual good news - but these are forced off balance by the author's agenda and the subservient plot.⁷ The whole "relationship" angle - i.e. Christian woman character meets non-Christian man character, etc, etc. - is handled less ham-handedly than in most other books of this type and, while not entirely un-criinge-inducing on occasion, is certainly better than expected.⁸ The ending. No spoilers here, but "weak" would be not be too strong a word. Stuff comes out of absolutely nowhere - whatever the Christian equivalent of "deus ex machina" is. Other stuff happens for no apparent good reason or purpose other than to avoid any danger of a satisfactory conclusion. Things are wrapped up that make no difference to anyone, and things are left hanging that are presumably intended to be thought-provoking, but aren't.⁹ This book does become a page-turner, simply because you will want to find out if the obvious conclusion is really as obvious as you think it is. But calling it "suspense" is a gross dereliction of the English language.¹⁰ Overall, an interesting read for the Christian-tinged futurism. For the plot, not so much.

Good book

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