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Left Behind by The Da Vinci Code?

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In an interview with *Sojourners* magazine, Brian McLaren says the popularity of Dan Brown's book, *The Da Vinci Code*, is rooted in "an experience in shared frustration with status-quo, male-dominated, power-oriented, cover-up-prone organized Christian religion."

Then:

We need to ask ourselves why the vision of Jesus hinted at in Dan Brown's book is more interesting, attractive, and intriguing to these people than the standard vision of Jesus they hear about in church. Why would so many people be disappointed to find that Brown's version of Jesus has been largely discredited as fanciful and inaccurate, leaving only the church's conventional version? Is it possible that, even though Brown's fictional version misleads in many ways, it at least serves to open up the possibility that the church's conventional version of Jesus may not do him justice?

This is just not a responsible way to deal with a serious theological challenge. Why did the Gnostic cults prefer their conception of Jesus to that of the canonical Gospels? Is this the fault of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? The church's "conventional version of Jesus," where it needs correction, can be corrected only by Scripture.

Here is the strangest comment in the interview:

The book is fiction and it's filled with a lot of fiction about a lot of things that a lot of people have already debunked. But frankly, I don't think it has more harmful ideas in it than the Left Behind novels. And in a certain way, what the Left Behind novels do, the way they twist scripture toward a certain theological and political end, I think Brown is twisting scripture, just to other political ends. But at the end of the day, the difference is I don't think Brown really cares that much about theology. He just wanted to write a page-turner and he was very successful at that.

Ok, let me be clear about this — I am no fan of the *Left Behind* series. But *The Da Vinci Code* offers a broadside denial of the deity of Christ — arguing that He was not divine, that He did not rise from the dead, and that He did not come to save sinners.

This is an attack on the central doctrines of Christianity — a denial of the irreducible *kerygma* of the Christian message. This is no more serious than a disagreement over eschatology? That claim is nonsense.

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