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# Television Meets Christianity — The Problem

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Hanna Rosin of [The Washington Post](#) provides a fascinating analysis of why television dramas dealing with Christianity usually end in disaster. In "[God and Man on Television](#)," published at [Slate.com](#), Rosin offers a most interesting argument for why NBC's [The Book of Daniel](#) was such a debacle:

*Never was there a better example of Hollywood's schizophrenic outreach program to red America. A psychiatrist would know the name for this, lightly repressed hostility or something — the show took great pains to insult anyone who might want to watch it. The premise was [Six Feet Under for Christians](#) — a dark comedy about a highly dysfunctional family of misfits that centers around a church instead of a funeral home. Perfectly interesting, except that it wasn't. In the first week we were introduced to Daniel's gay son, and his lesbian sister-in-law, and his daughter who got busted for selling pot, and his hostile, randy adopted Asian son, and his wife who drank martinis long before sundown . . . .*

*NBC sold the show as "provocative and edgy," and from the beginning it drew the predictable backlash — a few affiliates refused to air it, and Christian groups complained it was the "work of an embittered ex-Catholic homosexual," as the Catholic League put it. (Jack Kenny, the show's gay creator, based the show on his lover's repressed family — and made sure to say so in every interview he gave.) NBC will probably claim the show was just too controversial, but usually controversy makes for good buzz. Daniel was just boring, and for an obvious reason: Hollywood executives seem convinced that dinnertime at any religious home sounds like the 1992 Republican convention, with everyone screaming about gays and sex and other culture war issues. Kenny did to Daniel what other Hollywood executives do to TV presidents — made him a wuss who's soft on everyone and loves the environment. Jesus, meanwhile, was straight off the inspirational best-seller list: a friend who might seem flaky but always comes through with the hard truths like "Life is hard," or "Boy, you never know, do you," his response when they figured out Daniel's sister-in-law is gay.*

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