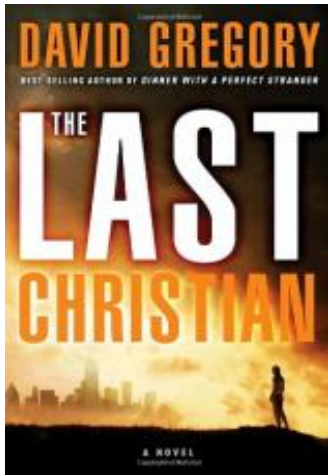


The Last Christian

by David Gregory



About the Book

In the future, it's possible to live forever --- but at what cost?

A.D. 2088.

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.

Discussion Guide

1. The Last Christian highlights a mixture of rapidly developing sciences, including bioengineering, virtual reality and nano-robotics. These developments can be seen for their positive benefits or for the way they handicap the spiritual life.

What do you see as the potential benefits of such advancements? The potential dangers? How should Christians approach technology and scientific advancements? Should they take a posture of fear?

2. In 2088, **The Last Christian** portrays relationships in the United States as being mostly interacted online, on the Grid. Indicators presently point us toward more virtual community and into a certain kind of isolation. What can believers do to understand that community and to foster relationships even as technology drives us further from actual human contact?

3. **The Last Christian** presents a world in which most diseases have been cured and people regularly live past 120. If you expected to live past 120, what effect would that expectation have on the way you live your life? What effect do you think such a change would have on most people's lives?

4. What do you think most people would choose: a consciousness without end, as Bryson Nichols envisioned, but also without God, or a normal lifespan with the presence of God? Why? Which would you choose?

5. Is there a point at which the use of technology and an active walk of faith with God become mutually exclusive? In what ways, if any, does your use of technology impede the closeness of your relationship with God?

6. According to the story, what is deficient in Abby's understanding of the Christian life as she comes to America? Is she suffering from a lack of trying hard? In what ways do you see this deficiency in your own life or the lives of Christians in general?

7. What does Abby's grandfather Ray attempt to communicate with her? Why does Abby struggle to understand his message?

8. What are the implications of Ray's spiritual message for you personally? Does it change your understanding of what a faith walk with God means? How?

9. What is the spiritual epiphany that Abby has on the train? How does this new awareness affect the way she sees and responds to things in the remainder of the story?

10. In his lecture to his college class, Creighton lists five primary reasons for the demise of Christianity in the U.S. (a) Do you see any of these trends at work now in the culture? In what ways? (b) Which of these trends do you think is the most serious problem confronting the Christian faith? (c) What do you expect will be the results of the trends you see on (i) society at large, and (ii) the church?

11. Do you see characteristics or trends in the church in America that will prevent it from going the way of secular Europe?

12. What feelings did starting a book called **The Last Christian** evoke in you?

13. In the book, Abby has some strong reactions to what she sees as the negatives of American culture in 2088. What are some of the things she reacts against? Do you see any of these same issues in today's American culture? How have these cultural factors influenced your own life?

14. What threats to free religious expression and freedom of speech have you noticed in the news? What do you think might be the long-term outcome of such threats?

15. What do you think is the main inner conflict Creighton experiences with regard to whether or not to get the brain transplant? What makes him decide in a certain direction? How did you react to his decision? Why?

16. What are the competing ultimate realities expounded by Abby and Bryson Nichols in their conversation at his estate? Which reality do you think is correct? What would you say to someone who asked you to defend your answer?

17. What do you think is the primary message of the final scene of the book, the conversation between Hutch Hardin and Creighton? What implications does this message have for your life?

18. What were the primary effects **The Last Christian** had upon you? What did it make you think about afterwards? What feelings did it evoke? What, if anything, did it make you ponder concerning your own life?

Author Bio

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