God Complex Radio: Left Behind and Loving It
http://godcomplexradio.com/2013/04/d-mark-davis-left-behind-and-loving-it/

Guest:
- Pastor and founder of Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive, Iowa, D. Mark Davis wrote *Left Behind and Loving It: A Cheeky Look at the End Times* as a means of revisiting “more Biblical and theological integrity” the apocalyptic, eschatological texts he first experienced in a more fundamentalist faith tradition

Suggested learners:
- Adults and mature teens, perhaps especially those who have come to mainline Christianity from more conservative evangelical backgrounds

Outline of interview:
- Circular relationship between evangelism and eschatological concerns; the former provides urgency while the latter gives content
- Left-behind theology: a way of seeing the history of the world wherein the last days are *upon* us, and ours is the last era; the very next thing on the global timeline is rapture
- Word rapture comes indirectly from the Bible (1st Thessalonians 4:17); Latin *rapturo*, meaning caught up
  - Biblical basis of the word rapture is almost negligible
  - Notion of rapture feeds off of fear of the direction the world is tending towards; vision widely shared by many who see a troubling devolution in today’s world
- How little Scripture has to do with this theology; rather, plays off fear of the danger of our times (in reference to Boston bombings)
  - Absorbs actual fears, events, and inserts highly questionable content (e.g. Pat Robertson’s analysis of the bombings)
  - Narrative fits our fears; justifies prejudice, offers opportunity to name an enemy, validates fears, encourages us to act in direct disobedience of the Sermon on the Mount
- Is not *the* Christian theology; we must deconstruct many of the things that have been said in the name of the Gospel
- Danger of understanding Jesus as the sheepdog; no longer a sheep

Additional reflection questions:
1. There is a sense of “no more Mr. Nice Guy” in the left-behind theology; how does that compare to your conception of Jesus? Is he coming back with teeth bared?
2. Despite the limited connections between the left-behind theology and Scripture, are there
ideas or images from this movement that liberal and moderate Christians might choose to embrace?

3. What is the responsibility of Christians who disagree with the theology of the left-behind movement to engage with these ideas? Should they ignore them, actively refute them, be in conversation with them, or something else? To put it another way, what is the witness of mainline Christianity in a culture whose image of the faith is shaped strongly by conservative evangelicals?

Podcast study guides are a new genre for us all. Have a suggestion? Please contact us at cmt@vts.edu.