

BBC Provokes Christians With Good Friday Show That 'Sexualizes Christ'

An Easter BBC program that suggested Mary Magdalene was married to Jesus Christ has been described as "highly provocative" by a bishop.

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali criticized the program, which was broadcast on Good Friday, saying the timing was when "Christians are thinking about Christ on the cross."

He added that the show has references to Jesus "being kissed on the mouth by Mary Magdalene and it refers to her being his wife."

He said: "It is highly provocative in terms of its content for Christians on Good Friday and it attempts to sexualize Christ in the most offensive way."

The Mystery of Mary Magdalene was broadcast on BBC 1 on Good Friday at 12 p.m. GMT, and was fronted by Melvyn Bragg.

The program looked at a series of Gnostic gospels—writings that are not part of the Bible. Bishop Nazir-Ali commented: "I am concerned about the misuses of very obscure Gnostic gospels to impugn the integrity of the Bible."

He also expressed concern that Christians who believe the Bible were not given any sort of response to the claims of the programme.

Andrea Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, said: "Noon Good Friday is the precise time Christians are remembering Jesus' crucifixion.

"To air a program which questions the purity of Christ is at

best insensitive and at worst offensive. Who is making such bewildering decisions in the BBC's religious programming department?"

She concluded that a program "based on sound scholarship—rather than pseudo-scholarship" should now be broadcast.

Last month the BBC came under fire for broadcasting an Easter radio program that said the way Britain treats gay people is like the crucifixion of Jesus.

The lecture was given by Benjamin Cohen, a gay rights activist and former Channel 4 News reporter.

"This is typical of the BBC's socially liberal bias which tries to distort the Christian message at every turn," a spokesman for The Christian Institute said.

"Using the crucifixion to push a gay rights agenda is a new low, even for the BBC. It's yet another slap in the face to every Christian who pays the licence fee."