

**TOPIC 4****ALL RELIGIONS ARE  
BASICALLY THE SAME. FACT OR  
FICTION?****Conversation Points**

- ★ People who can conversationally speak more than one language are smarter than most people. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**
- ★ People who have pets are always more caring than those people who do not. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**
- ★ Vegetarians are healthier than people who eat vegetables and meat. **AGREE or DISAGREE?**

**Reflection**

Lee Strobel was born in Arlington Heights, Illinois. He grew up with a keen interest in news. When he was 13-years old he started in his own newspaper, *The Arlington Bulletin* - reporting news about bikes, local government, and crime. This was delivered to seventy-three customers in his estate. When he was 14-years old he first met Leslie who became his closest friend. But through Lee's teen years he became extremely angry and rebellious which was not made any easier by his growing use of alcohol. Despite the best efforts of his father to prevent his son spiralling out of control, they only ended up in very heated yelling matches. On the eve of his graduation from high school (when Lee would soon be about to leave home for college), his relationship with his father, Walter Strobel, had become so bad and deteriorated so much that his exasperated dad said to him, "*I don't have enough love for you to fill my little finger!*"

After high school, Lee was glad to leave home and move to neighbouring Missouri for college where he earned a degree in journalism from Missouri University. He then went on to the prestigious Yale University in Connecticut where he earned a Masters of Studies in Law. He and his wife Leslie were both 21-years old when they married in 1972. They soon moved back to Illinois where Lee took up a position with *The Chicago Tribune* as a law reporter and eventually became the Tribune's Legal Editor. He gained

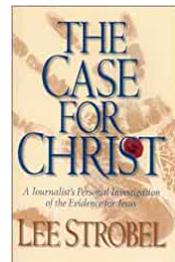


Leslie and Lee on their wedding day in 1972

a reputation as a hard-hitting investigative journalist and won many awards in the process. But through this period he also became a hard-drinking and very unpleasant angry man. Leslie was becoming increasingly fearful especially for their newly arrived baby daughter, Alison. Lee said, *"I lived a very immoral, and drunken, and profane, and narcissistic, really self-destructive kind of a life. That was my life."* Years later, Alison reflected on her childhood and said that as a little girl she was fearful of her dad. In an interview about this time of his life, Lee told the interviewer that *the ugliest detail about him was that he came home drunk and angry so often that his daughter would immediately gather her toys and go to her room when he walked in the door after work.*

Lee and Leslie's marriage was at this stage "teetering on divorce". Linda, a neighbour in their apartment building had become increasingly concerned for Leslie after hearing the yelling and the commotion especially when he began throwing things and putting his foot through the wall! Linda reached out to Leslie. Befriending Leslie, one day she invited her to come which her church in Chicago, which was, at that stage, meeting in a movie cinema. Leslie enjoyed it so much that she kept going week after week. Lee became concerned. "I didn't want to be married to a Christian," he said. "I didn't sign up for this." So he decided he *would* go with his wife to her church so that he could show her why they were wrong!

What happened instead was not what Lee was expecting. He heard an intelligent presentation about the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and Christianity. This meant that his task of showing Leslie *why it was wrong* was going to be more difficult than he first thought. He used his skills as an investigative journalist over the next 18 months to do his research which involved interviewing leading theologians across America. Initially, he presented his work to *The Chicago Tribune* to publish as a series of investigative articles. They declined. So it was published in a book, *The Case for Christ* which also contains how the evidence persuaded Lee to become a Christian!



29. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 5:26:47 pm

John 5:33 You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.

John 5:34 Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

John 5:35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

John 5:36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.

John 5:37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen,

John 5:38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,

John 5:40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

30. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 5:27:10 pm

The fact that Jesus considered that the very religious Jewish leaders were not saved tells that not all religions can lead to salvation with God despite their claims to be able to do so.

FACT OR FICTION

Section 1: Certain things are objectively true. Fact or fiction?

*I came to the conclusion ultimately that based on the avalanche of evidence that points so powerfully toward the truth of Christianity, it would have taken more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to become a Christian.*

LEE STROBEL

The Case For Christ, 1998

**Investigating the Truth Claims of Religions**

*The Case For Christ* was the first of forty books about God, Jesus, and Christianity, that Lee Strobel investigated and wrote journalistically about. Based on his research, he found that the idea that all religions were basically the same was simply not true. Christians believe that there is one God who is a triune person of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Islam teaches that this is the unforgivable sin of *shirk*. Although there are now many different types of Buddhists, classical Buddhism teaches that there is *no God*. Hinduism teaches that *Brahma* created everything from himself so that he is now dissolved into the universe including into a multiplicity of many gods particularly Shiva, Ganesha, Krishna, Vishnu, and in some forms of Hinduism, another 330,000,000 gods. As you can see, these different religions each have completely different understandings of *what* and *who* God is. This necessarily means that they each have radically different views on the meaning and purpose of life, life-after-death, sexuality, and science. .

People who have different religious beliefs are often very nice, warm, easy-to-get-along-with, people. You might have good intellectual reasons for thinking their religion is wrong. **How does meeting a nice member of that religion challenge your views?**

**From the Bible**

- 1. How does the way that Jesus spoke to the religious leaders of Judaism in **John 5:33-40** effect the idea that all *religions are equal* and *basically the same*?

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31. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 5:53:54 pm  
John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

32. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 5:54:01 pm  
The fact that Jesus stated that He was the only way to the Father God, and that He emphatically said that no-one can come to the Father but through Him, should tell us that He did not consider all religions being able to lead anyone to His Father.

33. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 7:56:37 pm  
Rom. 10:9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Rom. 10:10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

34. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 7:57:23 pm  
Because it states that being made right with God is an act of a person's will expressed by confessing the need for a forgiveness and acceptance of God's offer of salvation.

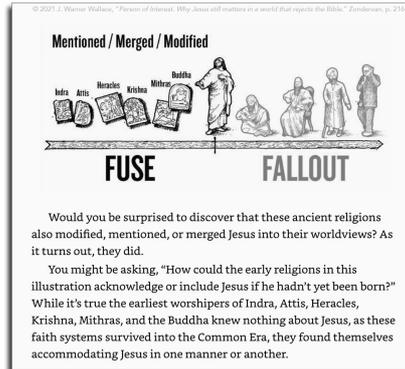
35. Dr. Andrew Corbett

26 February 2023 at 8:02:34 pm  
Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

FACT OR FICTION

Section 1: Certain things are objectively true. Fact or fiction?

J. Warner Wallace points out in his book, *Person of Interest*, that after Jesus came, all existing religions in some way have tried to incorporate some of His teachings into their own religion, and/or claim that Jesus basically endorsed them.



- 31 2. Note what Jesus the Christ said as recorded in **John 14:6** and discuss whether Jesus thought that "all religions lead to God"?
- 32 \_\_\_\_\_
- 33 3. Some teach that since Jesus the Christ is the Saviour of all people, all people (regardless of their religion or no religion) have already been eternally saved and made right with God. In what way does **Romans 10:9-10** challenge this idea?
- 34 \_\_\_\_\_
- 35 4. Read **Acts 4:12**. Is it *unfair* of God to reject all other religions other than trusting and following Jesus the Christ as Saviour and Lord? Discuss.

**Additional References**

Pew Research, *Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation*. June 29 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/06/29/beliefs-about-god-in-india/>

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