

Read the good news for yourself in the New Testament. If you will seek your Maker with all your heart he will show himself to you.

This is my story of why I believe what I believe. *What is yours?*

Questions about the Christ

- The Holy Bible (The book of John is a good place to begin.)
- Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis
- Jesus Among Other Gods, Ravi Zacharias
- Case for Faith and Case for Christ, Lee Strobel

Problems of Modern Naturalism

- Origin of Species, Charles Darwin
(I find most 'Darwinists' haven't read it.)
- Darwin on Trial, Phillip Johnson
- The Mystery of Life's Origins, Walter Bradley
- Darwin's Black Box, Michael Behe

To connect with someone, contact Solid Rock—Climbers for Christ at info@srcfc.org or 541-408-5846. We would love to dialogue with you!

Different World Views

I suggest that you go straight to the sacred texts and to people who are devout in the view that they hold. Nominal believers who pay lip service to beliefs but do not act on them simply do not really believe what they say they do (this includes Christians). Realize that the views you hear and read of 'modern' interpretations of ancient teachings usually skip over difficulties found in the real sources for the texts in order to sell you on the matter. And beware anyone who tells you that you can treat truth like a buffet table and just take what is convenient or feels good for you. The bottom line is that you must believe what you deem to be the most reliable sources of information. Every person must resolve inner questions by trusting a source of truth. This is your choice given to you by the Designer of the universe, so choose wisely. One day your Creator will hold you responsible for your decision.

in the Old Testament. Even the enemies of Christ admitted that they could not attack his morality, logic, or supernatural authority. He said that he was the physical embodiment of the Spirit of the Designer and that he had come to reconcile God's justice with mankind's rebellion by taking mankind's punishment upon himself. He did not come to establish a governmental rule but a spiritual kingdom that would dwell in the hearts of those who followed him. He lived the perfect life as intended by the Designer but then suffered the punishment due a person rebelling against the Designer. According to the New Testament he did many supernatural things in the presence of tens of thousands of people, including returning from the dead and ascending into the heavens. Those who accept his payment for their own rebellion will be deemed by the Designer as righteous.

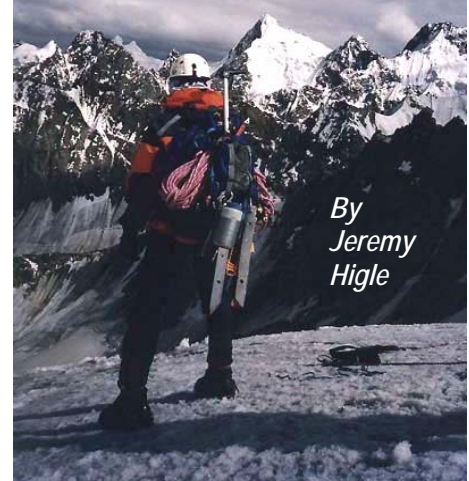
NOTE: All of these discussions are summaries of long and arduous 'Pitches' but in my own heart and mind, there is only one reasonable option to conquer the inner self and that is to conform my life to the one truth in the universe that must exist. That truth is not found in word or creed but in the person and world view presented by Jesus, the Christ.

PITCH 6: *If the story of Jesus Christ is true as it seems to be then there must be supernatural power that will result in following him.*

Here is the crux of the route, so to speak. Because if there is no supernatural experience to be had in the words and work of Jesus Christ then the whole climb will run out and we must rappel back to the base of the climb. However, this is where the truth to be found in the Christ's teaching is the most powerful. He said, "I am the truth, the life, and the way. No one can come to the Father except through me." This is the crux which leaves many abandoning the climb. It is a blank face that has no climbable feature by which humans can pass. My guilt and pride say that I must earn this success with my own skill. But the Christ said he has already climbed this pitch which is impossible for me and I must simply allow him to haul me up the last and most difficult pitch. I am not smart

Grade VII

Every Climber's Quest



(The author has climbed for over a decade. He is pictured here during the first ascent of Karpo Brakpo in the Karakoram.)

After completing the first solo winter ascent of the 5,000 foot vertical ice gauntlet *The Shroud* Ivan Ghirardini pondered his historic climb which nearly killed him. He concluded his mystical account of the climb by saying, "*We shall not find the seventh grade beyond the sixth, but in ourselves.*" - (From *The High Lonesome, 'The Shroud Solo'*, edited by John Long)

PITCH 1: *There is truth in the world and it is true regardless of what I believe.*

This is a restatement from the earlier paragraph that the universe is ordered and that order is not changed by what I believe. The idea that – 'There is one absolute truth and it is that there is no absolute truth' is an irrational illusion. It is like a climber saying I don't have to believe in gravity if I don't like it. Our faith has no intrinsic power unless what we believe in is true. I can tell myself I decide what is right and wrong but it is just like a climber convincing himself that he has control over the mountains. It may make me comfortable but one day reality will catch up with me.

PITCH 2: *All views on the reality of the world are exclusive of other views.*

In my travels and talking with people in China, India, Pakistan, Mexico, Thailand, and the west I have discovered one thing about the different views of the world. Every world view (including, Mormonism, Atheism, Naturalism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity) says it has the only correct view of reality. All of these say that if you do not believe as they do, then you are wrong. Even the 'pluralistic' Hindu and Buddhist say that if you do not accept their doctrine of infinity and reincarnation, then you are wrong. But this is a good thing because all of these views do recognize the first reality, that everyone is not right, but one of these views is. There are exclusive beliefs in each of these world views which make it irrational to believe more than one. Any statement about truth, by definition excludes the opposite. To say that each of these leads to the same place in the end simply shows that one has no real understanding of the different views or of logical thinking. Even Baha'ism, which claims to embrace all religions, excludes view points that are exclusive and thus logically excludes itself. So all world views are exclusive and they logically must be.

A climber's perspective:

The most important thing that an experienced climber comes to realize in the backcountry is – I am not in control. The universe has forces built into it that all people are subject to no matter how they feel about it. Climbers who have a sense that they control the ultimate outcome in the mountains are not sensing reality, but an illusion in their mind for their own comfort. Even the most competent climber can do everything right and still be killed. The rules in nature are imposed on us and we have no influence or choice. Climbers compensate for this by adjusting plans and opinions to the reality that we find ourselves in.

There is no evidence in the natural universe that we can make up the rules for our lives. The rules are already made and our own ignorance (or denial of our ignorance) is the greatest danger in mountain adventures and in our own hearts. I have encountered the same thing that Ivan Ghirardini articulated in the quote on the cover. The greatest challenge for every climber is to conquer the lonely degenerated place inside of one's self. Without right purpose in the heart there is no worthwhile purpose in climbing, except to briefly distract one from the inner question.

After a careful study of the different ideas on the reality of the universe that are out there, here is a summary of my reasoning for viewing the situation of the natural world and of the human heart. My intent is to share with you the good news of how I have climbed the seventh grade of my own heart, filling that lonely degenerate place with hope, love, and peace. Here is my beta on the route – 1) objectively look at the problem, 2) consider the opinions of others who have succeeded, and 3) pursue it with all you are and have.

PITCH 3: *The Universe is finite and had a beginning that could not have resulted from random chance.*

This reality makes it impossible to hold to the view of the Atheist, the Post-Modernist, the Naturalist, the Buddhist, and the Hindu. All of these world views are based on the assumption that the universe is infinite and had no beginning. Modern science and mathematics have proved that there was a beginning to the universe and the arguments of the mentioned world views to reconcile their original system with a finite universe do not seem reasonable. So these are unacceptable in my view. And to further this reality, we find that the universe could not have arrived by chance.

To reinforce this point I include a quote from Walter Bradley, PhD (former director of the Polymer Technology Center at Texas A&M and widely respected as one of the foremost authorities on the theories for the origin of life in the universe): *"There isn't any doubt that science, for the moment at least, is at a dead end. The optimism of the 1950's is gone. The mood of the 1999 international conference on the origin of life was described as grim, full of frustration, pessimism, and desperation. Nobody pretends that any alternative provides a reasonable path of how life went unguided from simple chemicals to proteins to basic life forms."* Applying the rules of logic as I know them - the only way to rationally view the universe is to say that either we are mistaken about the laws of the universe, or that there is a supernatural designer which designed the universe.

PITCH 4: *Islam and Mormonism are each built on the testimony of an individual man who said the Bible is true but that it is incorrect where it differs from each of their teaching.*

Both Joseph Smith & the Prophet Mohammed claimed that they had a private, individual revelation from God that was a correction of the mistakes made by the prophets in the Bible. While their teachings are drastically different from each other, they both claimed that they had secretly received their revelations from God and that their new teachings were the ultimate bar to which other truth must be held. Anywhere the teaching of the

enough, powerful enough, rich enough, deserving enough, hard working enough, and cannot earn it. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast." It is in this gift I have found the supernatural ability to conquer my own heart and to develop a rich, fulfilling relationship with my creator. There is no natural explanation for my experience and for the peace I now have in my inner self that passes all of my own understanding. All I did, to follow the climbing analogy, is have enough faith to clip into the haul line, and watch as I was lifted to the summit by no effort of my own. I am still clipped into that rope today and have seen my self carried through the difficulties of this life while I simply rested in Christ's work. Christ is the only being who can lead this pitch, the crux of the grueling seventh grade.

PITCH 7: *Relationship and not Religion*

Christ's life and message were that religions are manmade and insufficient to reach God. Many people in the past have tried to mix his message with manmade dogmas, qualifications, and institutions. This is a message for the hearts of people not for political agendas or cultural imperialism. The work of the followers of Christ is to love and serve God, love and serve other people, and be servant witnesses to the message of hope that Christ gave. Perhaps as Gandhi said, you like the Christ but not the Christians. Well what I tell you is to seek after the relationship that your Designer intended through the Christ and not so much after any religion created by man. You must meet your Designer one to one and not through the lens of religion. The Christ said "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Bible (or any other teaching) disagrees with them - it is wrong. So according to these world views the truth is based on an individual's word alone and neither of these two men were known to have any public supernatural evidences. However, both set up a society of which they were the ultimate and unquestionable authority. And both of these prophets had serious moral shortcomings which are attested to and un-denied even by their own followers. So it is reasonable to say that these can be seen as unreliable sources. Each view originates from a self proclaimed exclusive, infallible source but the individuals themselves were known to be fallible. (See the Koran, the Hadith [official book of Islamic history], and Book of Mormon.) There are also other sects which fall into this category.

PITCH 5: *The differences between Judaism and Christianity*

The ancient texts of the Bible can be authenticated on a basis of historical accuracy. The Bible (with New Testament included) was written by dozens of authors of different social status, on three different continents, over a span of some 3,000 to 4,000 years. With that in mind it has an undeniably amazing continuity. The Bible claims to be the record of the Intelligent Designer's revelation of himself to humanity, showing his character, and telling about the rebellion of humanity through history. This rebellion by humanity has resulted in evil that was not intended by the Designer. These texts describe a finite universe created in an orderly way so that the character of the Designer can be seen throughout his creation.

Judaism is based on a promise given through the Law and the Prophets (called the Old Testament in Christianity) that God would one day send a Messiah (savior) to set up a righteous kingdom on earth and to lead all the nations to serve God. The Jewish teaching says that they are looking forward to that day when this king will come to give them justice and reestablishment of the Kingdom of Israel. But this view is incomplete.

Christianity is based on the same Law and the Prophets and on the perfect life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth who claimed to be the One promised