

When It Comes to Religion, Do Dan Brown and C.S. Lewis Agree?

Ahead of the release of his new book *Origin*, famed author Dan Brown was [interviewed](#) by CBS. During the course of the interview, the issue of religion came up and Brown was asked to elaborate on his views of this explosive subject. In response to whether he was “anti-religion,” Brown replied:

“Absolutely not. Religion does an enormous amount of good in the world. At the same time, there are factions in every religion that take the metaphors and the myth of scripture and they hold them up as literal fact. And that is the danger of any philosophy, or any religion.”

When asked if we would be better off without religion, Brown declared, “I personally believe that our planet would be absolutely fine without religion, and I also feel that we are evolving in that direction.”

Brown’s words are interesting, particularly when viewed in the light of famous author C.S. Lewis. In fact, Brown’s comments on the benefits of a moderated, non-offensive religion echo those made by one of Lewis’ most famous characters: the demon Screwtape.

In instruction to his fellow demon Wormwood, [Screwtape explains](#) how best to lead individuals away from religion, specifically Christianity:

“Talk to him about ‘moderation in all things’. If you can once get him to the point of thinking that ‘religion is all very well up to a point’, you can feel quite happy about his soul. A Moderated religion is as good for us as no religion

at all – and more amusing.”

In other words, the moderated religion which Screwtape advances is one which offers a comfortable feeling to the individual who follows it.

Not surprisingly, human beings naturally gravitate toward such a comfortable state of mind. But as Lewis [explains elsewhere](#), “comfort” is not the objective of Christianity. Comfort, he explains, may be the final outcome of Christianity, but the path to that comfort is an arduous one paved with difficult search for truth:

“I quite agree that the Christian religion is, in the long run, a thing of unspeakable comfort. But it does not begin in comfort; it begins in the dismay I have been describing, and it is no use at all trying to go on to that comfort without first going through that dismay. In religion, as in war and everything else, comfort is the one thing you cannot get by looking for it. If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end: if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth – only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin with and, in the end, despair.”

It’s hard to deny that society today is looking for comfort above all else. In the midst of chaos, dissension, and catastrophe, many of us desire rest and security all the more.

But is our quest for this rest and comfort headed down the wrong path? In order to achieve the genuine comfort and rest for which we long, must we first, as C.S. Lewis argues, turn toward the difficult headwinds of truth?