



By

Mark McGee

*The Myth of the Non-Christian: Engaging Atheists, Nominal Christians and the Spiritual But Not Religious* by Luke Cawley (IVP Books, 2016) addresses an important aspect of our Lord's directive to "make disciples" – *Contextual Apologetics*.

"The art of formulating appropriate and diverse ways of sharing Jesus, based on a thorough understanding of those with whom we are interacting, is one that has a rich history with Christianity. Strangely, though, even some fantastically gifted Christian communicators manages to overlook its importance." *The Myth of the Non-Christian*, page 15

Luke Cawley has been involved in ministry in the UK and Romania for many years and shares what he's learned in his new book. Cawley is honest in sharing his own struggles and the insights he gained through them.

Cawley presents three key groups of people –

“In this book we will follow Jesus’ footsteps by learning to be contextual apologists in our own settings. We will meet three sets of people:

- The “spiritual but not religious”
- Convinced atheists
- Nominal Christians (page 23)

That, I think, is one of the strengths of *The Myth of the Non-Christian*. Cawley’s primary point, and reason for the book’s title, is that “there’s no such thing as a non-Christian.” He believes it’s an obsolete category.

“I’ve rarely met anybody, though, who calls himself a ‘non-Christian.’ It’s strange, then, that we Christians persist in treating the label as if it were somehow rich with meaning. Perhaps the time has come to retire the term and to rediscover the rich variety that exists among people who

are not yet following Jesus. Not everybody is the same. Our approaches to sharing Jesus should therefore not treat people as such. We need to move from having a strategy for communicating with all people to having multiple strategies for different group.” page 13

Cawley spends the rest of his book looking at a variety of strategies for reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is where we meet with his idea for *contextual apologetics*.

I found *The Myth of the Non-Christian* challenging and a great read. I recommend the book to you and other Christians interested in making a difference in the lives of people who are not yet followers of Jesus Christ.

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## About the Author

Luke Cawley is a writer, speaker, trainer, and the director of Chrysolis, an organization he helped start in 2012 with a vision to enable organizations and churches to better communicate the Jesus story. Luke has spent most of his adult life founding and developing missional communities on university campuses in Britain and Romania and is a regular speaker at conferences and outreach events around the world. An active writer and blogger, Luke has trained people at churches, parachurch organizations, and universities to better engage those around them with the story of Jesus. He enjoys thoughtful engagement with people who wouldn't normally consider Jesus and he often speaks in contexts where God is not typically discussed, such as schools, bars, cafes and theatres. Luke has an master's degree in evangelism and leadership from Wheaton College and a certificate in theological and pastoral studies from Oxford University. He's married to, Whitney, a schoolteacher, and they have three children.



## Publisher's Notes

There's no such thing as a non-Christian.

Somebody might self-identify as spiritual but not religious. Or they might be a practicing Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim. Or they might call themselves an atheist, freethinker or agnostic. But the one thing that people never describe themselves as is a "non-Christian." So Christians who want to "reach non-Christians" need to realize that they're not all the same. Evangelism is not one-size-fits-all.

Luke Cawley shows how Christians can contextualize the gospel in different ways to connect with different kinds of people. Here he unpacks the religious identities of three key demographics: the spiritual but not religious, committed atheists and nominal Christians. Each group has particular characteristics and requires specific approaches and practices to make the Christian faith plausible, desirable and tangible to them.

Filled with real-life stories of changed lives, this book is a practical and hopeful resource for helping people to encounter God.

# Reviews

“The world of real estate is ruled by one word repeated thrice: location, location, location. In the real world of relationships, which is the real estate of life, one word reigns supreme: context, context, context. Luke Cawley has written the new go-to book for contextual apologetics. This book is everywhere thoughtful and judicious; it is wide-ranging and deeply illuminating.”

Leonard Sweet, E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism, Drew University, bestselling author of *From Tablet to Table*, creator of [preachthestory.com](http://preachthestory.com)

“I am convinced that we need to rethink evangelism in light of the increasingly missionary situation of the church in our time. This is a top-class book that will help God’s people do just that. We might just become a more genuinely good-news people in the process.”

Alan Hirsch, author and activist

“I’ve been equipped and inspired anew by this book to better understand and connect with the many different kinds of people who don’t yet follow Jesus. Ditch the one-size-fits-all approach to being a witness: let this book help you do the things that may actually meet our friends’ felt spiritual needs.”

James Choung, national director of evangelism, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, author of *True Story*

“I have read many books on helping people to faith in Christ, but this is one of the best. Perceptive, well-read, full of illustrative stories and extremely practical. Buy it and use it!”

Michael Green, theologian and evangelist

“While many people think of apologetics and cringe for fear of engaging in heated, insensitive arguments, *The Myth of the Non-Christian* presents a refreshingly different perspective. Listen to people, love them, help them connect to Jesus in a way that makes sense to them. It’s a simple yet profound concept that can transform the ways we engage people with the gospel. Luke Cawley winsomely communicates to people of diverse backgrounds that following Jesus makes intellectual sense and satisfies our deepest longings. This book is a gift to all of us who are seeking to share this message!”

Jessica Leep Fick, author of *Beautiful Feet*

“Luke Cawley’s book is a brilliant resource for anyone interested in any form of Christian apologetics—for evangelists, teachers, pastors and indeed for anyone who wants to engage those who don’t understand what Christ offers that the culture cannot. The book is full of captivating snippets of conversations you and I have every day. It will make every reader more able to understand those who do not know Christ and more able to present him in ways they

can understand. Cawley covers the gamut of unbelievers—skeptics, atheists, the unchurched and the spiritual but not religious. Importantly, Cawley is not afraid to engage the serious topic of spiritual reality. The text is highly accessible without compromising depth and should be read by all who ever want to talk with nonbelievers.”

Mary Poplin, professor and author of *Is Reality Secular?*

“A riveting back and forth between compelling principles of contextualized apologetics and life story. Luke speaks powerfully and prophetically about what apologetics in our day should look like as he gives the reader a fresh glimpse of what happens when our head and heart come together in our striving with people. Luke has an obvious love for God and for people. He paints a picture of what it looks like to do an apologetic and evangelistic ministry with impact and compassion. Theory, practice, heart, passion and presence—few books bring this level of integration together as *The Myth of the Non-Christian!*”

R. York Moore, national evangelist, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA

“Suppose Christians take seriously the call to spread the gospel, to answer questions about the faith and to give a reason for the hope that they have in Jesus Christ. If we shoulder this crucially important task, shouldn’t we seek to engage and speak to actual people rather than our idealized notion of a ‘non-Christian’? Absolutely! Luke Cawley shows us why and how. He combines a much-needed diatribe against ‘one-size-fits-all’ apologetics with some very practical and easily accessible suggestions on how engage in apologetics. I cannot imagine a better book for a community of people who desire to share their hope with a world that desperately needs Christ!”

James Beilby, professor of systematic and philosophical theology, Bethel University, St. Paul, author of *Thinking About Christian Apologetics*

“I recommend *The Myth of the Non-Christian* to any Christian interested in evangelism and apologetics. As a vocational minister, however, I would especially recommend it to other vocational ministers and church leaders. It will help us understand the challenges in reaching post-Christian Westerners for Christ as well as best practices for doing so.”

George P. Wood, *Influence*, April 15, 2016

“Real-life encounters, provocative sidebars, and questions at chapters’ end help readers further interact with the book. The New Atheists and approaching nominal Christians are also considered. Recommended to anyone wanting to more effectively share the Gospel.”

Gerald Wisz, *CBA Retailers+Resources*, March 16, 2016



*The Myth of the Non-Christian: Engaging Atheists, Nominal Christians and the Spiritual But Not Religious* (IVP Books, 2016, 240 pages)

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