



By

Mark McGee



*The Atheist Who Didn't Exist (or: the Dreadful Consequences of Bad Arguments)* by Andy Bannister (Monarch Books, 2015) is one of the best apologetics books about atheism I've read in a long time. It is by far the most humorous (more about that in a minute).

Dr. Andy Bannister is the Canadian Director for RZIM (Ravi Zacharias International Ministries) and speaks and teaches in Canada, Europe, UK, the United States, and other countries around the world. He holds a PhD in Islamic Studies “and enjoys mountaineering, juggling, and cats (although not simultaneously).”

Dr. Bannister was involved in youth ministry before studying theology and philosophy (focusing especially on Islam). He worked with churches and organizations from his base in Oxford, England before moving to Canada. Dr. Bannister is also an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths at Melbourne School of Theology. He is the author of *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur'an*

(Lexington Books, 2014), which reveals many of the ways the Qur'an was first composed.

As a former atheist who has discussed the evidence for the existence of God, the credibility of the Bible, and the historicity of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with atheists for 45 years, I look forward to seeing how other Christian apologists present a defense to atheist arguments. We can all learn from each other.

God loves atheists. I know that to be true because God loves me. Even when I was denying His existence and cursing Him and His people, God loved me.

“For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:6-8

That's how God looks at atheists and anyone else who is "ungodly" and a "sinner." As Paul pointed out earlier in his letter to the Romans, "For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9) and "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to seek and save sinners (Luke 19:10), "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23) and "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Ephesians 2:4-5). It is God's great love for atheists that I read about clearly and compassionately in Andy Bannister's new book, *The Atheist Who Didn't Exist*.

I used to think that atheism had the best "arguments" from knowledge, logic and reason. I learned otherwise; which is why I became a theist, specifically a Christian theist. Arguments from atheism are bad .. really bad .. but the challenge is how to share that with an atheist in a way that will find both a hearing and serious consideration.

Christian apologists who work with atheists carry at least three evidential tools with them at all times: knowledge, logic and reason. Dr. Bannister adds a fourth tool in his new book: humor. The chapter titles are proof of his unique approach. Here are some examples –

- The Loch Ness Monster's Moustache
- The Aardvark in the Artichokes
- Sven and the Art of Refrigerator Maintenance
- Humpty Dumpty and the Vegan
- The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin

Not exactly your typical Christian apologetics book about atheism. That's just one of the things I love about the book. Andy Bannister combines humor with knowledge, reason and logic to present a powerful apologetic to atheism. Each one of the chapters addresses an argument that atheists use in their defense of atheism and their attack on theism. Here are some examples:

- The Loch Ness Monster's Moustache (or: The Terrible Consequences of Bad Arguments)
- The Aardvark in the Artichokes (or: Why Not All Gods are the Same)
- Sven and the Art of Refrigerator Maintenance (or: Why Religion Doesn't Poison Everything)
- Humpty Dumpty and the Vegan (or: Why We Really Do Need God to Be Good)
- The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin (or: Why Life Without God is Meaningless)

If you want to know more about how Dr. Bannister uses humor in each of the chapters to share with atheists, you'll need to buy the book — which is what I did and what I recommend you do as well. You can download [Chapter 1 for free here!](#)

## Ways To Use The Book

- Read the book yourself to learn more about atheism and how to talk with atheists about God, the Bible and Jesus Christ ... read for personal knowledge, reason and logic and how to use the arguments in discussions with atheists and agnostics
- Read the book with a friend or small group of friends
- Use the book as a study guide for church youth group
- Use the book as a study guide with singles group
- Use the book as a study guide with university group (e.g. Ratio Christi, BCM, CRU, RUF)
- Use the book as a study guide for men's and women's groups
- Use the book as a study guide for parents' group
- Use the book as a study guide for grandparents' group
- Invite an atheist or agnostic friend to read the book with you to discuss both sides of the arguments included in the book



## About the Book

(From [theatheistwhodidntexist.com/](http://theatheistwhodidntexist.com/))

In the last decade, atheism has leapt from obscurity to the front pages: producing best-selling books, making movies, and plastering adverts on the side of buses. There's an energy and a confidence to contemporary atheism: many people now assume that a godless scepticism is the default position, indeed the only position for anybody wishing to appear educated, contemporary and urbane. Atheism is hip, religion is boring.

Yet when one pokes at popular atheism, many of the arguments used to prop it up quickly unravel. *The Atheist Who Didn't Exist* is designed to expose some of the loose threads on the cardigan of atheism, tug a little, and see what happens. Blending humour with serious thought, Andy Bannister helps the reader question everything, assume nothing and, above all, recognise lazy scepticism and bad

arguments. Be an atheist by all means: but do be a thought-through one.

# Contents

Foreword by Ravi Zacharias

## Chapters

- 1 The Loch Ness Monster's Moustache (or: The Terrible Consequences of Bad Arguments)
- 2 The Scandinavian Sceptic (or: Why Atheism Really is a Belief System)
- 3 The Aardvark in the Artichokes (or: Why Not All Gods are the Same)
- 4 The Santa Delusion (or: Why Faith in God Does Not Mean You're Insane)
- 5 Aim for That Haystack! (or: Why Psychological Arguments Against Religion Fail)
- 6 Sven and the Art of Refrigerator Maintenance (or: Why Religion Doesn't Poison Everything)
- 7 The Lunatic in the Louvre (or: Why Science Cannot Explain the Entirety of Reality)
- 8 Humpty Dumpty and the Vegan (or: Why We Really Do Need God to Be Good)

9 The Peculiar Case of the Postmodern Penguin (or: Why Everybody Has Faith)

10 The Panini Poisoner of Pimlico (or: Why Everybody Has Faith)

11 The Reluctant Eunuch (or: Why We Really Can Know a Lot About Jesus)

Acknowledgements

Text Credits

## Reviews & Endorsements

“This book is for you, whether you’re an atheist, a doubter, or a believer. In an age of overdone rhetoric that lacks substance, Andy Bannister has done what few writers on the topic of God have done: made it fun and fast-paced, yet fair and sincere. Andy has the rare ability to use humour to expose the faulty logic of bad arguments while at the same time being respectful to the people who might use those same arguments. You’ll laugh in these pages even as your intellect is stimulated and your thinking is challenged. *The Atheist Who Didn’t Exist* is a thoughtful book that will stimulate the humour and intelligence of the atheists who do exist. I wholeheartedly recommend it!” – Abdu Murray, speaker and author of *Grand Central Question: Answering the Critical Concerns of the Major Worldviews*

“The most enjoyable critique of popular atheism I have read. It is serious fun, by which I mean it offers deeply thoughtful responses to modern scepticism while regularly making you laugh.” – John Dickson, Macquarie University

“Andy Bannister’s book is a breath, a gust, a positive whoosh of fresh air. Made me laugh, made me think, made me cry. The words bounce across the page. A sane Christian! Whatever next?” – Adrian Plass, author and speaker

“Andy Bannister has written a clever book that patiently, humorously, and effectively dispatches popular neo-atheistic slogans and arguments. Nicely done!” –Paul Copan, Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University

“This is a remarkable and timely book: intelligent, funny, and elegant.” – Michael Coren, author, broadcaster, and journalist

“Every atheist vs believer debate I’ve been to has made me want to gouge out my eyes with a spoon. Bannister’s book, however, is exactly what this skeptical believer needed.” – Drew Marshall, radio host

“This is the most enjoyable critique of popular atheism I have read. It is serious fun, by which I mean it somehow offers deeply thoughtful responses to modern scepticism while regularly making you laugh – often laughing at Andy’s true wit, sometimes at that ‘British drollery’! Oddly, for such an entertaining riposte to fashionable atheist arguments, the book is remarkably free of smugness and self-congratulation. I could – and will – give this book to my sceptical friends.” – Dr John Dickson, Founding Director of the Centre for Public Christianity, and Honorary Fellow of the Department of Ancient History, Macquarie University

“In a brilliant work that is as humorous as it is damaging to atheist arguments, Bannister demonstrates the consequences of implementing New Atheist arguments in real life (that is, out of the realm of stuffy office speculations). His work is a wild ride that takes the reader from stories to theory to end game. Writing with eloquence and imagination, he illustrates the supposed ‘safe ground’ of New Atheist thought as truly no ground at all.” – Professor Mary Jo Sharp, Houston Baptist University

“Andy Bannister provides a set of powerful and accessible arguments that can be used by ordinary people in responding to the tsunami of atheist sound bites flooding public discourse in the West. His tongue-in-cheek humour gives a certain lightness which does not in any way undermine the rigour and force of the book’s arguments. This is not a negative study – though the New Atheism is certainly taken to the cleaners – and it is also profoundly positive in presenting compelling arguments for the central claims of Christianity.” – Dr Peter Riddell, Professorial Research Associate, History, SOAS, University of London

“A book that tackles heady things with humour and grace and in a way that ordinary people like myself can actually understand. Highly recommended; I read it twice!” – Jeff Allen, comedian

“This lively, witty, and engaging book provides a powerful and thoughtful critique of the New Atheism associated with Richard Dawkins and others. This is a lovely book, which draws deeply on high-quality philosophical, historical, and scientific thinking. A readable, thoughtful, and humorous



challenge to those who hold New Atheist beliefs. Highly recommended!” – Professor Steve Walton, St Mary’s University, London

“It’s the ‘God Debate’, but not as you know it. In this conversational, well- researched and accessible volume, Andy Bannister offers an intelligent, provocative, and humorous engagement with the New Atheism. Andy asks big questions and challenges some dominant assumptions. Share and enjoy.” – Paul Woolley, Deputy Chief Executive, Bible Society

“I would especially highlight this book’s accessibility. Although it is well endowed with references, its populist, racy style may well appeal to readers who would be unlikely to engage with yet another ‘academic’ treatise on faith and secularism. On these grounds, I recommend it as an important addition to the debate on the most fundamental issue confronting any person, anywhere, at any time: are there good grounds for believing in a God or are believers such as Christians suffering delusional irrationality? This book may help each reader to come to a conclusion based

on argumentation and evidence presented with satirical humour: a very valuable addition to the library!” – Baroness Caroline Cox, founder of Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust

The Atheist Who Didn't Exist (or: The Terrible Consequences of Really Bad Arguments), Monarch Books, 2015, 240 pages

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