

Year in Review 2022-2023

We want to glorify God through confident, connected evangelism to see people saved for eternity.

**Engage the World
Equip the Church
Work in Partnership**



▶ We're grateful for an amazing year!

Dear Friends,

I'm delighted to share this Year in Review with you that highlights some of the key areas of our ministry. It's been a pivotal year for OCCA as we rolled out our new Training Pathway, reached hundreds of young people through the relaunch of our youth apologetics initiative REBOOT, and continued to speak into a variety of contexts to proclaim the transforming hope of the gospel. It's been wonderful to see so many people encountering Jesus through OCCA.

This past year has seen great uncertainty; global outbreaks of war, the rising cost of living and a surge in questions around identity and meaning. People are looking for answers and the need to share the hope we have in Jesus Christ has never been more resonant.

The work of OCCA continues to grow and it's been a privilege to lead this ministry during such a transformative time. Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, let's continue to engage in the most critical questions of our time and share the beauty and intellectual coherence of the Christian faith.

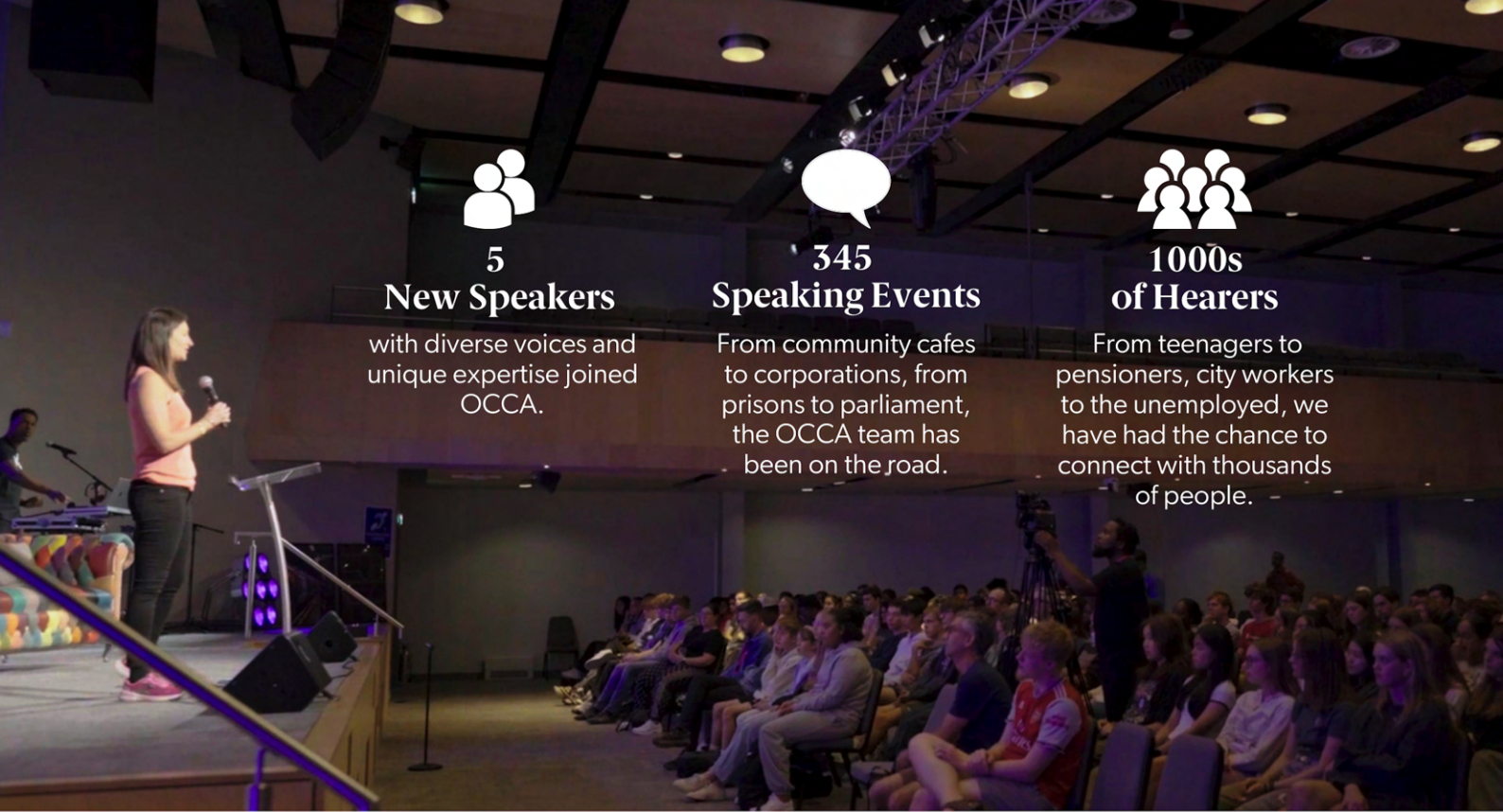
I hope this report gives you a taste of some of the exciting things that have been happening.

With every blessing,

Charles Styles

CEO





5

New Speakers

with diverse voices and unique expertise joined OCCA.



345

Speaking Events

From community cafes to corporations, from prisons to parliament, the OCCA team has been on the road.



1000s

of Hearers

From teenagers to pensioners, city workers to the unemployed, we have had the chance to connect with thousands of people.

Engaging with Life's Big Questions

People of all backgrounds are asking profound questions about faith, meaning, and identity. Through our evangelistic speaking, we help people with questions meet the God who answers. OCCA is home to a curious culture and we love to explore the complex, the confusing and the compelling.

Sharing Christ in a meaningful and relevant way

We love to be invited to point people to the God who loves them.

In doing so, we seek to offer the credibility of the Christian faith and the compelling beauty of Jesus Christ through addressing the cultural questions of our day. Engaging with questions and being generous with objections, we strive to listen keenly to the real issues people face.

This year, we spoke in a wide variety of contexts—from community cafes to corporations, from prisons to parliament. We worked alongside local churches and parachurch organisations to reach the next generation through talks and debates in schools and universities.

Through our evangelistic speaking, we helped people from different backgrounds explore the traditional apologetic questions such as the existence of God, the problem of evil, science and faith, as well as grapple with contemporary issues including identity, race, sexuality and mental health.

OCCA engaged in hundreds of unique speaking events across the country this year, thanks to our team of speakers who brought their unique voices and perspectives to share Christ in a meaningful and relevant way. These events reached people with thoughtful and informed answers to their biggest questions about the Christian faith.

Speaking into the Vital Discussions of our Time

Is it rational to believe in God?

In May, Simon Edwards debated with Stephen Woodford, an atheist YouTuber better known online as 'Rationality Rules', on whether it is rational to believe in God. More than 600 students from St. Michael's School and Aylesbury Vale Academy attended. The event was also streamed online and has since attracted more than 80,000 views on YouTube. Justin Brierley—an accomplished moderator and former presenter of Unbelievable on Premier Christian Radio—hosted the conversation and moderated the Q&A.



Where do we find meaning?

Sara Stevenson was invited to speak at Global Leadership Geneva-Bern—a faith-based non-profit in Geneva, Switzerland that supports diplomats, members of parliament, and business leaders to find purpose through faith and encouragement.

Sara spoke at three events, including a prayer meeting for a group of Christian UN workers and a gathering for ambassadors of all faiths on how the resurrection relates to human rights.



Gender and sexuality

Medical doctor Ben Thomas joined our team in January and has been speaking widely at Christian conferences, churches and youth events into the complex and sensitive subjects of gender and sexuality. In April, Ben partnered with Solas to speak at Forres Baptist Church in Scotland on how to share the Bible's message on these difficult topics with both grace and truth.



We spent the night looking at how to share the gospel with LGBTQ+ people and how to approach transgender issues, which are becoming more frequent in our churches. It was a very welcoming and informative night with a Q&A session that could have run on past midnight! It was a superb way for us to tackle difficult subjects with clear biblical guidance, open discussion and lots of useful information.

Jon Mackenzie

Pastor at Forres Baptist Church

**A SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT
GOD, FAITH, AND LIFE.**

SEND IN YOUR
QUESTIONS:



REBOOT

Today's youth—Gen Z and Gen Alpha—are craving answers to life's big questions about meaning, purpose, and identity. And with the vast amount of information available at their fingertips, there is a need for informed and thoughtful responses to their questions.

REBOOT offers a space for young people to ask difficult questions about God, faith, and the many cultural topics of our day and receive kind and credible responses in return.

Our events help to connect and resource young people, youth pastors, and youth workers to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith in order to share it with the world around them.

We work collaboratively with partners and local churches to deliver youth apologetics in a variety of ways both online and in-person that is engaging to youth, grounded in truth, relevant to their lives today, and respectful of everyone's backgrounds.

- ▶ **REBOOT Digital** is our online presence, including digital events for young people.
- ▶ **REBOOT Roundtable** is a resource for youth workers and leaders to consider difficult topics.
- ▶ **REBOOT Local** is an open and accessible youth event hosted by local churches.
- ▶ **REBOOT City** is a one-day conference where young people can explore life's big questions.
- ▶ **REBOOT Academy** offers courses for young people to continue to explore their questions with their youth leaders and parents.

In July, we hosted our first **REBOOT Roundtable** online for youth leaders. OCCA Adjunct, Sam Allberry gave a talk on the Christian sexual ethic, which was followed by a time of Q&A. Questions included how to engage with transgenderism, how to use pronouns and how to talk about sexuality with young people.

In the past year I've found myself mentoring and discipling young teens who have same-sex attraction. The opportunity to ask questions and have them answered by someone with lived experience was invaluable.

Lois Mensah-Afoakwah
Youth Leader, Kingswood Baptist, Basildon



Behind the scenes at
REBOOT Roundtable



REBOOT DIGITAL 2023

This year, we were excited to re-launch REBOOT Digital—a fun and interactive online event for young people to explore life’s big questions.

Hosted by OCCA’s REBOOT leaders, Alanzo Paul and Clare Williams, more than 200 youth groups (over 3,000 people) tuned in online for an evening of games, talks and Q&A on the theme of ‘Why am I here?’

Together with OCCA Chaplain, John Lennox they looked at important faith and cultural topics including evolution, sexuality and identity, mental health and suffering.



Who are you? God says you are His. You are made in the image of God. You are royalty even though you don’t realise it yet, which means you are not your successes or shame or failures or anything else that seeks to define you. You have been loved into existence.

Alanzo Paul
REBOOT Co-Lead



Watch REBOOT Digital 2023!

2,198 youth groups tuned in to the live event



Equipping at Every Stage

OCCA's four-part Training Pathway

Training the next generation of evangelists and apologists has long been a core part of the OCCA vision. There are now more than 350 OCCA alumni all around the world.

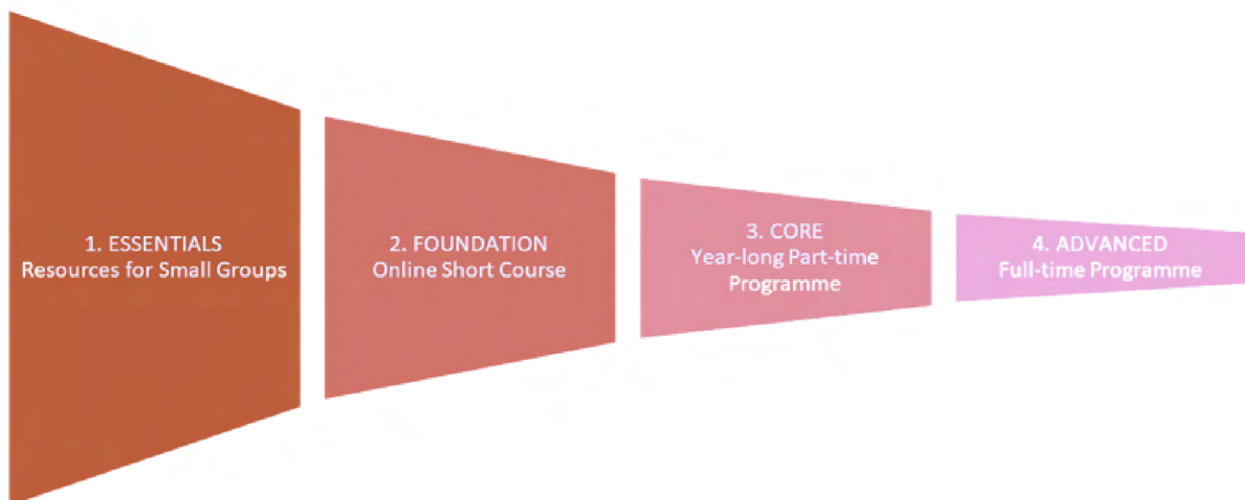
This year, we launched our Training Pathway, a strategic approach to train and equip all Christians to discuss faith, truth, and God so they can confidently share and articulate their faith with those around them.

Our Training Pathway comes in four stages, each stage involving training in the Bible, Skills, Lenses, and Issues, with a central theme of growing the heart of a faithful evangelist.

We have renewed our focus on the UK Church and thought deeply about how we widen the reach of our training, and the diversity of those we train.

We want to ensure that anyone—regardless of their financial situation, geographical location, or cultural background—is able to benefit from the training that we offer. With both online and in-person opportunities, these courses mean accessing OCCA's training is much easier and more cost-effective.

As well as looking at objections to the gospel, reasons for belief and other worldviews, our courses explore big issues facing our culture today, such as race, sexuality and A.I, among others. We want to help people engage with these issues in the framework of the Christian faith.



“As an academic working in the field of Philosophy of Religion, I’m excited by the way that a compelling cumulative case for theism has been articulated by leading scholars over the past few decades; and yet what is desperately needed are individuals who are able to translate that work for a wider audience. With its unique blend of scholars and communicators, OCCA is ideally positioned to act as a bridge between these two worlds.

Max Baker-Hytch
OCCA Tutor and Academic Consultant



Confident Faith

Apologetics for Everyone

Courses

▶ Apologetics for Everyone

In August, we published our first Essentials Course: a free online resource for churches and small groups to help them engage confidently in meaningful conversations about the Christian faith.

Over six sessions, Tash and Simon Edwards explore the reasons behind Christian belief and how to articulate them clearly and persuasively. Since its release, almost 600 church groups have signed up to use the course.

Access it for FREE at: www.theocca.org/essentials

▶ Foundational Apologetics

Our new online Foundational Apologetics Course encourages and equips Christians to have natural conversations about their faith and to respond to the tough questions of our day.

The course is spread over ten weeks and includes a mix of lectures, Q&A and assignments. Topics covered include: 'What are the reasons for belief in God?' 'Hasn't the church done more harm than good?' and 'Do science and faith mix?' as well as teaching about worldview, reason and the purpose of apologetics.



3 cohorts



83 students



14 countries

Lakelyn Taylor



"OCCA provided a fresh and unique perspective on apologetics for me. I learned that apologetics can be balanced with a person-centred approach that incorporates all types of evidence, not just arguments."

Emma Woodhams



"The content was so well put together and the topics were relevant and interesting. I loved meeting with people from all walks of life. That in itself helps you to be more open-minded when speaking to non-Christian friends."

Karim Sedra



"The academic rigour and scholarship of the programme is challenging and rewarding. Also, the live interaction with tutors was brilliant, and enhanced the learning experience exponentially."

▶ NEW 1-Year Course

In September 2023, we will launch our One-Year Hybrid Core Course, led by OCCA speakers Sara Stevenson and Tom Price. This online course will meet each week for one year with two three-day intensives held in Oxford and is designed to equip and train people for outreach and ministry. Teaching will be delivered by experienced evangelists, academics, and thinkers actively involved in evangelism, public theology, and apologetics.

Working in Partnership

We work alongside churches, schools, Christian ministries and festivals to support the work of God's kingdom.

Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast

In June, our team participated in the annual **Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast** with a seminar for politicians, church and community leaders on how to communicate the relevance of Christ to Gen Z.

OCCA on the Road

Over the summer, our team spoke at **six** large Christian festivals including the **Keswick Convention**, **Wildfires** and **Big Church Festival**.

OCCA ran the evangelism seminar track at **New Wine - United** on how to have natural conversations about Jesus and answer difficult questions. Ben Thomas led a Big Top discussion on identity and sexuality which attracted around 400 people.

And Alanzo Paul and Clare Williams spoke on the topics of cancel culture, identity and justice to 1,000 youth at **HTB Focus**.



Circles & Spaces Podcast



Listen to Alanzo and Clare speak on the importance of diving deep into the Word with young people on this Alpha Youth podcast.

Special Events



Business Programme

In June, we ran a three-week Business Programme for senior business men and women from a variety of sectors.

Lectures and discussion groups covered a range of topics including cancel culture, race, artificial intelligence, and how to communicate the gospel through key political and economic issues of the day. In this intensive course, business leaders were encouraged and equipped with the tools to engage with their colleagues' intellectual objections and concerns about the gospel.



Summer Conference

In July, we hosted our annual Summer Conference on the theme, "Hope in an Uncertain World" at Oxford University's Merton College. 82 people from eight countries gathered for a wonderful week filled with fellowship, engaging workshops and informed lectures.

Our core team was joined by Sam Allberry who spoke on, 'Identity: What makes me human?', scientist and OCCA adjunct Dr. Sharon Dirckx, who spoke on, 'Broken Planet: How do we make sense of God, natural disasters and pandemics?', and mental health experts who discussed anxiety, trauma, and healing.

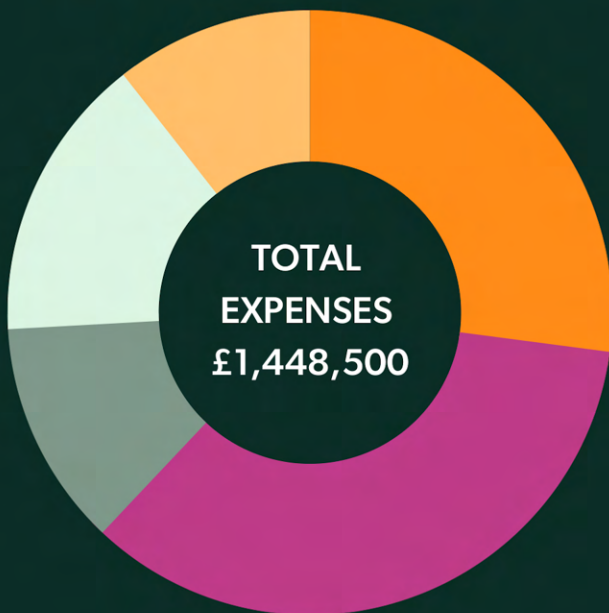


Our Finances

We are so thankful for the many generous people who support us financially. We are dependent on the sacrificial support of people who share our passion to speak truth into a confused world.

OUTGOING

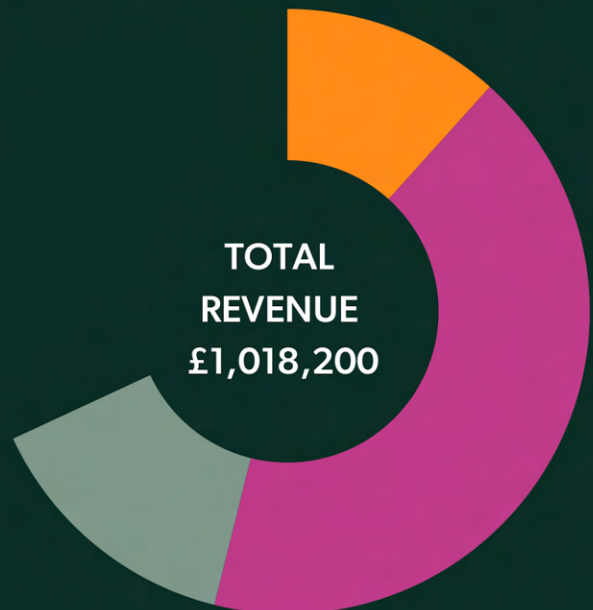
● Engage the World	£392,500
● Equip the Church	£506,600
● Training Pathway	£174,800
● Building Partnerships	£221,200
● Operational Costs	£153,400



INCOMING

● Ministry Activities	£157,500
● Donors	£569,200
● Grant-Making Trusts	£191,500
● Investment from Capital	£430,300

The gap between costs and income has been met this year through the sale of a building OCCA owned and used in Oxford. To continue to deliver the impact outlined in this report (and more) on a sustainable basis, we need to fill this funding gap through donor and trust income.



OCCA The Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics is operated by OCCA House Limited, a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England.

Charity No. 1067314
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Online Resources

We're thrilled to share our **NEW Online Resource Hub** which we hope will help more people find accessible answers to their tough questions about life, faith, and God.



More than 2.5 billion people regularly visit YouTube every month. That's almost one-third of the world's population. Many of the platform's channels are just for fun, many are useful, and some explore the vital questions of our day. People are searching for answers, and it can be hard to know where to turn to find meaningful and credible responses.

Over the past few months, our team has been busy filming and producing lots of engaging and thoughtful content to help people with their tough questions. We've created a hub of videos and articles that explore the big questions people are asking about the Christian faith, including how it relates to science, identity and meaning, other religions and worldviews. Every week we'll be publishing a new video that speaks to the heart of a particular issue.

We're excited to see this equip the church to share our faith more winsomely, and engage the world where it's needed most.



To explore all the videos available on our new Resource Hub, visit: theocca.org/resources

The Current Questions

We seek to commend the credibility of the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ through the questions of culture.



“Questions of gender, sexuality and their relationship to human identity are amongst the biggest questions of our time, both inside and outside of the church. They are also a source of a lot of confusion and pain, and lead people to doubt the goodness of God and the gospel we have been given. As a matter of urgency, I believe that young people and adults need to discuss these topics with honesty, love and grace, always with our eyes set on Jesus and the truth he has revealed to us.

Ben Thomas
OCCA Speaker and Tutor

Thinking Faith: Exploring today’s big issues through the lens of the Christian message

We’re excited for the future of Thinking Faith – our new, online platform offering thoughtful reflection and analysis on current affairs and popular culture from a faith-based perspective.

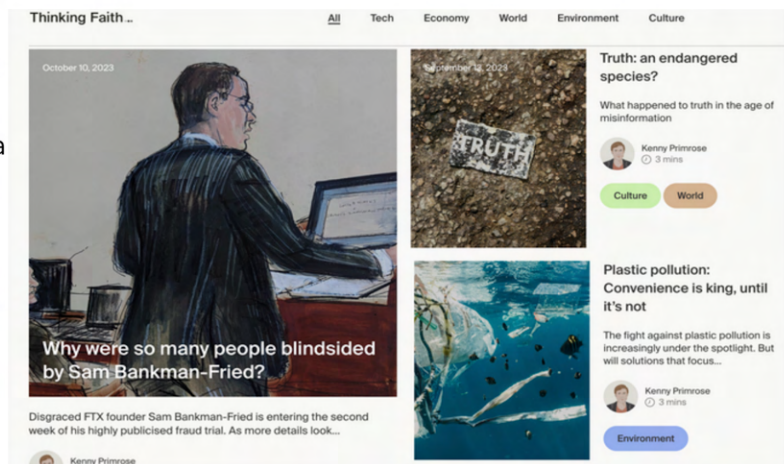
With intellectual integrity, fresh insight and depth, our team produces a variety of long-form articles and short, sharp videos on the latest international news and trends to spark meaningful conversation about the big issues shaping the world around us.

The project is spearheaded by Abigail Woodcock, a former news journalist, and Max Jeganathan, a former lawyer and political advisor who speaks around the world in banks, businesses and universities.



Join Thinking Faith on Instagram for (almost) daily shots of content.

 [thinkingfaithsocial](#)



 thinkingfaith.com



At the heart of Thinking Faith is our passion to make sense of the stories beneath the headlines- through the lens of the Christian message. In our ever-changing world where truth is heavily contested, we believe the Christian message has something transforming and compelling to offer as we engage with today’s big issues.



Abigail Woodcock
Managing Editor, Thinking Faith

Looking Ahead

It's been a tremendously active year, much of which has been the study and preparation for work we hope will come to fruition over the next twelve months.

In September, we're holding the first of several **Critical Thinking Conferences**—a new initiative to help A-level students enrolled in Philosophy and Religious Studies (and their teachers) learn how to engage with different worldviews and perspectives.

For this first event, we are partnering with St Edward's in Oxford to host 300 students from across Oxfordshire for a variety of talks and Q&As on topics including science and faith, justice, and the existence of God. This will shortly be followed by a similar event in Northampton. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to engage students and teachers in this way with more conferences planned around the country in 2024.

We will also be creating **two NEW Essentials courses** in 2024— one focussed on Relationships and Sexuality led by Ben Thomas, and 'How to Tell Your Story' presented by Charlie Styles. These two courses will empower people to have confidence to share their faith with those around them.



In November, we're hosting our third Hinduism and Jainism Symposium—a gathering of community leaders from across the United Kingdom who seek to reach out into places with high South Asian populations. This year's focus will be on how to bridge the divide between the Hinduism belief of *moksha*—the pursuit of freedom from reincarnation—and the Christian belief of salvation and grace.

We're also excited to launch a series of videos to help Christians become more aware of cultural sensitivities when engaging with Hindus. Our content will explore the history of the people of India, how the Bible shaped modern India, and eastern misconceptions of the Christian faith.

“ When all is said and done, when the culture has been analysed, when the debate has finished and everyone's said their piece, it all comes back to Jesus. Was Jesus really the person he said he was? Did he do the things the Bible tells us? Did he really die for my sins and did he really rise from the dead?

*When all is said and done,
it's all about Jesus.*

Charlie Styles
CEO



'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'

Ephesians 3: 20-21

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www.theocca.org

OCCA The Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics

76 Banbury Road, Oxford,
OX2 6JT, UK