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2023-2024

Year in Review

Engaging the world — Equipping the church

Thank you for your support

Dear friends,

Welcome to our Year in Review. It's been a tremendously active year as we've seen much of our work and preparation from previous years come to fruition. It's been wonderful to see so many people encountering Jesus through OCCA.

We're living in an astonishing cultural moment. This year saw more than half the globe's population take to the polls to vote for their leaders, making it the biggest election season in history. The capabilities of Artificial Intelligence are increasingly pushing the boundaries of ethical and moral questions, and global unrest persists in fuelling both political and economic uncertainty.

It's a remarkable cultural shift, and one that raises deep questions about truth, meaning and purpose.

Helping people to engage thoughtfully and meaningfully with these big questions of culture is central to what we do at the OCCA. Our courses, events and digital content are all designed to empower people to share their faith with confidence, bringing clarity to the chaos.

This year, we held the first of our new Reboot City events in Ilford, following it up with online ministry and several smaller Reboot Local events around the country. It was so encouraging to see this amazing youth ministry back to full strength, now with added accessibility for those who can't make the larger events.

We rolled out the new One Year Hybrid Course; stage three on the OCCA Training Pathway. The first cohort involved people from an array of backgrounds in education, outreach and ministry. Our Online Hub has grown from strength to strength, reaching tens of thousands of people with helpful content and resources responding to tough questions about life and faith. And we held our first Confident Faith Conference over the summer, equipping nearly 300 people to engage with significant and difficult topics from a Christian perspective.

Our work continues to grow, and we're so grateful for your prayers and support that make all this possible. It's a privilege to play our part in all that God is doing through His Kingdom. I'm delighted to share this report with you, which I hope gives you a taste of some of the exciting things we have been doing.

Thank you.

With every blessing,



Charlie Styles
Director of OCCA

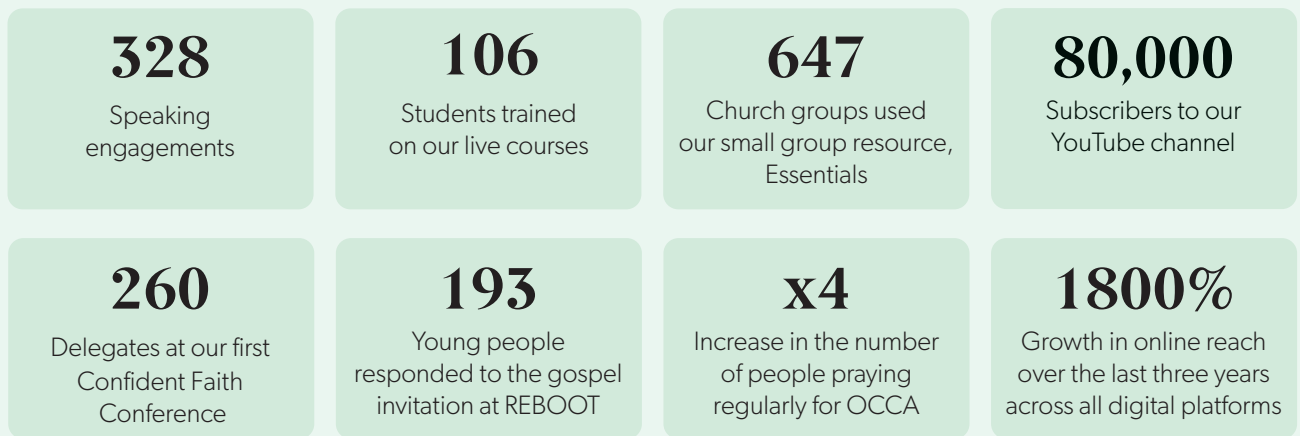


Our Mission

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

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

A Year in Numbers



Making Meaningful Impact

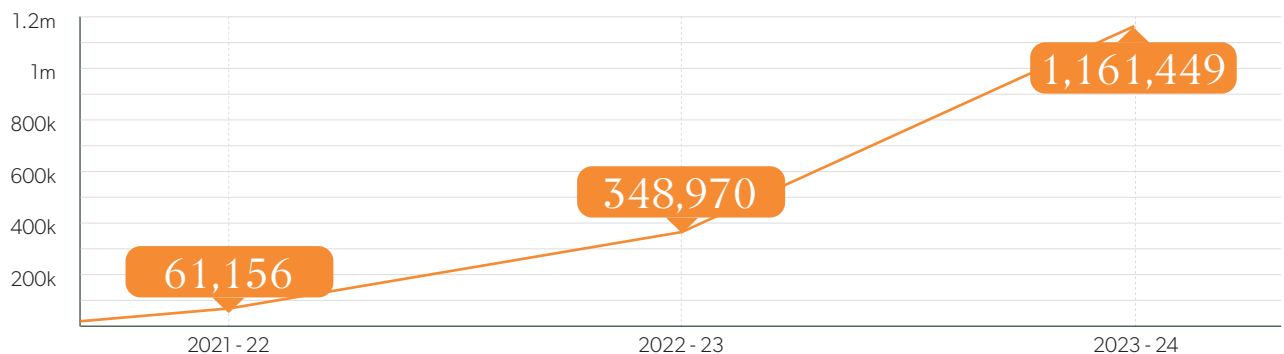
"The community here provides a really safe space to tackle difficult issues and questions in a way that seeks to be humble, welcoming and inclusive of a variety of thoughts and approaches and worldviews."

Marissa, OCCA Summer School student

"I like that I've been encouraged to think creatively and consider ideas about faith, God, myself and others that I'd never previously imagined."

Ben, Foundational Apologetics student

Total Online Reach



Engaging the World

through Evangelistic Speaking

328 Speaking Events

Thousands of Hearers



Sharing Christ in a Meaningful and Relevant Way

OCCA engaged in hundreds of speaking events across the country this year thanks to our team of speakers who brought their unique perspectives to share Christ in a meaningful and relevant way. From pubs to corporations, podcasts to parliament, we have helped hundreds of people from different backgrounds explore topics such as the **Reliability of the Gospels, The Problem of Evil, Faith and Science**, as well as grapple with contemporary issues including **identity, race** and **sexuality**.

Speaking into Questions of Ethics and Reason

In September, OCCA tutor Max Baker-Hytch spoke to 30 lawyers at J A Kemp legal firm in London on the theme of **Faith and Science**. A fruitful time of Q&A followed, with several questions being asked about the nature of evidence and whether belief in God can be reconciled with science.

"We employ some very bright minds in STEM subjects, many of whom have PhDs. OCCA has a reputation for tackling often difficult subjects with intellectual rigour, and its speakers are engaging and compelling."

- Ben, on behalf of J A Kemp

Sharing the Gospel with Students

Our speaking team partnered with various Christian Unions across the country in their mission weeks, exploring topics such as **The Existence of God, Gender Identity** and **Purpose**. University mission weeks present a brilliant opportunity for Christian students to step out and boldly invite friends to hear about the good news of Jesus, and these talks so often spark extraordinary conversations. The number of questions our team engaged with across multiple events demonstrates a hunger to find out more about what a relationship with Jesus has to offer.



Alanzo Paul and Clare Williams speaking to students at Falmouth University on the topics of **Hope** and **The Trustworthiness of the Bible**.

A Good Return

OCCA's President Professor John Lennox spoke in a variety of contexts this year, including at Rothschild Bank in London on his new book, **A Good Return: Biblical Principles for Work, Wealth and Wisdom**, and the International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Prague where he gave the keynote speech on **Religious Life under Digital Surveillance**.



In November, renowned psychologist and social commentator Jordan Peterson published a podcast episode he recorded with John on **Transhumanism and the Interplay between Faith and Reason**. The episode garnered more than 1.6m views, with 44K people engaging with their discussion online.



Faith and Film

In October, Tom Price spoke at Knowle Parish Church's outreach event on **How Movies Make Us Think**, following an evangelistic Men's Breakfast.

Tom said: *"Film is a powerful tool to share the gospel as it gives us a way to reflect on important things in a less direct way. It can be confronting because it plays out different redemptive journeys and shows us people with longings for love, hope and justice. People who came seemed to thoroughly enjoy the stimulation of this way of engaging with questions and doing apologetics."*



Hope in Unexpected Places

Clare Williams had the privilege of speaking at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Christmas Celebration at Westminster. She shared a reflection on **Hope in Unexpected Places**, looking at the Christmas story and the unusual places hope is found.

Our team has also done a few events further afield including...

Sharing the Hope of the Gospel in Ukraine

In January, Sara Stevenson accepted an invitation from a former OCCA Business Programme delegate to equip church leaders and students in Ukraine on behalf of the Baptist Union Church and Forward United. Over 12 days, Sara spoke across nine events in six cities from Lviv to Kyiv on a range of topics, including the **Evidence for God** and **Finding Meaning in Suffering**. She also spoke evangelistically to young adults at two Q&A evenings.

Sara said: *"The conversations after each event stand out to me as many people were processing their questions whilst suffering from the trauma of losing loved ones or having loved ones fighting in the war. The level of need for pastoral support meant the events were engaging with much needed discussions on the goodness of God, suffering and forgiveness."*





REBOOT

Engaging the World

by Reaching the Rising Generation

🗨️ 16 Reboot events 📍 1000+ young people engaged with the gospel

Can I choose my gender? Does God hate queer people? Why is there so much suffering in the world? These are just some of the questions Gen Z and Gen Alpha are asking. With the vast amount of information available at their fingertips, informed and meaningful responses are needed now more than ever.

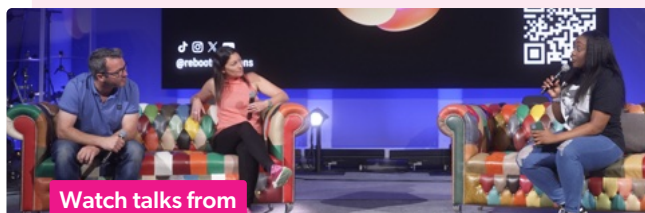
Our youth apologetics project REBOOT continues to offer a safe space for young people to ask difficult questions about God, faith, and life, and receive kind and credible responses in return.

Reboot City

In September, we hosted our first REBOOT City event in east London. More than 250 young people and their youth leaders joined us from across the country for a day of talks, games, breakout sessions and Q&A. Together we tackled some tough topics including **identity, despair, faith and science, and other religions**. We're so thankful to Josh Green (24-7 Prayer), Aaron Routledge (The Message Trust) and DJ Kelechi who joined us to make it such a special event.

"There's still so much for me to explore and to learn but today was a really emotional and eye-opening experience."

"I liked the whole vibe going on. It was very different to just another youth sermon. It was fun and very interactive."

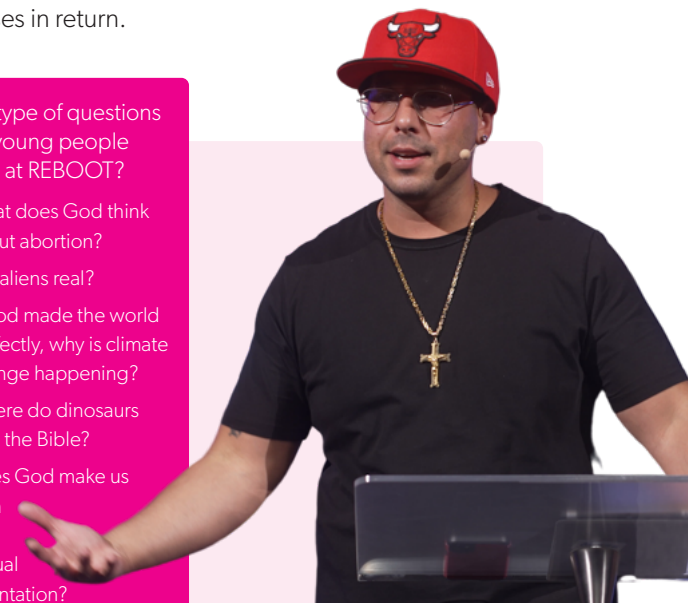


Watch talks from Reboot City!



What type of questions were young people asking at REBOOT?

1. What does God think about abortion?
2. Are aliens real?
3. If God made the world perfectly, why is climate change happening?
4. Where do dinosaurs fit in the Bible?
5. Does God make us with our sexual orientation?



Reboot Locals

We're passionate about partnering with local churches to deliver youth apologetics both online and in-person that is engaging to youth, grounded in truth, relevant to their lives today, and respectful of everyone's backgrounds.

In the Spring we had an incredible time collaborating with local churches across England for four Reboot Local events within three weeks. Across these events, more than 230 young people engaged with talks on **Identity, The Occult, Suffering** and **The Reliability of the Bible**, with 58 of those responding to the gospel invitation.

Sharing the Credibility

of the Christian Faith with Students



22 schools spoken at across the UK



Hundreds of students and their teachers engaged with the gospel

OCCA engaged significantly with schools over the last year, including a mix of independent and state schools. By organising workshops, Q&A sessions and debates with those from other worldviews, our team was able to give students an informed and credible view of the Christian faith.

"The humanist and atheist perspectives are often represented in the media and in school life. By dialoguing with these perspectives, we're able to provide a range of depth in Christian thinking in response to some of life's most fundamental questions." Sara Stevenson, OCCA speaker and former teacher

Feedback from teachers

"OCCA's school events have promoted some great discussion and will provide some good conversation material for our sixth form lunchtime group for the next couple of sessions. Our thanks on behalf of myself and the students for organising this and inviting us."

"I've had some wonderful conversations with two year 10 students and a year 8 about the OCCA day. They were blown away by the content and the level of the discussion. It was a lesson too in how to disagree well. There was grace and intellect in the room; not always happy bedfellows."

Are church schools indoctrinating children? Tune in to this episode of Table Talk to hear Sara Stevenson share her thoughts.



Critical Thinking Conferences

In September we held our first **Critical Thinking Conference** in partnership with St Edward's, Oxford. Around 300 sixth form students studying Religion and Philosophy joined us from schools across Oxfordshire for talks and Q&A on **Faith and Science, Justice**, as well as a debate on **The Existence of God**.



In November, our team organised a Big Questions Conference in partnership with three schools in Northampton. Around 150 students came for an interactive day of talks and Q&A sessions from OCCA speakers, humanists and atheists. Topics discussed included **evolution, identity and other religions**. OCCA's team of speakers, Prof. John Lennox, Sara Stevenson, Alanzo Paul and Max Baker-Hytch also took part in panel discussions on the theme of **Hope** and where it comes from.

Stephen Woodford, an atheist YouTuber with more than 350,000 subscribers to his 'Rationality Rules' channel, took part in the event alongside our team. He said: *"This experience reaffirmed something that's easy to forget—the power of open, respectful conversation, and the curiosity of the younger generation."*



Engaging the World Online



63,000 new subscribers to our YouTube channel



1,161,500 people have engaged with the gospel through our content



Our content has been watched for **40,000 hours**



Our content has been viewed **157,000 times in the UK**

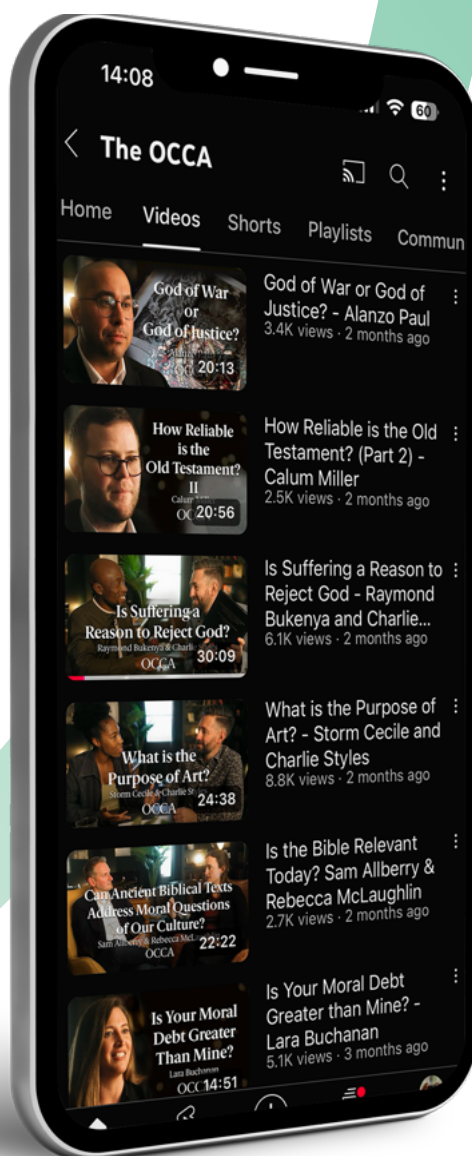


110,000 visits to our Online Hub, which has more than doubled since last year

We've seen a huge uplift of engagement on our digital platforms this year. Since launching our Online Hub in October, the number of subscribers to our YouTube channel has grown from 17,234 to 80,910; a staggering 360%.

Every week we share thought-provoking videos that engage with deep questions of faith. Visits have more than doubled to our Online Hub over the last year, with our free resources and videos regularly reaching thousands of people each month. We are so encouraged that people are connecting and engaging with us in this space.

Check out our YouTube channel:



Meeting People with their Questions Online

Identity, Gender and Sexuality were among the most searched for topics online during 2023/2024, with 1.2 million searches from across the world. We were able to meet those looking for clarity and truth in these areas with our free resources and content, including Sam Allberry's video, **What Does it Mean to be Human?** which reached 8,000 18–34-year-olds within the first three months of its release.

Engagement across our social media platforms has also increased substantially as we regularly post segments from our videos to Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

We welcome comments on our content (even ones that disagree!)

We are grateful people from different worldviews are engaging with our content online. Their comments give us a glimpse into any preconceptions people may have about the Christian faith and give us the opportunity to further engage with tough questions that could be a barrier to belief. As we continue to navigate this digital territory, we pray for courage to stand by our convictions and wisdom to handle disagreement with grace and kindness.

@seanwoodyatt7342 -

In response to Can you prove God exists? - Mark Lanier

Nobody can prove god exists, as he is a fictional character in a story book. The only people that believe in him are people who don't know how to use their brains.

@Milites-Christi -

In response to Can you debate and still be friends? - Darrell Bock and John Lennox

The content was very useful, thank you for your hard work.

@ralfhaggstrom9862 -

In response to Jesus is Amazing - Peter J. Williams

ONLY A BUNCH OF UNSUBSTANTIATED CLAIMS, utter nonsense!



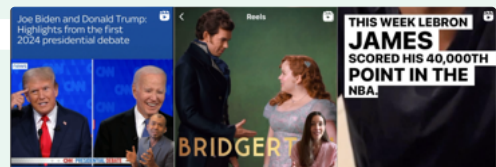
Our Most Watched Video: Eight Decades of Faith and Reason

To celebrate John's 80th birthday, Charlie Styles and Professor Lennox filmed a conversation. 67,000 people tuned in to hear John share the gospel through his life, story and ministry. The video has been watched for more than 14,000 hours.



So You Want to Live Forever?

Over Easter, OCCA Speaker and medical doctor Ben Thomas hosted our Easter video series, exploring the topic of life after death and the different worldviews that surround it. The series garnered more than 33,000 views on our YouTube channel, sharing the hope and beauty of the gospel to the thousands of people online who were searching **What is the meaning of Easter?** at that time.



Thinking Faith: Speaking the Truth and Beauty of the Gospel into Current Affairs

Our online platform Thinking Faith reached more than 120,000 people this year with a faith-based perspective to today's news stories. Over the last five years, research shows there's been a large shift away from traditional media towards social media for news consumption. Our team used Instagram, a platform people often go to for news, to share an informed and meaningful response to a variety of big issues, including the Gaza-Israel conflict, the US and UK elections, AI and the rise of ChatGPT, as well as trends in popular culture.

Slowdown.sara: **"This post is so encouraging."**

Hazjazmaz: **"I needed this humbling reminder myself today too. Thank you "**

Equipping the Church

Training the Next Generation of Evangelists and Apologists



4 courses



> 100 people trained



Students joined online from **14 countries**

We love to encourage and equip Christians to have natural conversations about their faith and to respond to the tough questions of our day.

As part of the **Training Pathway** we introduced last year, we've seen demand increase for our online **Foundational Apologetics** course. While just over half of our students were located in the UK, we had participants from 14 countries join us online throughout the year. Next year we will be offering this course at different times to encourage those in other time zones, or with a different working pattern, to attend.

Foundational Apologetics is a ten-week online course offering a variety of lectures, Q&A sessions and assignments on topics such as **What are the reasons for belief in God? Hasn't the church done more harm than good?** and **Do science and faith mix?**

1. Essentials
Resources for small groups

2. Foundations
Online short course

3. Core
Year-long part-time programme

4. Advanced
Full-time programme

What our students are saying:

"The topics were particularly valuable as they felt very practical for the conversations that I have with my non-Christian friends." Philippa, spring cohort

"The principle of listening well and responding to the individual rather than the argument really came through clearly and will stay with me." John, autumn cohort

We were also excited to launch our **One Year Hybrid Course**, a year-long programme that offers a deeper dive into apologetics through a mix of lectures, assignments, workshops and intensives. Teaching was delivered by experienced evangelists, academics, and thinkers actively involved in evangelism and public theology. We trained 35 people for outreach and ministry on a range of topics including **ethics, human rights, and eastern worldviews.**

Find out more about our courses:



Linz attended our One Year Hybrid Course:

"If you're an evangelist, or you love to explore God's word and talk about it with people, then this course really enriches your conversations. I found that in conversations I've been having with people from other faiths that I've been able to really hear their perspective and understand where they're coming from; I've been able to answer their questions more effectively in a non-defensive way. This course has just been so valuable to be able to engage with people better."



Helping Youth Leaders

Respond Meaningfully to their Young People

In our travels across the country, we've witnessed firsthand the growing challenges faced by youth leaders and parents in response to the increasingly profound questions raised by Gen Z and Gen Alpha. We're passionate about equipping them with the insights and tools needed to confidently address the big questions about life, faith and God that today's youth are asking.

We've loved partnering with local churches to deliver training and continuing our Reboot Roundtable webinars to offer meaningful and credible responses to questions around **suffering, identity and justice**.

Reboot Roundtable: Empty Tomb or Empty Claims? A Case for the Resurrection of Jesus

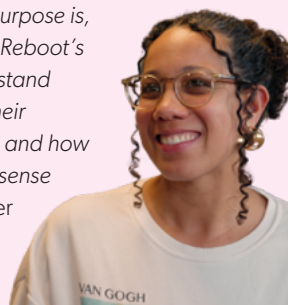
In the lead-up to Easter, Clare Williams hosted an online webinar with philosopher and author Dr Lydia McGrew to explore **The Reliability of the Gospels**. More than 200 youth workers and parents signed up to be encouraged and equipped to respond to questions their youth ask during this season.



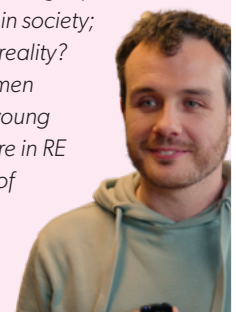
Reboot events in St Albans

In April, as part of a series of Reboot events in St Albans, our team provided a training session at Forest Town Church for 25 youth leaders. Tom Price spoke on **How to Tell a Better Story with the Gospel**, while Alanzo Paul tackled the issue of **suffering and injustice**, one of the biggest topics young people wrestle with.

"My young people ask lots of questions about God and suffering, what their purpose is, their identity and who they are. Reboot's training is a great way to understand young people; to understand their thoughts behind their questions and how to engage in a way that makes sense to them." Rachel, a Youth Leader in St Albans, attended the training.



"Why does God allow suffering? is a massive question my young people ask. Sexuality is also a big topic for them, as well as the role of gender in society; is gender a social construct or a fixed reality? We also get questions about how women are portrayed in the Bible. When our young people are talking to their friends or are in RE lessons at school, these are the types of questions that they're faced with. It's important we can meet them where they are." John, Youth Leader.



Equipping People

to Share their Faith
with Confidence

OCCA Summer School: Grappling with the thorny issues of today's culture

In July, we welcomed delegates from around the world to Oxford for our OCCA Summer School. Over four days, delegates took a deep dive into the important issues shaping the world today, gaining insight and understanding into how to have meaningful conversations about these topics in their spheres of influence.

"The way OCCA is addressing questions that people are asking is about the best I've seen anywhere. There's always going to be traditional apologetics questions people ask but there are questions before the question now, and I just find that the team here is putting a Christian perspective on things like racism, justice, sexuality and suffering in ways that I'm not seeing many other places do. It's been a great resource." Dan, Summer School delegate

"Being able to hear multiple talks from very knowledgeable people left me feeling encouraged to be more engaged and open with my faith. It showed me that there are answers to some very difficult questions of life found in the Christian faith but also there are still many people out there who need to hear the hope of Christ." Ben, Confident Faith Conference attendee



Confident Faith Conference: Finding Clarity in the Chaos



This summer we held our first **Confident Faith Conference** at Oxford University's iconic Examination Rooms. Almost 300 people attended to be encouraged and equipped to respond to the difficult questions of today's culture. Talks and breakout sessions covered a range of topics, including **Finding Meaning in Pain, Navigating Economic Unrest, Identity** and **Sexuality**.



Snapshot of talks from the Confident Faith Conference:

How to navigate a world of economic unrest **Max Jeganathan**

Can we live with AI? **Prof. John Lennox**

Why do we get things so wrong?
Rt Revd Dr Emma Ineson

Why does Christianity give queer people such a tough time? **Ben Thomas & Sam Allberry**

How to live through an environmental apocalypse **Revd Sam Allberry**

Working in Partnership

Partnering with churches, Christian ministries and festivals remains a priority for our team, equipping and encouraging people to have meaningful conversations about their faith and the big questions facing our culture today.

Christians in Government

Earlier this year, Sara Stevenson and Alanzo Paul teamed up with Christians in Government to put on a six-part apologetics series on **The Evidence for the Christian Faith**. More than 100 civil servants joined online to engage in the discussions.

"The series was really helpful in both strengthening our faith and equipping us to respond credibly to colleagues about what we believe." Aidan, Co-Chair of Christians in Government



One-Day Apologetics

We've continued to partner with local churches to deliver day events for their congregations to equip them to respond meaningfully and credibly to some of today's big issues. Our team has run sessions on a variety of topics, including the **reliability of the Bible, gender identity, sexuality, and cancel culture**.

"We absolutely loved having OCCA come and lead us for the day. It was so valuable to inspire the Church and to empower them with knowledge they can use in sharing the Gospel." Marcus Hart, Curate at Christ Church, Ware

Responding to the Questions of Culture

Ben Thomas, a medical doctor and speaker on our team, has continued to speak widely at Christian conferences, churches and youth events into the complex and sensitive subjects of **gender and sexuality**.

In February, he partnered with Scripture Union Scotland to share a biblical approach to **Is Christianity LGBTQ+ friendly?** Ben also led a session at St Aldates Church in Oxford to equip parents to respond helpfully and kindly to questions young people may have on gender identity and sexuality.



OCCA on the road

The summer was filled with speaking opportunities at large Christian festivals including the Keswick Convention, New Wine, Word Alive and Big Church Festival. Alanzo Paul and Clare Williams were also back at HTB Focus, leading the daily morning devotions for more than 1000 youth and delivering seminars on topics such as **injustice and colonialism**.

A Heart for Hindus

In November, OCCA tutor Rahil Patel hosted our third Hinduism and Jainism Symposium. Leaders from heavily South Asian populated areas in the UK gathered for a series of lectures and Q&A sessions on how to share the gospel in their contexts.

Our Finances

We are so thankful for the many 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.

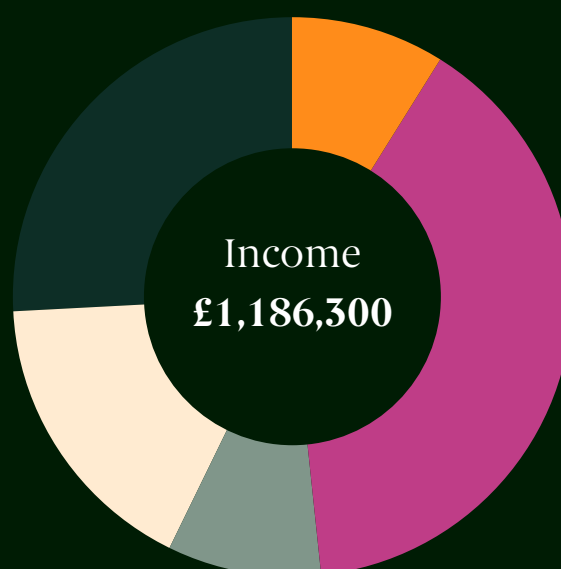
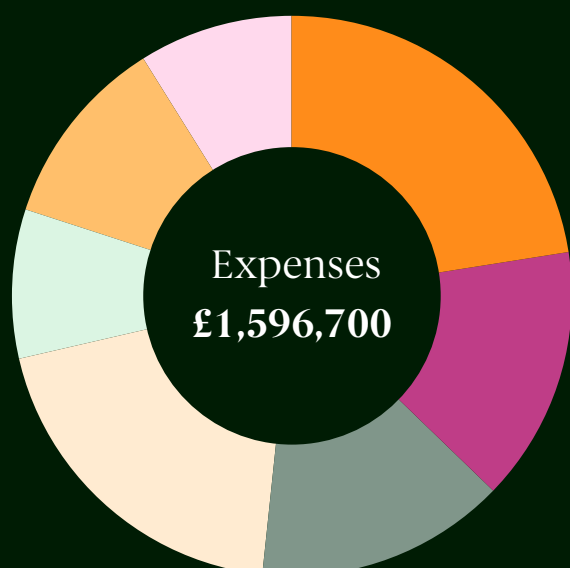
Outgoing

● Engage the World (including Reboot)	£361,000
● Equip the Church	£236,800
● Training Pathway	£229,300
● Online Hub	£313,700
● Building Partnerships	£136,700
● Operational Costs	£178,900
● Facilities	£140,300

Incoming

● Ministry Activities	£145,000
● Donors	£630,300
● Grant-making Trusts	£139,000
● Assets Income (building fund & other)	£272,000
● Investment from Capital	£410,400

The investment from capital consists of transition funding from the sale of our old building. In the coming years, we need to close this gap through new income.



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

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Looking Ahead

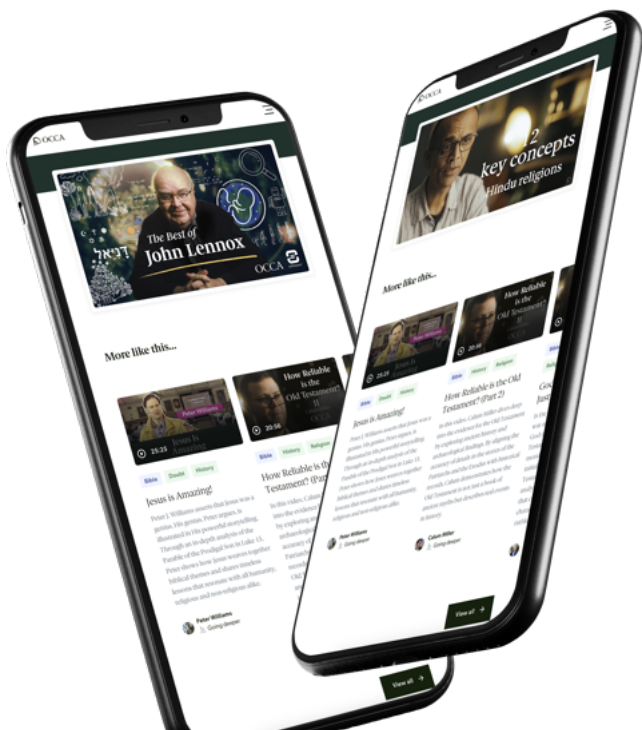
We're thankful for a fruitful year of equipping and encouraging people to become more confident in sharing their faith. Following the launch of our One Year Hybrid Course, expanding our reach online through our new Online Hub, and hosting our first Confident Faith Conference, we plan to consolidate what we've done and build on the foundations of what the Lord is doing through our team.

Online Hub Special Projects

In October we will be launching **Key Concepts of Hinduism**, a course led by OCCA tutor and former Hindu monk Rahil Patel which will explore some of the key ideas, beliefs and practices of people from the Hindu tradition.

Rahil said: *"Mutual understanding is key for dialogue. Without paying attention to someone else, we can't connect with them and find common ground. This often happens between people of different religions and worldviews. From this course, you'll learn how Christians and Hindus can have richer conversations."*

And we're excited to release **The Best of John Lennox**, a special collection of 14 films exploring Professor John Lennox's pivotal contributions to debates on topics such as the **Bible and Culture, Science and Religion, AI and Transhumanism**, and more.



New Podcasts

Our team regularly speak into some of the most pressing questions of culture, sharing the truth and beauty of the gospel into often challenging topics. We plan to record these talks and make them available in a new podcast series.

We're Growing our Speaking Team

We're looking forward to welcoming a couple of new speakers onto our team in the autumn.

Aase Victoria will be relocating from Oslo, Norway to Oxford and is passionate about engaging with the big ethical issues and questions of our day. She brings a background in theology and leadership.

Cristo Rodriguez will be joining us from a career in education and will be focusing on our work in schools. He is excited to faithfully and fairly present Christian beliefs and responses to life's most significant questions.


You can read interviews with both Aase Victoria and Cristo on our website.



'In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.'

1 Peter 3:15



      @theoCCA

www.theocca.org