

Year-Round Mentoring for Apologetics Leaders

with Dr. Andy Bannister, Ph.D.



Dr. Andy Bannister is the Director of the [Solas Centre for Public Christianity](#), speaking and teaching regularly throughout the UK, Europe, Canada, the USA, and the wider world. From universities to churches, business forums to TV and radio, he regularly addresses audiences of both Christians and those of all faiths and none on issues relating to faith, culture, politics and society.

Andy holds a PhD in Islamic studies and has taught extensively at universities across Canada, the USA, the UK and further afield on both Islam and philosophy. He is also an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Arthur Jeffery Centre for the Study of Islam at Melbourne School of Theology and is also Adjunct Faculty at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto.

He is the author of several books including *An Oral Formulaic Study of the Qur'an* (2014); *The Atheist Who Didn't Exist (or: The Dreadful Consequences of Really Bad Arguments)* (2015); *Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?* (2021); and *How to Talk About Jesus Without Looking Like an Idiot* (2022). He is also a co-presenter of [Pod of the Gaps](#), a popular podcast that combines theology, culture and humour, and aims to help Christians explore the challenges (and opportunities!) of living in the 21st century.

When not travelling, speaking, or writing, Andy is a keen hiker, mountain climber and photographer. He is married to Astrid and they have two children, Caitriona and Christopher, and live in Wiltshire in England.

GOAL: To provide Christian evangelists and apologists with the proper content, encouragement, relationships, and breakthrough training that would enable their ministries to grow qualitatively and exponentially.

PLAN: This year-round mentoring group includes:

- A Pre-Forum Seminar in Wisla, Poland on 20 May 2023 (14:00-17:30 CEST);
- four two-hour webinars with webinar assignments;
- a two-day online “retreat” on 18 and 19 January 2024;
- a Pre-Forum Conference at the 2024 Forum on 24-25 May.

PARTICIPANTS: Ten to twelve Christian evangelists/apologists who are passionate about persuasively engaging their culture with the gospel, and willing to commit to becoming part of a learning community.

QUALIFICATIONS: All participants will be actively involved in evangelism and apologetics, and each will be a spiritually mature Christian.

COMMITMENTS: In addition to submitting an application, in order to be accepted as a participant, you must commit to:

1. Thoroughly review a selection of pre-assigned materials before and after each webinar. These assignments will consist of reading selections of books or academic articles, including the list of books and articles indicated for each webinar.
2. Have a proper internet connection and a device equipped with both microphone and video capability.
3. Attend **all** sessions, including a Pre-Forum Seminar on 20 May 2023; four two-hour webinars with webinar assignments; a two-day online “retreat” on 18 and 19 January 2024; and a Pre-Forum Seminar on 24-25 May 2024.
4. Secure a copy of the needed books for assignments.
5. In order to be accepted to next year’s European Leadership Forum all Year-Round Mentoring participants will need to nominate two other leaders for the following year’s Year-Round Mentoring, which includes personally contacting and recruiting them by email.

2024 Online “Retreat”: All Apologetics participants will meet with Andy for a two-day virtual/online retreat, from 13:00 – 16:00 (UK time) on 18th and 19th January 2024 (i.e. six hours in total).

Webinar Sessions

The current apologetics mentoring plan includes the following four two-hour webinars.

Webinar One: Comparative Worldviews

Thursday, 5th October 2023, 14:00-16:00 UK time

- I. The first 15 minutes will be devoted to answering questions about the assignments.
- II. Reading, Listening, and Writing Assignments
 - A. Read Andy Bannister’s book *Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?* (paying esp. attention to chapter 3).
 - B. Read one of the following:
 - Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* - chapter 2.
 - Ellis Potter, *Three Theories of Everything* - read as much of this very short little book as you can manage.
 - C. Listen to the lecture “Worldviews - How do you see the world and why?” by Os Guinness at https://youtu.be/w6M9ls_BwWE.
 - D. Watch the lecture by Nancy Pearcey, “Test Everything: Five Principles for Answering Any Worldview” at <https://youtu.be/UR11Kmk0GSA>.
 - E. Write a 400-word paragraph on each of the four questions below (i.e. 1,600 words in total). This is due 2 weeks before the webinar and should be submitted to catherine@solas-cpc.org.

- i. *How is the concept of a "worldview" helpful for engaging with how our friends, neighbours and colleagues think about life?*
- ii. *What are some key questions you might ask a friend to help explore their worldview?*
- iii. *How might you respond to somebody who said: "I don't have a worldview, I don't believe anything, I'm an atheist"?*
- iv. *What are some of the key differences between the Islamic and Christian worldviews?*

Webinar Two: Practical Conversational Apologetics

Thursday, 23rd November 2023, 14:00-16:00 UK time

- I. The first 15 minutes will be devoted to answering questions about the assignments.
- II. Requirements
 - a. Read my book *How to Talk About Jesus Without Looking Like an Idiot*.
 - b. Read Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life* - chapters 8 through 12.
 - c. Listen to four different Solas PEP Talk podcasts (<https://www.solas-cpc.org/category/podcast/pep-talk/>) - lots of food for thought there on evangelism from a wide variety of perspectives.
- III. Assignments
 - F. Write a 400-word paragraph on each of the four questions below (i.e. 1,600 words in total). This is due 2 weeks before the webinar and should be submitted to catherine@solas-cpc.org.
 - i. *Why do you think many Christians are afraid or nervous about evangelism (especially at work or school/university?)*
 - ii. *When you have tried to share your faith with friends, what's gone well? What has gone less well? What have you learnt?*
 - iii. *Why do you think questions and conversations are such a powerful evangelistic tool?*

Webinar Three: Has Science Buried God?

Thursday, 22nd February 2024, 14:00-16:00 UK time

- I. The first 15 minutes will be devoted to answering questions about the assignments.
 - a. Assignments
 - i. Read David Hutchings and Tom McLeish, *Let There Be Science: Why God Loves Science and Science Needs God* – especially pay attention to chapters 1 and 2.
 - ii. Read Glen Scrivener, *The Air We Breathe*, chapter 6.
 - iii. Read Sarah Bodbyl Roels' essay, "Are science and Christianity at war?" at <https://biologos.org/common-questions/are-science-and-christianity-at-war/>.

- b. Write a 400-word paragraph on each of the four questions below (i.e. 1,600 words in total). This is due 2 weeks before the webinar and should be submitted to catherine@solas-cpc.org.
- i. *How might you respond and try to begin a conversation with a friend who says "We don't need God, science can explain everything?"*
 - ii. *"Science answers the how questions; religion answers the why questions." Is this a helpful way to help our friends think about science and faith?*
 - iii. *How might we get a conversation from questions about God and science to an opportunity to talk about Jesus? What are some of the connecting points along the way?*

Webinar Four: Answering the Problem of Evil

Thursday, 18th April 2024, 14:00-16:00 UK time

- I. The first 15 minutes will be devoted to answering questions about the assignments.
- II. Assignments
 - a. Read Sharon Dirckx, *Why? Looking at God, Evil and Personal Suffering* – pay careful attention to especially the introduction and chapters 1-2.
 - b. Read Arthur Leff's famous essay on the problems that atheists have in even speaking of "good" and "evil" at <http://bit.ly/leff>.
 - c. Read Os Guinness, *Unspeakable: Facing Up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror* – especially chapters 10-12.
 - d. Write a 400-word paragraph on each of the four questions below (i.e. 1,600 words in total). This is due 2 weeks before the webinar and should be submitted to catherine@solas-cpc.org.
 - i. Questions about evil, pain and suffering can be very personal, not just philosophical. *If a friend asks you about Christianity and the problem of evil, how might you navigate the conversation both pastorally and apologetically?*
 - ii. Some have suggested that the more important question is not so much "Why evil?" as "How can we live faithfully with suffering, pain and evil?" *Do you agree or disagree?*
 - iii. *If a friend asks "Where is God in X" and speaks of an example of suffering, pain or injustice, how might you begin with their question but naturally weave Jesus and the gospel into the conversation?*

How to Apply

To apply:

1. Fill out an online application [here](#). Please be sure to fill out every field.
2. Once we receive your application form and reference, your application will be considered complete. We will review completed applications and let you know if you are accepted into the program within four to six weeks.

If you have questions, contact us at initiatives@euroleadership.org.