**Joined-Up Evangelism: Helping People Connect**

**Their Deepest Longings to the Gospel**

Although many of our secular friends may say they’re not interested in God, their lives are often shot through with “signs of transcendence” (longings for things like justice, beauty, love, and joy). In this session, we’ll draw on insights from writers ranging from Blaise Pascal to C. S. Lewis and explore how we can use our friends’ desires and longings as signposts to the gospel. Yes, there are cultural challenges to evangelism in post-Christian Europe, but by “joining the dots” for our friends, we can help show how is the gospel that offers the deepest answers to the questions they are already asking.

**Andy Bannister** is the Director of Solas, an evangelism and training ministry based in Scotland. Andy holds a PhD in Islamic studies and is an Adjunct Professor at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. Andy is the author of several books including *An Oral-Formulaic Study of the Qur’an*; *The Atheist Who Didn’t Exist*; and his latest book, *Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?* is an accessible engagement with this absolutely crucial question. When not traveling, speaking, or writing, Andy is a keen hiker, mountain climber, and photographer. He is married to Astrid; they have two children, Caitriona and Christopher. See more at www.solas-cpc.org.

1. **Introduction**
2. The changing nature of questions/challenges to the Christian faith.
3. Increasingly the question is not “Is Christianity *true* but is Christianity *bad*?”
4. The danger of reducing apologetics to *just* intellectual arguments.
5. S. Lewis and the need to address the imagination.
6. **The Cultural Moment: What’s Driving the Tough Questions?**
7. *“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.” – Martin Luther*
8. A *feelings* based culture.
9. The myth of tolerance.
10. The toxic confusion of religion and politics.
11. Confusion about what the gospel actually is.
12. *“[The cross] is so petty, it’s so trivial, it’s so local, it’s so earth-bound, it’s so unworthy of the universe.” — Richard Dawkins*
13. **Connecting *Their* Story to the *Gospel* Story**
14. Engaging the mind, heart, and imagination and helping people *wish* the gospel were true.
15. *“Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is.” — Blaise Pascal*
16. Demonstrating the power of the gospel to explain, shed light on, and connect the dots:
17. Justice
18. Science
19. Beauty
20. Identity
21. Freedom
22. Meaning
23. Diversity
24. Dignity
25. Forgiveness
26. **Story-Shaped Apologetics**
27. The illuminative power of the gospel.
28. The ‘fittingness argument’.
29. **Conclusions**
30. Lessons from Colossians 4:5-6
31. Beginning with the question and ending with the gospel

***Further Reading:***

Bannister, Andy *The Atheist Who Didn’t Exist (or: The Dreadful Consequences of Really Bad Arguments)* (Oxford: Monarch, 2015) (especially chapter 10)

Ganssle, Gregory E., *A Reasonable God: Engaging the New Face of Atheism* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2009)

Guinness, Os, *The Long Journey Home: A Guide to Your Search for the Meaning of Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2001)

McGrath, Alister E., *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012)

Newbigin, Lesslie, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1991 [1989])

Spufford, Francis, *Unapologetic: Why, Despite Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Surprising Emotional Sense* (London: Faber & Faber, 2013 [2012])

Wright, N. T., *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (New York: HarperOne, 2006)

Williams, Clifford, *Existential Reasons for Belief in God: A Defense of Desires and Emotions for Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011)