

## Learning from Science: Setting the Cultural Agenda

While Christian perspectives can be heard in public discourse, they are largely confined to a narrow band of topics where they clash with dominant secular worldviews — including sexuality, creation/evolution and beginning or end of life issues. This leaves Christians frustrated that the enormous breadth of biblical thought is unheard or misrepresented. In recent years scientists have faced similar issues, in particular that they have compelling answers to questions that the majority of people aren't asking. Their response has been to prioritise the communication of scientific depth, particularly through mainstream and online media, in a way that captures the public imagination. Kay Carter asks how Christians might learn from the success of the science-communicators phenomenon to broaden the space for Christians in the public square.

**Kay Carter** is Director of Communications at Tyndale House, an academic institute for biblical understanding, where she supports researchers to speak about their work in a way that cuts through the academic/popular divide and captures the public imagination. Kay has a background in journalism, including as a staff member of *The Sunday Times* in London and as founding editor of *The Difference* magazine, which examined political issues through the lens of Christian ethics. She has a long-term interest in religious freedom and has worked as a lobbyist for organisations that represent persecuted Christians in the Middle East. Before joining Tyndale House, she ran the secretariat for the British All Party Parliamentary Group on International Freedom of Religion or Belief.

### I. Parallels between Christian communication and science-communication

- A. A detailed message in a soundbite world
- B. Going deeper without losing your audience
- C. Teaching knowledge to change attitudes

### II. The explosive growth of science-communication

- A. The emergence of a discipline
- B. A strategic response to a practical problem
  - 1. Public engagement
  - 2. Media accuracy
- C. A template for cultural change
  - 1. A new space in the public square

2. A new set of tools for public engagement

## **DISCUSSION**

### **III. Learning from best practices in science-communication**

- A. Keeping it simple
- B. Creative communication ideas
- C. Rigorous evaluation

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Suggested Readings:***

Donghong Cheng, Michael Claessens, Toss Gascoigne, Jenni Metcalfe, Bernard Schiele, Shunke Shi, *Communicating Science in Social Contexts*, (Springer Science and Business Media, 2008)

Richard Holliman, Elizabeth Whitelegg, Eileen Scanlon, Sam Smidt and Jeff Thomas, *Investigating Science Communication in the Information Age*, (Oxford University Press, 2009)

Sue Wolstenholme, *Science Public Relations and Communication*, (Chartered Institute of Public Relations, 2013);  
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