

Communicating Biblical Truth to a Secular Culture through the Media with Clarity, Creativity and Confidence

In today's global cyber-village stories on issues at the interface of Christianity and culture generate a huge amount of media interest and publicity. This creates great opportunities to impart a Christian worldview perspective for those who are willing to take the necessary risks and seize the opportunities on offer. It is essential that a Christian view is heard clearly and is able to shape media dialogue and public policy and yet many Christians seem reluctant to put their heads above the parapet and speak out. Responding effectively to these opportunities requires courage, planning, monitoring, wisdom and grace. Training can help but the best way of learning is to get involved and learn on the job. Based on extensive experience in the UK campaigning and speaking on issues at the interface of Christianity and medicine this seminar will examine how to get involved with attention to messaging, media training, consultancy, delivery and use of social media.

Peter Saunders was born in New Zealand and originally trained as a general surgeon before serving with the Africa Inland Mission in Kenya and completing two years mission training at All Nations Christian College in the UK. Since 1992 he has served full-time with Christian Medical Fellowship, a UK-based organisation with 4,500 UK doctors and 1,000 medical students as members, first as Head of Student Ministries, and since 1999 as Chief Executive. His current work involves leadership training, teaching evangelism and ethics, medical mission, writing, editing, and media work. He has been a member of the ICMDA (International Christian Medical and Dental Association) Board since 2003 and is also Campaign Director of the Care Not Killing Alliance, a coalition of over 40 organisations in the UK promoting palliative care and opposing euthanasia. His wife Kirsty is a community paediatrician and they have three sons, Christopher, Benjamin and Jonathan. They are members of Spicer Street Church, St Albans. www.cmf.org.uk; www.carenotkilling.org.uk; <http://pjsaunders.blogspot.com/>

I. The Current Media scene

- A. The rise of militant secularism
- B. The global village and the media explosion
- C. How the media works – the ‘shark fest’
- D. Social networking – Facebook, Twitter and Blogs
- E. Online newspapers and rapid responses

II. Why get involved

- A. A wider audience
- B. Opportunity for dialogue
- C. Giving Christians confidence

III. Some biblical principles

- A. The Apostolic precedent
 - 1. Taking thoughts captive (2 Cor 10:4,5)

2. 'Dialogue' – the truth in words they understand in a place they feel safe

B. Scriptural principles

1. Being surrounded (2 Kings 6:14-16; Psalms 118:9-11)
2. Examples of firestorms (1 Kings 18; John 7&8; Acts 21:27-40)
3. God is in control (Ephesians 1:15-23; Daniel 4:17, 25, 32)
4. Be realistic about the spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-20)
5. Be prepared and willing (Joshua 1:5-9; Esther 4:13,14; Isaiah 6:8)
6. Keep your head (2 Timothy 4:5; Philippians 4:6; Psalm 46)
7. Trust God (Exodus 4:10-12; Isaiah 54:17; Jeremiah 1:5-10; Luke 21:14, 15)

IV. The Media

A. The Press

B. Radio

C. Television

D. New Media

V. Influencing journalists

A. Use a media consultant if possible

B. Identify sympathetic journalists to feed

C. Present your message on a plate (press releases and briefings)

VI. Handling interviews

A. Decide what issues you will focus on and which you won't

B. Say 'yes' and be prepared to 'drop everything' if necessary

C. Find out what kind of interview/debate it is

D. Decide what your key messages are and the language you will use

E. Get your messages out early regardless of what they ask you

F. Look for opportunities to 'turn' the interview

G. Be pleasant but passionate and try to get the last word

VII. Being Prepared

- A. Being reactive and proactive – who is lighting the match?

- B. Stay connected
 - 1. Key news bulletins
 - 2. Twitter
 - 3. Google news
 - 4. The blogosphere

- C. Preparation
 - 1. Horizon scanning and diary planning
 - 2. Agreed strategy and position
 - 3. Media training

- D. Develop key support structures
 - 1. Campaign Director – Oversees strategy for campaign
 - 2. Press Officer – fields calls and allocates media opportunities
 - 3. Office administrator – distributes releases/briefings and updates website
 - 4. Media spokespeople – trained and strategically deployed
 - 5. Researcher – chasing up information needed in the campaign

- E. Resources
 - 1. Laptop, tablet and smartphone
 - 2. Press releases, media briefings and articles
 - 3. Website, email lists and social networking
 - 4. Speakers list

VII. Personal challenges

- A. Anxiety

- B. Reticence

- C. Clarity

- D. Pride

- E. Publicity Addiction