

## How to Lead in a Media Firestorm

In today's global cyber-village local news stories can quickly go international and 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. Generating and reacting to such situations requires careful planning, monitoring, teamwork and execution in order to ensure that a Christian view is heard clearly and is able to shape media dialogue and public policy. 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 prepare best for a media shark-fest through attention to messaging, media training, consultancy, delivery, use of social media and mobilisation of a strong supporter base.

**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 worked in full-time Christian ministry with Christian Medical Fellowship, a UK-based organisation with around 4,000 UK doctors and 1,000 medical student members, first as Head of Student Ministries and since 1999 as Chief Executive. As CMF's CEO he is involved in leadership training, teaching evangelism, apologetics and ethics, medical mission, writing, editing and media work. He was a foundation member of the European Apologetics Network, and is currently Campaign Director of the Care Not Killing Alliance and a board member of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association. Peter is married to Kirsty and they have three sons. They live in St Albans, UK and are members of Spicer Street Free Evangelical Church.

- 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. Examples of ‘firestorms’ – ‘crises where you are called to speak’

### A. Personal Media Firestorms

1. The Joffe Bill
2. Sky Real lives
3. The Falconer Amendment

### B. Firestorms in the Scriptures

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)

8. Understand that Crisis = Threat + Opportunity

9. Rest and recover (1 Kings 19; Luke 5:15, 16)

III. Preparing for the Event

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

B. Staying connected

1. Key news bulletins

2. BBC news stories

3. Twitter

4. Google news

5. The blogosphere

C. Preparation

1. Horizon scanning and diary planning

2. Agreed strategy and position
3. Media training
4. Media consultancy
5. Website, circulation list and stakeholders
6. Social media

D. Delegation of key roles

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

6. Advisors – wise heads to consult

7. Rapid responders – tweeters, face-bookers, tweeters and rapid responders

E. Resources

1. Laptop and smartphone

2. Press releases, media briefings and articles

3. Website, email lists and social networking

4. Speakers list

IV. Leading during the Event

A. Clearing the ground – shelving and rescheduling routine tasks

B. Deploying the troops and resources

C. Encouraging and informing

D. Special techniques

1. The ambush – knowing when to drop everything

2. Spiking their guns – spoiling their party

3. Moving the debate – changing the argument
4. Self-defence – judging whether and how to respond
5. The twitter storm – dealing with trolls and honest enquirers

V. Follow up

A. Other opportunities

1. International News outlets
2. Follow up stories – moving the goalposts
3. Regional radio
4. The Christian Press
5. Social networking

B. Encouraging the troops

1. Bringing stakeholders/supporters up to date
2. Thanking people
3. Telling the story