

## 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. From 1992 to 2018 he 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 from 1999 as Chief Executive. From 2006 to 2018 he also served as Campaign Director of the Care Not Killing Alliance, a coalition of over 40 organisations in the UK promoting palliative care and opposing euthanasia. Since January 2019 he has been CEO of the ICMDA (International Christian Medical and Dental Association) which brings together national associations of doctors and dentists in over 80 countries worldwide. His work has involved leadership training, teaching evangelism and ethics, medical mission, writing, editing, and media work. His wife Kirsty is a community paediatrician and they have three sons, Christopher, Benjamin and Jonathan, and one grandson. They are members of Spicer Street Church, St Albans. [www.icmda.net](http://www.icmda.net); <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. Wider audience
  - B. Opportunity for dialogue
  - C. Giving Christians confidence
- III. Some biblical principles
  - A. Whose battle is this?

- i. Who upholds you? (Isaiah 41:10)
    - ii. What is your heritage? (Isaiah 54:17)
      - a. Who will give you the words? (Exodus 4:11,12; Matthew 10:19,20)
  - B. The Apostolic precedent
    - i. Taking thoughts captive (2 Cor 10:4,5)
    - ii. 'Dialogue' – the truth in words they understand in a place they feel safe
- IV. The Media
  - A. The Press
  - B. Radio
  - C. Television
  - D. New Media - How to use social media to good effect (Twitter, Facebook, Blogs)
- 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. 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. Handling interviews

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

- a. No one can be an expert on everything but...
- b. You can become an expert quickly on some issues
- c. But be ready to say no if it is not a priority or there is someone better

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

- a. It's never convenient but...
- b. Try to negotiate the conditions...
- c. And leave time to prepare

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

- a. Radio/Television
- b. Live/Recorded
- c. Hostile/Friendly
- d. Skilled/Unskilled interviewer
- e. Soundbites/Extended Interview

- f. Face to face/To camera
- g. One to one/Debate/Panel/Studio

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

- a. Write out your main messages in order of priority
- b. Reduce them to memorable soundbites
- c. Deliver them at the first opportunity and frame your argument around them

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

- a. The first question is never the one you want to answer...
- b. Don't dodge it but move quickly onto what you want to say
- c. Tell stories that show your human side
- d. If they don't cut you off then just keep talking

**F. Look for opportunities to 'turn' the interview**

- a. Take control of the interview and move it in the direction you want to go
- b. Make provocative statements that then lead them to ask the question you want to answer
- c. Be pleasant but passionate and try to get the last word
- d. Play the expert card and blind them with facts

**G. Deal with personal challenges**

- a. Anxiety
- b. Reticence
- c. Clarity
- d. Pride
- e. Publicity Addiction

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