

The Prophets in a Media World

This session will explore the relationship between the biblical prophets and today's media world by exploring themes which are central to both. These include truth, justice, values, relationships within society, and right foundations for life. These are issues with which journalists, as well as filmmakers, writers, and other creatives regularly engage, and which fuel heated debates within social media. We will consider how both the biblical prophets and the contemporary media prompt people to reflect on their current reality, and present alternative possible futures. This leads to some final reflections on how the biblical prophets can serve as role models for communicating truth in today's media world.

Tony Watkins is a speaker and writer on media and culture. Previously with Damaris, he now works both independently and in partnership with several organisations. He is the Network Co-ordinator for the Lausanne Media Engagement Network, and teaches regularly at Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communications, Norway, and the Norwegian School of Theology. Tony has written, or co-written, several books including *Focus: The Art and Soul of Cinema* and *Dark Matter: A Thinking Fan's Guide to Philip Pullman*. Tony and his family are involved in Above Bar Church, Southampton, where he is part of the leadership team.

I. The calling of the Hebrew prophets

- A. The prophetic vocation: to speak on behalf of God
- B. Calling the people back to the covenant
 - 1. Exposing failure
 - 2. Presenting possible futures

II. The calling of the media

- A. The human vocation: to represent God
- B. Speaking truth to power
 - 1. Exposing failure
 - 2. Suggesting possible futures

III. Themes of concern to the prophets and the media

- A. Values

- 1. Truth
- 2. Righteousness
- B. Social justice
 - 1. Money
 - 2. Power
 - 3. Sex
- C. Nations
- D. Religion

IV. The prophets as models for media communication

- A. Perspectives
- B. Approaches
 - 1. Graphic imagery
 - 2. Persuasive language
 - 3. Unexpected connections

Suggested Reading:

Lundbom, Jack: *The Hebrew Prophets: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2010)

McConville, J. Gordon: *Exploring the Old Testament: Vol. 4 The Prophets* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002)

Robertson, O. Palmer: *The Christ of the Prophets*, abridged edition (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008)

Watkins, Tony: *Focus: The Art and Soul of Cinema* (Milton Keynes: Damaris, 2007)

Wolff, Hans Walter: *Confrontations with Prophets* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1983)

Woods, Robert H., and Patton, Paul: *Prophetically Incorrect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010)