



Confidence
in the Gospel

As part of the Evangelical Alliance's *Confidence in the Gospel* initiative we are hosting a series of five national consultations to wrestle with significant and timely issues relating to the gospel.

To ensure that as many people as possible can engage with this programme, the talks are being filmed and made available online.

Why not watch some of the videos, and use the questions provided, to explore these vital subjects with your small group or leadership team?

For more information, videos and resources visit eauk.org/confidence

Jez Carr

has held a variety of roles in the music industry, from working as a jazz pianist to writing operating manuals for studio gear. He runs Keswick Unconventional, an arts stream within the Keswick Convention.

Synopsis

The arts are important in mission, yet there is often a dislocation between the Church and the arts.

The story of the plague leave many people asking a question; why? Surely God could have simply put the Egyptians to sleep one night and quietly led all the Israelites out into the desert. Then, Moses could have sat them down and explained how Yahweh was their God and redeemer, is more powerful than Pharaoh and was going to look after them. That approach would have saved a lot of suffering.

Yahweh wanted to teach something that went beyond information and required more than words. He wanted to give them a new understanding of who he was and who they were – it was a lesson that would shape their identity for many generations.

Pharaoh, with his vast propaganda machine, had given them the identity of slaves and they would have held Egypt in a sense of awe; he had been lying to their imaginations for centuries. A simple explanation was going to be no match for this. That is why we have the plagues, a multi-sensory performance of the power of Yahweh to defeat Pharaoh, free his people and reclaim their imaginations.

Advertisers use this approach. When advertising a car, they do not explain the car, they give people an experience of it. They feed people's imagination, claiming that it's this car that is missing from their life.

The world is full of these messages and we want to free people with the power of the gospel. We cannot fight imagination and experience with just information. Why do we settle with explanations of the gospel, when we're up against something that is so much more persuasive?

We therefore need to invest in those of us who help us experience the fullness of God's revelation – our artists. Jez Carr finishes with five practical points: (1) Don't try to manage the creative process. (2) Make sure your artists feel they have permission to explore subject matter that isn't directly evangelistically useful. (3) Keep your commissions general. (4) Ensure your artists can relate easily to you and each other – dialogue is essential for all forms of creativity. (5) Focus on the spiritual maturity of your artists.

Questions

- 1) What are some of the most significant lessons that you have learnt through experience? What can we learn from this in the way we teach people as the Church?
- 2) If you are an artist, how do you feel about how the Church has approached your discipline? What would you like the Church to do differently in this area?
- 3) As a church, how could we better embrace the arts, and artists?