



Communicating faith to a secular world: An Australian radio case study Sheridan Voysey

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

Sheridan Voysey

is a writer, speaker and broadcaster on faith and spirituality. He has authored five books including, *Unseen Footprints: Encountering the Divine Along the Journey of Life* (named 2006 Christian book of the year) and *Resurrection Year: Turning Broken Dreams into New Beginnings*. Sheridan is the creator and former host of *Open House*: a live, nationally-networked radio show exploring life, faith and culture.

Synopsis

Christians in Australia had been praying for a radio license for 50 years. When they finally got one they did not establish a typical Christian radio station feature preaching programmes and worship music. Instead they used it to develop a missionary opportunity to engage a non-Christian audience. It was on this foundation that Sheridan developed *Open House* a call-in programme to engage the spiritual but not religious crowd, and to explore life, faith and culture. He outlines four commitments they made, which he believes were all essential for their success.

(1) We will be missional. It's not about us, it's about them. They didn't talk about issues from within the Christian community; they talked about the issues their listeners were facing. However, it's not just about them, it's about Him. They didn't want it to be lightweight, merely entertainment and inspiration.

(2) We will be credible. Through excellence – they wanted to create the best programme possible. Through expertise – when talking about issues they had guests who knew what they were talking about. Through fairness – gave space for the best of our critics and the worst of ourselves.

(3) We will be holistic. They didn't just talk about hot topics (eg abortion and homosexuality), they wanted to bring the whole of the gospel to bear on the whole of life. Including what the gospel has to say about the re-creation of culture, the re-fashioning of society, as well forgiveness and transformation of the individual.

(4) We will be hospitable. They created a safe place where everyone is welcome. The deepest longing of the human heart is to be listened to. If we create a safe space, take people seriously, with empathy, people will share. Then, you will get to the point where you can say: "I've got good news."

Questions

(1) As a church, or as individuals, what can we learn from the example of *Open House*? What changes do we need to make to become more missional, credible, holistic and/or hospitable?

(2) Think about a group of people our church we could connect with. If we were starting from a blank sheet of paper, what would we create and how would we make sure it was missional, credible, holistic and hospitable?

(3) If we were going to launch a radio show, similar to *Open House* in the UK, next week what would the focus of the first show be? What music would we play? What topics would we explore? Who would be our special guests?