

PUBLICLY SPEAKING

The newsletter of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship

E-mail: lecture@thebol.com

January/February 2009

Questions Answered

Question: My branch sent in our lecture application form to the Board of Lectureship office, but now we need to make a change. We've already updated the lecturer. Who do we call or e-mail to correct the information that advertises in the *Sentinel* and on the Internet?

Answer: Please phone (1-617-450-3669) or e-mail (lecture@thebol.com) changes to the Board of Lectureship office as soon as the updates are available. We don't need an additional lecture application form. Lecture information can be updated immediately with the changes appearing on the Internet the next day. If your change is received prior to the *Sentinel* deadline, the correct information will be printed automatically.

Your lecture application forms generate the notices in the *Sentinel* and Internet via our database, so please do not contact the *Sentinel*, spirituality.com or churchofchristscientist.com with your updates.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Looking for an Audience

First Park Ridge, Illinois, USA, sponsored two lectures given by lecturer Ryder Stevens at the Cook County Department of Corrections on September 27, 2008. The first lecture to women at Division 3 was scheduled to begin at 9 am. "After arriving and setting up at the chapel, we were told that the start would be delayed because of the need to pick up laundry at that time. The Christian Science chaplain confirmed that this was usually the case for our services there. After a short while, two women came into the room. We anticipated that more would soon follow, but this was not the case. After about 20 minutes, the Chaplain went to investigate and was told that the two women were the only ones who wanted to hear the talk. He then requested and was allowed to access various areas of the prison and inform the women that a Christian Science lecture given by a very special speaker who had traveled a long way was about to begin, and that they would be very glad if they heard him. This prompted many more to come — at least 20. Shortly after 10 am, Ryder began his talk. While they were waiting, he had been sharing stories and relevant experiences with those women who had arrived.

"The talk centered on the genuine completeness of each child of God, the innate wholeness and purity which is how God, our Father-Mother, sees each of us. There is no mortal history that can negate that reality of our identity. This seemed to really resonate with the women there. During the subsequent Q&A period, there were many questions. Paperback copies of *Science and Health* and bookmarks (printed with local radio and TV programs airing the Bible Lesson and *Radio Sentinel*) were provided to each attendee. In addition, lots of *Monitors* and *Sentinels* were available and just about everyone attending took them. A few

lingered as long as they could asking further questions. Many thanked us for what they had heard and were provided.

"The second lecture was at Division 4 to male inmates and was to begin at noon. Because flyers had been disseminated at both divisions in the two weeks preceding the lecture, we were assigned the gymnasium in anticipation of an attendance which exceeded any of the classroom capacities. This proved to be the case. Between 70 and 80 men attended.

"All of the attendees were provided with a paperback *Science and Health* and bookmark. After the lecture, a modest number of *Monitors* and *Sentinels* were available. For such a large group in a venue with two large fans providing background noise, the level of attentiveness was excellent. Ryder spoke about getting past history. He explored how they are not victims, not pawns, in an endless cycle of incarceration. God has called them, created them to be so much more than those limited, historical definitions. Who am I as a child of God? He pointed them to the scripture of Romans 8:1-2 '...the principle of life in Christ Jesus lifts me out of the old vicious circle of sin and death.' JB Phillips.

"At the conclusion of the talk, there were many questions. They seemed to have a momentum of their own. Afterwards, about a half dozen approached Ryder and asked that he pray for them (he had made this offer during his talk). Another half dozen asked me the location of the Park Ridge church and stated that they would be coming to our services after they were released. Many more expressed heartfelt gratitude for the event.

"During both talks Ryder encouraged the attendees to access *Science and Health* by reading the marginal headings until they found ones that spoke to their needs or interests, and then read the paragraph next to them. After both talks, we encouraged everyone to go to the book — also to join us at our future Saturday services at the facility."

Not enough time or funds?

Late in September, First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Wenatchee, Washington, USA, began looking at planning a lecture in 2009. As the lecture committee considered which lecturer to approach and the topics offered, Scott Preller's name came up. They soon discovered that he was going to be in their state in October — the very next month, but they felt that wasn't enough time to plan a lecture. It would probably be too late in his schedule for him to hook on to his trip and come across the state to lecture for them, and on top of all that they were short on funds.

However, the lecture chair was asked to go ahead and contact him just to confirm that they were correct that adding a lecture wasn't possible. When the lecture chair called him, to her surprise he said he **did** have a day available if he could get travel arranged. He shared that if it was in God's plan, it could come together.

The committee then began to work on finding the funds and were led to explore a particular option that (again) they felt was probably not possible, but they thought they would ask anyway. After following their inspiration to make the contact, all obstacles disappeared and the funding fell into place.

The branch notified the lecturer, and he graciously worked out his travel schedule to rent a car and drive across the state from Bellingham to Wenatchee the night before to give a lecture for them on Sunday. The lecture chair said, "Our lecture committee got busy (really busy) praying all the way to get advertising and physical arrangements made. To me, as

lecture chair, it was almost as if I were watching this all come together as one thing worked out after another.”

There were more people attending this lecture in a local Senior Center than they had had in the past (even when they have planned for months ahead). There were seven newcomers — more than the lecture chair can remember for a long time.

One lady said she had seen a *Science and Health* and might have had one before, but never read it. She indicated she would very much like to read it now. The branch was giving them away, so she took one. Two others said it was their first exposure to Christian Science, and they thought the lecture was wonderful and thought provoking. They each took a copy of *Science and Health*. Two other newcomers said they enjoyed the lecture and had been invited by family or friends. Another man thanked us sincerely for always mailing him an invitation. Though he attends another church, he loves the lectures. The receptionist at the Senior Center, who was there to let us in the building, said she heard part of it and it was very good.

The lecture chair said, “The expedient way things came together and the amount of work that could be done in such a short time was evidence that God-directed activity makes things possible that probably wouldn't be possible from a human standpoint, or at least not coming together so smoothly. It was truly inspiring being a part of and watching this lecture come together and experiencing the positive feeling inside myself, and seeing others attitudes change from ‘it can't be done’ to pitching in and working on it, as well as others seeing it come together as one of our best attended lectures.”

The lecture committee is already thinking ahead to their next lecture!

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you have general lecture questions, you can always e-mail us in your language at lecture@thebol.com, or, if you speak English, call the Board of Lectureship office at The Mother Church. Our number is +1-617-450-3669.

Our mailing address is:
Board of Lectureship
The First Church of Christ, Scientist
210 Massachusetts Ave, P06-10
Boston, MA 02115
USA

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Do you have any fruitage or progressive ideas for lecturing you'd like to share through PUBLICLY SPEAKING? Please send us your thoughts. We may be able to include your contribution in a future issue of PUBLICLY SPEAKING.