

## **GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING A SEMINAR**

Many church leaders are very experienced in planning church functions and do not need these guidelines. However, there are some church leaders for whom these guidelines may prove helpful. These guidelines are given to insure that all details of our seminar may receive adequate attention. You may think of details that I've overlooked. If so, please inform me how these guidelines may be improved that I may also inform others. When you've established a seminar date, a checklist regarding these seminar items will be forwarded to you.

### **Goals and Objectives**

These seminars contrast Christian principles to those of humanism in our culture. Everyone who believes in biblical values should be interested in these messages, including many theists from denominational backgrounds. Since it is not the primary objective of these seminars to convert the lost to Christ, these seminars are particularly suited to inviting denominational friends to your church facilities without their feeling any sense of intimidation. Many will already be interested in these subjects, and will respond to personal invitations from Christians when they understand that the seminars' intentions are not to discuss themes of doctrinal differences among various churches.

### **Program**

Whenever possible, I recommend that churches record these messages by audio and/or video tape for use at later occasions. Perhaps more benefit will be derived from these messages on tape than is gained from their original presentations. No copyright should be placed on recorded materials. I also request that there be no commercial marketing of recorded messages without my express consent. (You should feel free, however, to duplicate copies of your tapes and make them available to congregational members and friends, at cost, or even to send a copy to someone on the church's mailing list who might request a copy, as long as arrangements are non-profit.)

### **Schedules**

Most seminars are scheduled from Friday evening through Sunday evening. Some may be scheduled Sunday through Wednesday, however, this format is generally reserved for summer months. Adult classes for Summer Vacation Bible School may also be scheduled from Monday through Friday. If two messages are to be presented each evening, (and also two on Saturday morning, when applicable), please be certain that the congregation and others are informed of this arrangement through pulpit announcements, church bulletin articles, or whatever other means of advertisement you wish. Scheduling conflicts may be avoided by noting carefully what other activities are being scheduled by public school athletic events or by other area congregations.

## **Congregational Preparations**

### ***Advertisement and Promotion***

Advertisements should be targeted to two separate groups. One is the local congregation, and the other is the public at large. Promotional techniques will vary depending upon which group is being addressed. To the local congregation, the usual announcements in church bulletins and from the pulpit are essential. Begin occasional announcements in church bulletins and from the pulpit at least three months in advance, and regular concentrated announcements at least a month in advance. These announcements are not enough, however. Write down precisely what you want everyone to know, and then have telephone callers read that information over the telephone to every household. Indicate that all church leaders think this seminar is important, that church leaders will be present at all assemblies, and that all Christians need to know information which will be presented during these seminar sessions. Telephone calls should be made about a week in advance of the seminar.

For the public at large, flyers, newspaper advertisements, as well as radio and television spot announcements, etc. may be used. These enhance public awareness generally and give greater acceptance to personal invitations. Begin using newspaper and spot announcements, flyers, etc. about a week prior to the seminar. Again, however, by far the greatest promotional technique is that of personal invitations. Do not just invite people to come. Rather, individual Christians should invite specific individual friends and acquaintances. Don't just invite them. Say, something like, "Come, go with me" and then arrange to pick them up at a certain time. Be their host. Transport them to the building. Sit with them. Then take them home afterward. Church leaders should set the example in this for others to follow. Begin announcements to the public about a week in advance. Personal invitations should begin at least a week in advance of the seminar, and should increase in their intensity until the seminar is over. Everyone knows someone to invite and bring.

Regarding the content of advertising – my name and where I'm from need not be stressed. People have generally not heard of me, nor do they care where I'm from. Emphasize the subject matter to be discussed and its importance to them. If you think my credentials qualify me to speak in an authoritative and excellent manner, then present my credentials. What others have had to say about these seminar messages might also be emphasized. Be sure that place, date, and assembly times are well advertised. Also, if recordings are to be made of each session, advertise that fact. Let folks know what recordings will be available, where they can be obtained, and what their cost will be, if there is a cost.

### ***Arrangements Requested***

Assuming that an overhead projector and screen may be used, it would be helpful if they were in place upon my arrival. Be sure the projector glass plate, lens, etc. are clean. It makes for better focus and reading ease. If you do not have a large screen, it may be possible to project onto a front wall. Also, please practice with a transparency to see what lighting in auditorium is preferable for use with the projector. A speaker's stand (lectern) beside the projector (preferably on the left of projector) for the holding of notes, transparencies, may also be needed.

***Table in Foyer for Books, Materials, etc.***

If I have your permission to bring materials for distribution, I may desire that a 10 foot table, (such as churches generally use for their fellowship gatherings), be placed in the foyer for my display. It would be helpful if this were already in place, clean and ready for use, upon my arrival. (If you don't have a 10 foot table, an eight foot table, or several smaller tables will work nicely.)

**Accommodations for Speaker*****Housing***

If I'm to stay in a motel, please ***be sure*** there is a nearby restaurant, especially if I fly to your community, and am without personal transportation. When making motel reservations, please specify preference for a non-smoker's room. (If I fly, someone will need to meet me at the airport, then take me back, etc. Also, depending upon your situation, I may need to borrow a car while there. Any running four wheels will be fine.)

***Food***

It's nice to know, shortly after arrival, what eating arrangements I can expect (whose homes I will be in, and when, etc.) while I'm with you in a seminar. A list with times and places, etc. will be helpful to me. Please furnish me with names and complete addresses of hosts.

***Transportation***

Assuming I drive, you'll need to furnish me with directions to (1) place of lodging, and (2) place where seminar is to be given. (A photocopy of a city map, with major travel route highlighted, or a hand drawn sketch will be fine. You'll want to note major highways I'm likely to use, turn directions, etc.)

I've found it best to plan to arrive about mid-afternoon before the seminar begins. This gives time before the first seminar session to (1) go over a check list with your designated contact person, (2) put up display materials, (3) go to place of lodging to freshen up before the first seminar session, and (4) eat prior to assembly. If, after the last seminar program, I have time to drive home before mid-night, I'll not stay overnight. Otherwise, I've learned it generally best to wait until the next day before leaving.

If I should fly, I'll notify you several weeks in advance of my arrival time at the airport, flight number, and airline carrier, etc. as well as my departure time. This should give ample time for you to make arrangements for someone to meet me at the airport, take me back afterwards, etc..

**Seminar Expenses**

The amount of the speaker's honorarium should be determined by the host congregation. A good rule of thumb for determining honorarium to pay guest speakers is an amount at least an equivalent of what the congregation pays for their local evangelist's weekly salary. The host

congregation is also expected to furnish food, lodging, travel expenses related to the seminar. A self-explanatory form detailing estimated food and travel expenses related to the seminar will be sent to your contact person whenever a seminar has been scheduled.

**Finally**

*If possible, I'd like to meet with elders (or church leaders, if there are no elders), after the final seminar message, to discuss my work more fully. This would be a good time to receive from brethren any recommendations or suggestions for improving the presentation of seminars. If, after the seminar is over, brethren are so inclined to give a letter of recommendation from the church, it will be appreciated, and may be very helpful in the growth of this ministry.*