

Christian Brings Slide Show vs. Drugs to Chicago High School

by Claudia Annis

Oct. 30 (NSIPS)—Edward Christian, an assistant to the coroner of Philadelphia and a leader of the National Anti-Drug Coalition, has taken his devastating slide show depicting the effects of drug addiction on a coast-to-coast tour to educate youth. Christian previously showed these same slides at the coalition's founding meeting in Detroit Sept. 29, which set as one of its most important tasks the creation of a national educational program against illegal drugs.

On the first leg of his tour, Christian addressed over 1,500 students and nearly 300 parents and teachers who have been supporting the Illinois Anti-Drug Coalition over the past few months. The first public appearance was before two separate classes at the predominantly Mexican-American Benito Juarez High School in Chicago. At the end of one assembly, a student said, "I don't believe that angel dust is really embalming fluid. I think this is a hoax."

Christian factitiously replied, "Frankly, young man, I hope that you don't heed my warning. You see, I'm a coroner in Philly and I depend on people like you to use these drugs and overdose. If people like you don't O.D., I won't be able to work as many hours and I will take a cut in pay. So go right ahead."

The assistant principal remarked, "I've never heard the students so quiet at an assembly. This is incredible."

The next stop was Proviso East High School in the Western Chicago suburb of Maywood. The 1,000 students came into the assembly giggling and laughing but by the end some were shouting, "No more, please—we've had enough!" The principal thanked Christian and Paul Greenberg, an officer of the Illinois Anti-Drug Coalition, saying that the presentation would have "far-reaching consequences after you have left."

That evening saw the drug opponents in the Mexican-American community of Pilsen addressing a public meeting sponsored by the groups organizing against the Basta Methadone Center. Many of the 50 people in attendance were parents brought by students who had seen the presentation that morning at the Juarez High School.

The day ended with an overflow rally at the Maywood Civic Auditorium, where Rev. Ramsey and Tony Travis, two village trustees and members of the board of the Illinois Anti-Drug Coalition, introduced Dr. Christian. Again, news had spread by word of mouth from the morning high school presentations. One street gang attended, stayed for the whole presentation, and volunteered afterward to join in antidrug activity.

Christian's presentation resulted in the formation of a local Lombard, Illinois Anti-Drug Coalition, and invitations to address several other high schools on an anticipated return trip to Chicago.

Ennobling the Human Soul

On Saturday, Oct. 27, Christian addressed a drug education workshop in



Ed Christian presenting his slide show at the founding conference of the National Anti-Drug Coalition in Detroit Sept. 29.

Seattle sponsored by the Northwest Anti-Drug Coalition. The workshop took place at the New Hope Baptist Church, one of the largest black Baptist churches in Seattle, and was chaired by Rev. Dewey Kelley, who also participated in the founding convention of the National Anti-Drug Coalition in Detroit last month.

Rev. Kelley, who knows the ravages of drugs from personal experience as well as from his work as a counselor with a local treatment center, opened the workshop saying, "I used heroin for 22 years and then decided that when something controls you, you're not human."

Sam Kahl, the chairman of St. George Orthodox Church, a member of the Oregon Governor's Youth Commission and also an executive board member of the Northwest Anti-Drug Coalition, called on those present "not just to stop drugs, but to create true citizens." He noted that "we are successful partly because we name names, but also because we want to teach those things that ennoble the human soul."

The workshop's attendees included several students who planned to report on it to their classes; a local minister, who is now committed to working with the Anti-Drug Coalition; and, during the final session, four municipal candidates: School Board Candidate Don Frease and City Council candidate Brian Lantz. Bob Moffett, and Dolores Sibonga. Lantz's opponent, Norm Rice, was notably absent. Kelley, who said he intended to report back to his congregation on who had attended the workshop, announced that Rice was insulting the black community by his failure to attend.

The Northwest Anti-Drug Coalition Workshop and its booth at a "Drug

Awareness Fair" held at a local shopping center in honor of the country's "Drug Awareness Week," drew good coverage from various local media. Fitzgerald Beaver, editor-publisher of the black community weekly newspaper Facts, ran two articles in the latest edition, one describing the events and the other focusing on Christian. Local radio coverage included an interview with Washington Anti-Drug Coalition spokesman Pat Ruckert. The ABC-affiliated KOMO-TV did a one-minute wrap-up of the event during its Saturday evening newscast, featuring an interview with Christian.

Anti-Drug Curriculum

Christian's tour proceeded to San Francisco, where the Bay Area Anti-Drug Coalition had just received wide publicity with a picket line against the annual national conference of the pot lobby, NORML (National Organization for Reform of Marijuana Laws).

Christian, as well as San Francisco mayoral candidate Pat Dolbeare, spoke to South Bay High School and an area junior high. The audience included several educational officials and a Board of Education member, to whom Christian proposed that they fund his slide presentation and incorporate it into a regular curriculum for the high schools.

Returning to Philadelphia, Christian assembled a meeting this morning of mayoral candidates and religious leaders, whom he urged to join him in presenting a similar proposal to the Philadelphia Board of Education. Judging by the response received across the country, the incorporation of such a program in all U.S. high schools would be a major step toward the elimination of the drug epidemic in this country.