



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

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July 5, 2000

TO ALL CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT OVERSEERS

Dear Brothers:

It was in September 1894 that the Society first announced that qualified brothers would be visiting groups of Bible Students for the purpose of building them up in the truth. Now over a century later, you are part of a fine group of traveling overseers worldwide, who are performing a vital work of building up and encouraging our brothers and sisters.—Ephesians 4:11, 12.

As you know, there is much pressure from the world to divert our attention from our Scriptural commission to preach and to teach. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 20:20) Many non-essential things can consume our time and drain our energies. However, when the brothers hear what you talk about and see what you do, observing that all of it revolves around your worship of Jehovah, your faith is shown to be something to contemplate and to imitate. (Hebrews 13:7) Keep on, then, giving spiritual matters priority in your life and thus help our brothers to focus on the more important things.—Matthew 6:33; Philippians 1:9, 10.

Letters of Introduction When Publishers Move: When a publisher moves to another congregation, a letter of introduction should be sent to his new congregation along with the Congregation's Publisher Record card for that person. If the publisher moving is a former child molester, whether the abuse was committed recently or some years ago, even if such wrongdoing took place before baptism, it is *imperative* that this letter be sent. Some letters of introduction being sent for publishers who are former child molesters are not fully complying with the direction in the Society's letter of March 14, 1997, page 2, paragraph 3. In every case, the letter should include information about the individual's background, what the elders have been doing to monitor and assist him, and the *present experience* they have had with him. For example, over a period of time, a former child molester may move to more than one or two congregations. The elders in each congregation from which he moves should *send their own letter of introduction with both background and current information* regarding the person. They should *not* just forward a copy of the letter of introduction that they received from his former congregation. Also, if the elders had received a letter from the Society regarding the former child molester, they should not send a copy of that letter to the new congregation, although some points from the letter may be quoted if it will be helpful to the elders. Please emphasize the need for the elders to take seriously their responsibility in this matter so that former child molesters can be further assisted and the congregations will be protected from any valid accusation of neglect in protecting children from abuse.

Question 8 of the S-303 Form: Following Question 8, this parenthetical statement is added: "Confidential matters involving individuals should be reported on a separate sheet." A number of circuit overseers have inquired as to how such confidential information should be handled. Does the sheet with confidential information get circulated to all the elders along with the S-303 report? No. The S-303 report is circulated among all the elders to read. However, any supplementary letter with confidential information, perhaps containing details of wrongdoing and so

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forth, should not be circulated. Rather, the circuit overseer should review this letter with the Congregation Service Committee, and then the secretary should place it in the congregation's confidential file with the name of the person and date of the S-303 report on the outside of the sealed envelope.

Personal Qualifications Reports for Ministerial Training School Graduates: The Society very much appreciates the time you spend with graduates of the Ministerial Training School. It is hoped that the further training you provide will help them to continue making advancement and to qualify for greater privileges of service. The Personal Qualifications Report (S-326) forms that you submit following your visits with the congregations where a graduate is assigned have been very helpful to the Society in placing these brothers where their experience and training can be put to good use. The Personal Qualifications Report, however, should not be read to the brother. While you would likely want to share pertinent points from the report with him, please do not discuss any recommendation you have made to the Society on the report. This may arouse premature thoughts of receiving privileges and could lead to disappointment if he does not receive the responsibility.—Proverbs 13:12.

Lists of Appointed Brothers in a Circuit: At times, traveling overseers find it helpful to compile a list of elders in the circuit. We wish to express a word of caution in this area. The *Traveling Overseer Guidelines*, page 15, paragraph 8, states: "If a list of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of elders in the circuit is compiled, this list should be provided only to those in the circuit organization who require this information and who have use for it." It is neither necessary nor wise to distribute such lists indiscriminately to all elders in the circuit. Those receiving a list should not make copies of it and distribute it to others.

New Service Talks: For the next series of talks beginning in September 2000 and running through February 2001, we are providing outlines for the service talks for Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Circuit overseers should make up their own 30-minute service talk for Sunday following the *Watchtower* Study. On Tuesday evening the 30-minute service talk is entitled "Teaching Disciples All That Christ Commanded." While the outline allows time for a demonstration and an interview, you may choose to relate experiences that illustrate the success that pioneers and publishers are having in the ministry when they apply themselves in the teaching work. Your talks should include an announcement of the field service arrangements for the week and a hearty invitation for those who can arrange their affairs to share in this activity. On Thursday (or Friday) evening the 40-minute service talk will feature the subject "Personality—Strip Off the Old and Put On the New." Both of these talks were presented at the 1998 "God's Way of Life" District Convention. The timing for these outlines should be adjusted to allow time each week to incorporate a consideration of the needs of the congregation.

It is a pleasure to be working closely with fellow "servants of Jehovah." (Isaiah 54:17) Be assured that God will not forget all that you do 'for the love of his name.' (Hebrews 6:10) We send our warm love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & F. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.