



WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

SK:SR November 7, 2002

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

Isaiah 40:11 provides a touching picture of Jehovah's tender concern for his people: "Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care." As undershepherds, elders strive to reflect Jehovah's loving care. One way they do this is by giving assistance to those who have become spiritually weak. During the months of January, February, and March 2003, a special effort will be made to reactivate those who have become inactive. How will this be carried out?

Making Assignments: As soon as this letter is received, the Congregation Service Committee should meet to assign book study overseers to visit those who are inactive in the congregation's territory. They should exercise good judgement when doing this; other elders may be consulted. Even elders who are not book study overseers may be used to make such visits. Thereafter, a special meeting of the entire body of elders should be held to read this letter and inform the book study overseers of their assignments. This should be done well in advance of January 1, 2003, when the special effort begins.

As was brought out at the Kingdom Ministry School, the last Congregation's Publisher Record card for each inactive publisher should be kept indefinitely. The Congregation Service Committee should consult these cards to ensure that all inactive ones receive a visit. If any inactive ones have moved, please forward their names and addresses to the appropriate congregation.

Visiting Inactive Ones: Book study overseers and their assistants should be warm and upbuilding when making visits. They may find it helpful to review the article "Tenderly Shepherding Jehovah's Precious Sheep," which appeared in the July 15, 1993, *Watchtower*, pages 24-7. A principal objective of the visit is to help inactive ones appreciate that Jehovah cares for them. They might share a few encouraging Scriptural points from chapter 24 of the new book *Draw Close to Jehovah* or from the article "You Are Precious in God's Eyes!," which appeared in the April 1, 1995, *Watchtower*, pages 10-15. Other material may also be used, according to the needs and circumstances of the person; however, it will generally be best to keep the visit positive. If needed, additional visits can be made to give further encouragement.

Offering Bible Studies: If a brother or sister responds favourably to the visit and expresses a desire to resume activity with the congregation, a Bible study may be offered. If the study is accepted, make this known to the service overseer. He will make the arrangements after consulting with the other members of the service committee, who will use good judgement as to who is best suited to conduct the study, considering the circumstances that are involved. In some cases, no doubt, elders should be assigned to conduct these studies. The one assigned to conduct a study with an inactive person may report the time, return visits, and Bible study. Usually there is no need for another publisher to accompany the assigned conductor. It may not be

necessary for such studies to be conducted for a prolonged period of time.—See the November 1998 *Our Kingdom Ministry* “Question Box.”

The service overseer, in conjunction with the other two members of the Congregation Service Committee, will determine what material should be considered at these Bible studies. The book *Worship the Only True God* will be used in most studies with inactive ones. With those who have been inactive for a long time or who do not have a good foundation of accurate Bible knowledge, it may be beneficial to study the entire publication. With others, it may be sufficient to study selected chapters. With inactive ones who have a good knowledge of Bible truth, but who have become side-tracked from Christian activities, a study of section 4 of the book *Draw Close to Jehovah* may be just what they need to rekindle their love for Jehovah.

Resuming Field Service: If a person has been inactive for only a short time, a helping hand from an experienced publisher might be all that is needed to reactivate the individual in the field service. A Bible study may not even be necessary. However, if the inactive one has not associated with the congregation for a long time, more help will no doubt be needed. Before inviting a long-time inactive one to share again in the ministry, two elders should meet with him to see if he meets the basic requirements to serve as a Kingdom publisher, as outlined on pages 98-9 of the *Our Ministry* book. They will follow a procedure similar to that used when meeting with new ones who are seeking to qualify as publishers of the good news. The inactive one should have an earnest desire to share the good news with others, be consistent in attending congregation meetings, and be morally clean.—See the November 2000 *Our Kingdom Ministry* “Question Box.”

Can the Pioneers Assist Others programme be used in conjunction with this special effort to assist inactive ones? The purpose of that arrangement is to help publishers improve their skills in the ministry. It was not intended as a means to give attention to those who are weighed down with problems. Thus, inactive ones should not automatically be placed in the Pioneers Assist Others programme. However, if a formerly inactive one resumes sharing in the ministry and would appreciate the assistance available through that arrangement, he may be assigned in the usual manner.—See the September 1998 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 4.

Tabulating the Results: At the end of the three-month period, the secretary should tabulate the number of inactive ones who have accepted Bible studies, the number reactivated, and any outstanding experiences. This information should be given to the circuit overseer when he next visits the congregation so that it can be reported to the branch office. Certainly, there will be great joy both in heaven and on earth over each inactive one who is restored to spiritual health and full activity with the congregation.—Luke 15:4-7.

We pray Jehovah will richly bless you as you endeavour to fulfil your responsibilities as shepherds of the flock. With this letter, we send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & J. Society
OF BRITAIN