

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100

September 27, 2004

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Re: Courtesy telephone notifications

Dear Brothers:

Over the past two years, Jehovah's Witnesses have experienced many beneficial results from the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Watchtower v. Stratton*. We are sure that your zealously taking the lead in the ministry has contributed to this positive outcome.— Heb. 13:7.

Our November 22, 2002, letter to all bodies of elders in the United States allowed prior courtesy telephone notifications in certain circumstances. However, experience has shown that courtesy telephone notifications are of limited value. Thus, we are recommending that you discontinue prior courtesy telephone notifications.

Congregations that have discontinued courtesy telephone notifications have reported that their publishers appreciate not having to make such calls before engaging in the ministry. Moreover, we have observed that municipalities that view telephone notifications as a courtesy, rather than a requirement, have raised no legal objection to congregations that have ceased making such calls.

Although we recommend discontinuing courtesy telephone notifications, if your body of elders feels that local circumstances make it useful to provide courtesy telephone notifications to the police prior to going from door to door, we have no objection. By way of reminder, a courtesy notification only advises where you will be working from door to door and the number of publishers engaged in the ministry that day. If a municipality requires you to provide such a call or if any additional information is requested, you should immediately contact the Legal Department. Of course, if your congregation has received previous direction from the Legal Department regarding courtesy telephone notifications, you should continue to abide by that direction.

We trust that by discontinuing courtesy telephone notifications, we will continue to level any obstacles to our preaching work. (Isa. 40:4) By way of reminder, please ensure that prior to engaging in the public ministry, publishers do not (1) obtain a permit or register with police or municipal officials, (2) physically go to any police station or government office, or (3) provide the police or municipal officials either in person, by fax, or mail any papers, forms, lists, or other documents.

Please do not meet with or call municipal officials or police departments in your territory should you discontinue courtesy telephone notifications. In the unlikely event that a publisher is stopped by the police while engaged in the door-to-door ministry and is directed to obtain a permit, to provide prior notification in person or by telephone to police or any other municipal official, or to respond to demands for any other information, the publisher should not get involved in a discussion of his legal rights in an attempt to resolve the matter. Rather, he should

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES

September 27, 2004

Page 2

promptly and politely leave the territory if directed to do so. (Rom. 12:18) The publisher should then inform the body of elders of any such incident. Thereafter, please immediately contact the Legal Department for further direction rather than trying to resolve the matter on your own. Further, should you encounter any other potential or actual obstacle to your public ministry, please contact the Legal Department for assistance.

Please file this letter with other organizational policy letters, and destroy the November 22, 2002, letter on the same subject.

Thank you for your diligent efforts, and we pray that Jehovah will continue to bless the spirit you show as the work of Kingdom preaching and disciple making moves ahead under the leadership of Christ Jesus.—2 Tim. 4:22; Matt. 28:19, 20.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*