WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

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November 7, 2006

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Charitable Donation Programmes

Dear Brothers:

Periodically, enquiries are received about programmes that offer to donate to charitable organizations. Publishers have asked whether it is appropriate to designate a local congregation or one of the charitable corporations used by the branch office to receive donations from such programmes. Although we appreciate the sincere desire of those who wish to contribute financially through these arrangements, certain types of donation programmes are inappropriate. Following are three general categories of donation programmes.

Matching donation programmes: In these programmes, a company (usually an employer) agrees to increase or match an individual's donation to a charitable organization. The employer is simply making an additional voluntary contribution, which can be made even by those who are not Jehovah's Witnesses. (1 Ki. 10:10; Ezra 7:15) Since the matching donation is an additional voluntary contribution from an employer based on an individual's contribution and does not require the congregation's active participation, designating a charitable organization in a matching donation programme is a personal decision. Publishers should not initiate such an arrangement with the company but may take advantage of an established programme if they choose to pursue such a donation. If a publisher has questions about how to obtain the necessary documentation or if a congregation needs assistance in receiving a matching donation, please contact the branch office. The branch office is generally in a better position to supply the documentation requested by the employer than a local congregation.

Volunteer service donation programmes: In these programmes, a donor (usually an employer) agrees to make a donation to a charitable organization for which an individual performs a required amount of volunteer service. As Kingdom publishers, all of us perform our ministry voluntarily but not in behalf of the congregation or any other organization. Rather, participation in the ministry is a reflection of our individual dedication to Jehovah God and of personal obedience to Jesus Christ's command. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 12:30) The same principle applies to time spent working with Regional Building Committees on Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall construction projects or in relief work. Therefore, publishers should not designate the branch office or a congregation to receive donations as a charitable organization for which they do "volunteer service," and congregations should not participate in such programmes.

Fund-raising programmes: In these programmes, a donor (usually a business) offers to donate to a designated charitable organization based upon an individual's commercial activity with the donor. For example, a grocery store may agree to donate a percentage of an individual's purchases from that store. Frequently, these programmes require the designated charitable organization to participate actively, such as by encouraging its members and others

to do business with the sponsoring donor. The congregation, however, should avoid promoting any type of commercial activity. (John 2:15, 16) Furthermore, the congregation does not solicit funds. (Matt. 10:8) Thus, publishers should not designate the branch office or a congregation to receive donations from a fund-raising programme, and congregations should not participate in this type of programme.

Of course, donation programmes may be referred to differently than how they are labelled above. However, we hope that the descriptions provided and the Bible principles underlying the scriptures cited will assist publishers and congregations in deciding whether involvement with a specific donation programme is appropriate.—Luke 14:28.

Please accept an expression of our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & T. Society
OF BRITAIN