



# WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

April 3, 2007

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Guidelines for *Watchtower* Study Conductors

Dear Brothers:

Unit 2 (b) of the Kingdom Ministry School textbook gives counsel regarding teaching at congregation meetings. Under the first subheading on page 38, this statement is made: “*The Watchtower* is the principal means of dispensing spiritual food at the proper time.” Some of you will recall that “Teaching at the *Watchtower* Study” has been featured as an important subject for discussion at each Kingdom Ministry School conducted in recent years. We are pleased to see that by adhering to these instructions, *Watchtower* Study conductors have truly helped those in their respective congregations to grow in faith and remain steadfast in the truth.—Rom. 12:8.

However, as in many other matters, timely reminders are occasionally needed to refresh our minds on important concerns. (2 Pet. 1:12, 13) The responsibility of elders to teach effectively in the congregation, and especially as *Watchtower* Study conductors, is indeed an important concern to all. (Titus 1:9) In view of the seriousness and importance of effective teaching at the weekly *Watchtower* Study, we wish to remind you that as a body of elders, you collectively are responsible for ensuring that the *Watchtower* Study in your congregation is being conducted in harmony with the published information referred to above. You and your families should set a fine example by your active participation in the study, offering brief but well-thought-out comments that contribute to the effectiveness as well as the enjoyment of the teaching.

The Kingdom Ministry School textbook emphasizes the importance of thorough preparation on the part of the study conductor. But this does not mean that he should introduce additional material from his own personal research and thus possibly overshadow what has been published in the magazine. Extensive research has already been involved in producing the study article, and the points to be emphasized are those included in the paragraphs under consideration. When outside material is introduced, it often detracts from what “the faithful and discreet slave” has prepared for the congregation. (Matt. 24:45-47) The impression may be given that the additional information from the conductor’s research is of equal or greater value. When not adhering strictly to the published information, the conductor may appear to be calling attention to himself and his personal research rather than focusing attention on the material set out in the study article.

Please note the following statement toward the bottom of page 38 of the Kingdom Ministry School textbook: “The opening remarks of the conductor should be brief and to the point, calling attention to the theme and stimulating interest in the material.” Particular attention has been called to this point on different occasions. However, it has been observed that some conductors use five to eight minutes in introductory remarks, although one to one and a half minutes should suffice. The same applies to the concluding comments. Some have the

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custom of introducing additional scriptures during the study and take time to have them explained in some detail. Others call attention to original-language words that may or may not be used in the *Watchtower* article under consideration. The focus of the entire study should really be on the theme as set out in the title and the caption text. *The Watchtower* adds any necessary extra material in statements alongside the illustrations in the article, in footnotes, or in teaching boxes.

One hour is allotted for the *Watchtower* Study, including appropriate brief comments on the artwork and making good use of the teaching boxes. The one hour does not include the songs and concluding prayer. This requires careful portioning of the time so as to give balanced coverage of the material within the allotted time as well as to conduct the study with a spirit of warmth, giving sincere expressions of commendation to those who comment and to the reader.

The subheading at the top of page 39 of the Kingdom Ministry School textbook states: “The *conductor should not comment excessively.*” This seems to be the weakness most frequently observed on the part of study conductors. It has also been noted that some conductors ask additional questions when there are those in the audience with their hands up ready to offer comments that perhaps would cover the point well without the additional questions. Other conductors tend to spend an excessive amount of time on the introductory paragraphs and then have to rush through heavier material or important applications discussed later on in the study article. It is not necessary to comment on the content of a paragraph before it is read. *Watchtower* Study conductors are encouraged to review frequently the information on pages 38-40 of the Kingdom Ministry School textbook and readily give serious consideration to timely and kindly presented observations of fellow congregation elders. Please remember that everyone in the congregation is encouraged to prepare to comment, and generally those who do so should be allowed to express themselves. This cannot be done if the conductor’s comments dominate or are excessive or if he repeatedly calls on those who quickly hold up their hand after a question is asked. If a few individuals are called on to comment repeatedly, others may refrain from volunteering their comments. As a general rule, time should be allowed for at least one but not more than two or three comments from each participant, especially in a larger congregation.

We sincerely commend all of you who work hard in caring for your individual and collective responsibilities as elders. (1 Tim. 5:17) But we feel impelled to call the above matters to your attention and to remind you of the importance of doing your utmost in helping others to benefit fully from our study of “the principal means of dispensing spiritual food at the proper time,” *The Watchtower*.

Your brothers,

*Watch Tower B. & J. Society*  
OF BRITAIN

cc: Travelling overseers

PS to the presiding overseer:

In view of the serious nature of what is stated in this letter and the collective responsibility of the body of elders in assuring effective teaching for the benefit of all in the congregation, each elder should carefully review this letter. Thereafter, arrange for a meeting with all the elders present to discuss how it would apply to the local *Watchtower* Study. This letter should be retained in the congregation’s permanent file of policy letters. Your circuit overseer will discuss this information with the body of elders during a future visit to the congregation.