



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

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November 17, 2010

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Letters of introduction

Dear Brothers:

Much fine direction on the subject of letters of introduction has been included in the *Shepherding* textbook. For example, paragraphs 30 and 31 of chapter 3 deal with letters of introduction when elders and ministerial servants move. Paragraph 22 of chapter 7 deals with letters of introduction when a publisher with judicial restrictions moves. Paragraph 2 of chapter 10 deals with what should be sent when a disfellowshipped or disassociated person moves. And paragraphs 20 and 21 of chapter 12 provide updated direction on letters of introduction when a known child molester or an accused child molester moves. Thus, the July 1, 2006, letter to all bodies of elders regarding letters of introduction should be removed from the congregation permanent file of policy letters and be destroyed. However, please note the following additional points that are not included in the *Shepherding* textbook.

Format: A letter of introduction should always contain the following information: (1) the date of the letter, (2) the previous congregation's full name and complete mailing address, (3) the new congregation's full name and complete mailing address, and (4) signatures of the Congregation Service Committee, with their names typed or printed underneath their signatures. (*be pp. 71-73*) Some also find it helpful to use a regarding line (as shown above) so that the recipient may easily identify the purpose of the letter.

Congregation publisher: When a publisher (active or inactive) moves to another congregation, a letter of introduction and the *Congregation's Publisher Record* (S-21) cards should be promptly sent to the congregation where the publisher moved. (The last record card of an inactive publisher should be retained indefinitely by the congregation where the publisher moved.) If the previous service committee knows where the publisher moved, they may take the initiative and send these items without waiting for a formal request from the new congregation. What information should be conveyed in the letter of introduction? Ask yourself: What information would we want to receive if this person were moving into our congregation? (Matt. 7:12) Clearly state the publisher's full name, the names of any immediate family members, and any privileges the publisher or his family members have enjoyed, such as assignments on the Theocratic Ministry School, working with the Regional Building Committee, auxiliary pioneer service, and so forth. These elements should be included in all letters of introduction. If the person was reprovved in the distant past but is not presently under restrictions, there may be no need to mention past judicial action unless the offense involved child molestation, adulterous marriage, or some other notorious wrongdoing.

Regular pioneer: In addition to the information previously described for a congregation publisher, the letter of introduction for a regular pioneer should clearly state whether the pioneer is recommended to continue serving as such. The regular pioneer appointment letter (S-202) should also be forwarded to the congregation where the pioneer is moving. The secretary of the new congregation will make the needed adjustments to the form and send it to the branch office.

A revised appointment letter will then be sent to the new congregation. If a regular pioneer moves out of the branch territory, the pioneer appointment letter should be mailed to *your* branch office with a cover letter providing the date of the move and the name, city, state, and country of the congregation where the pioneer will be associating.

Each elder should make the following notation next to the penultimate bullet in paragraph 16 of chapter 2 in the *Shepherding* textbook: “See letter dated November 17, 2010, regarding letters of introduction.”

Carefully following these guidelines will help you to protect the flock and to render needed spiritual assistance to Jehovah’s precious sheep. We pray that Jehovah will continue to “give you peace constantly in every way” as you faithfully serve him in these last days. —2 Thess. 3:16.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & J. Society
OF AUSTRALIA

cc: Traveling overseers

PS to secretary: This letter should be retained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters. You may wish to update the congregation copy of *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22).