



# WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

December 7, 2010

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Supplementary information on correspondence and congregation records

Dear Brothers:

This letter supplements the December 6, 2010, letter regarding correspondence from the branch office and the congregation file. It replaces the letters dated November 15, 1998, June 1, 2001, and December 9, 2008. Those letters should be removed from the congregation permanent file of policy letters and be destroyed.

Many expressions of appreciation have been made for the new *Shepherding* textbook, and its release has provided a fine opportunity to review procedures for handling and storing correspondence. There are a few clarifications and adjustments we wish to bring to your attention, along with other points worthy of emphasis.

Whenever you write letters, reports, or make records for your files, be sure to follow exactly what is stated in the *Shepherding* textbook, the December 6, 2010, letter, and elsewhere. Take care not to go “beyond the things that are written” by storing more information than called for in the *Shepherding* textbook.—1 Cor. 4:6.

As we have stated before, you should always provide another congregation with necessary information about an individual. (Letter November 17, 2010, paragraph 3) We do not hold back from doing what is necessary to respect Jehovah’s standard of righteousness and holiness, and to protect the purity of the Christian congregation. (Acts 15:14; 1 Pet. 1:14-16) Nevertheless, we must use caution along with wisdom and discernment. (Prov. 19:8; Matt. 10:16) When conveying information to others we stick to facts and avoid expressing mere judgments. (Eph. 4:25; Rom. 14:10) We always express ourselves with discernment, love, and kindness. (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:13-15; Col. 4:6) If there are concerns or reservations about a person’s attitude these can be carefully expressed. However, we should not hesitate to convey a full and accurate picture to those who need and are authorized to know.

**Letters of introduction:** Carefully follow the November 17, 2010, letter. There is no need to have the *Congregation’s Publisher Record* (S-21) card signed in order to write a letter of introduction. Therefore, there is no longer any need to have new publishers sign an S-21 card or to keep the signed card indefinitely. See the December 6, 2010, letter for information on how long to store cards.

**Judicial records:** Destroy any blank *Notification of Disfellowshipping or Disassociation* (S-77) and *Summation of Disfellowshipping or Disassociation* (S-77a) forms in your files and use only the version of the S-77 form that appears on the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website. You will note from the reverse side of the new S-77 form that this means following an adjusted procedure. From now on you will promptly fill in an original S-77 form and make

two copies. You will retain one copy for the congregation confidential file, and send the *original and one copy to the branch office* in a special blue envelope. The branch office will stamp one copy of the S-77 form and return it to the congregation. After it is returned, this stamped copy of the S-77 form should be placed with the congregation copy of the S-77 form in a sealed envelope in the congregation confidential file.

Records will be kept in line with direction such as that found in the December 6, 2010, letter and the *Shepherding* textbook. (See *ks10* 2:16, points 2, 3; 2:21, point 8; 5:39, 41, 62; 7:34; 9:2, 3.) The *Specialized Shepherding* list currently in your file can remain as a record of past judicial cases. There is no need to maintain it from now on other than to remove records for those reinstated or judicially reprovved more than five years ago. (Compare *ks10* 2:21, point 8; letter dated December 6, 2010, page 3.) Where the *Shepherding* textbook 7:34 mentions a “detailed summary” and the S-77 form, in most cases the summary on the S-77 form will suffice. Take care not to keep anything in excess of what is stated in 7:34 of the *Shepherding* textbook.

**Child abuse:** Information should be kept in line with the *Shepherding* textbook 2:16, point 3. (See also *ks10* 5:39.) This means there is no longer any need to maintain a *Child Protection* list. However, keep the existing *Child Protection* list as a record of cases you have handled previously.

**Elders’ meetings:** Elders should not retain agendas. When recording minutes, take care not to exceed what is stated in the *Shepherding* textbook 2:6. Minutes should be treated as outlined for policy letters in paragraph 3 of the December 6, 2010, letter. In this way, after the “work copy” has been circulated, only the original is retained.

**Audit of files:** The annual audit of congregation files will continue, but on a much simplified basis. Its purpose is for you to make sure nothing is being stored unnecessarily.

**Field ministry:** The *House-to-House Record* (S-8) form is being reintroduced. In due course, you will receive an initial consignment. Thereafter, maintain a supply in line with *ks10* 2:18, point 5.

**Formal request from an individual to see written information you may hold concerning him:** If you receive a “Data Protection Subject Access Enquiry,” you should telephone the branch office’s Legal Department immediately.

If a publisher simply asks to see a particular letter, the letter of introduction for example, is it possible to help him spiritually first? You could kindly explain that all communications between bodies of elders are confidential. Is he willing to respect that confidentiality? Will seeing the letter of introduction really help him? If, at least from his perspective, he experienced difficulties with the body of elders of his former congregation, will seeing the letter of introduction help him let go of resentment and place such difficulties in the past, or might it only add fuel to his hurt feelings? (Gen. 45:24; Col. 3:13; compare Proverbs 26:20a; Phil. 3:13) If he served as an appointed brother and the former congregation had serious reservations about his qualifications, these concerns should have been explained to him verbally prior to his move. (*ks10* 3:31) However, if the publisher persists and makes a formal request, telephone our Legal Department immediately.

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We hope that setting out these clarifications is helpful. We keep in mind all the hard work you do and once again express our appreciation. (Heb. 6:10) Please be assured of our warm brotherly love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

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

PS to the secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation file along with other items related to confidential reports.