

WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

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July 17, 1995

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

As we read the inspired writings of the first-century governing body, we see clearly that they took an active interest in new Christian disciples, encouraging them to remain strong in faith. When planning his second missionary tour, the apostle Paul wanted to revisit newly-formed congregations 'to see how they were' spiritually. (Acts 15:36) Out of concern for God's household, the apostle Peter exhorted the older men to "shepherd the flock of God in [their] care . . . eagerly." (1 Pet. 5:2) Toward the end of his long life, the apostle John reflected: "No greater cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that . . . my children go on walking in the truth."—3 John 4.

Today, Jehovah's visible organization is likewise interested in the strengthening of new ones, so that they will remain active and fruitful in the truth. (2 Pet. 1:8) To that end, elders have always been encouraged to become progressively familiar with the personal circumstances of each newly-associated individual in their midst. Before newly-interested ones take up the public ministry as unbaptized publishers, two elders meet with each Bible student and teacher. Later, elders participate in preparing new ones for baptism by reviewing with them elementary Bible teachings. They also include them in the regular shepherding of the congregation. With this letter, effective immediately, another arrangement is to be put into place whereby **one year after a new one is baptized**, two elders will sit down with him 'to see how he is' spiritually. If the new one is a youth, the parent(s) should be present.

As is outlined on page 42 of *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*, about three months after each visit of the circuit overseer, the body of elders is to meet to discuss matters related to the spiritual progress of the congregation. On these two occasions during the year, the congregation secretary should inform the elders of each congregation member who has passed the one-year mark after baptism. The presiding overseer will then make definite arrangements, assigning two elders, one of them being the new one's Congregation Book Study conductor, to meet with that one. The secretary will give the two elders information from the Congregation's Publisher Record card to help them determine any areas wherein the individual might make further improvement as a publisher of the good news, without being critical of what he has accomplished thus far.

The spirit of the meeting with the new one should be very warm and spiritual, encouraging him with the Scriptures. (Compare 2 Thessalonians 1:3-5; 2:15-17.) Discuss his

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July 17, 1995

Page 2

spiritual progress, and offer practical suggestions on such things as how he can continue in a good routine of personal study and daily Bible reading, faithful meeting attendance and participation, and weekly field service activity. (Phil. 3:16) Usually, counsel and/or suggestions on one or two of these points are sufficient. Warmly commend him and help him to feel truly appreciated as a real part of the congregation. The beneficial effect of this new arrangement will become obvious as these enjoy their second year of baptism, growing ever stronger in their dedicated relationship with Jehovah and gaining confidence in the congregation's older men, who stand ready to give them personal assistance.—Isa. 32:1, 2.

During each visit to the congregation, the circuit overseer will check to see that the elders are diligently following through with this new arrangement.

We find much joy in working alongside you in the happy work of serving Jehovah's people. Please accept our warm Christian love and best wishes for success in your ministry.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & F. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.