



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

26 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2493, U.S.A. PHONE (716) 625-3600

September 25, 1995

TO ALL TRAVELING OVERSEERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

The recommending and approving of elders and ministerial servants for appointment in the congregations of Jehovah's people is a spirit-directed operation that is performed by prayerful men of God. Traveling overseers, as appointed representatives of the Governing Body, have a key role in this. (Titus 1:5) Your spiritual discernment is most helpful in assisting local bodies of elders to correctly evaluate those who may be Scripturally qualified to serve as ministerial servants and elders. The Society relies on specific information and observations provided by you on the S-2 form. It is important to properly fill out this form in an accurate and complete manner.—Compare Luke 1:3, 4.

The Society is pleased to inform you that the S-2 form has been revised to simplify your work in filling it out. Also, it will assist the Society in obtaining the pertinent information that is required for each recommendation. A sample copy of this form is attached. Shortly you will receive a supply of the revised forms. You may begin to use the new form after you exhaust your supply of older copies of the S-2a/b/c forms that you may have on hand.

Please have all substitute circuit overseers in your circuit read this letter so that they will be aware of the instructions that follow. Show them the enclosed sample so they too can study it carefully and see how to fill in the required information on the revised S-2 form.

This adjusted form should be easier to use as it eliminates the need to have "a," "b," and "c" forms, thus simplifying matters. The same S-2 form will suffice in providing the necessary copies to all who require it. The instruction box at the bottom of the reverse side of the new form explains how this will work:

The circuit overseer will send the ORIGINAL of this form to the Society. A SECOND COPY should be made for the congregation file. A THIRD COPY should be made and sent to the Society only if recommendations for appointment(s) and/or deletion(s) are being made. This THIRD COPY will be returned to the congregation after approval.

If more space is needed on the front, attach another form. If more space is needed than what is provided on the reverse, you may use a plain sheet of paper. The name of the congregation needs to be provided only at the top of the front side of the form. Remember that the "Name of Congregation" is always the same as the "City" unless two or more congregations exist in that city. The acting presiding overseer's name and correct mailing address are to be carefully typed in at the bottom of the reverse side, using all capital letters and no punctuation, as this will serve as the actual address for mailing the third copy back to the congregation. The Congregation Service Committee and you should always check the form for accuracy and sign it. If one of those elders is not present, another may sign in his place. When mailing your reports

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and correspondence for a week's visit, do not staple papers or reports together. Instead, *fold* all sheets together, not individually.

With this simplified form, there is no need, either on the front or on the back, for the circuit overseer to make duplicate entries on the front and back of those who are being recommended for appointment. Instead, on the front, there are four separate blocks. The first and second are used to show only those who are being newly **recommended** for appointment. The third and fourth blocks are used to show only those who are already **appointed** in the congregation. Hence, each brother is listed only once, either as a new recommendation or as already appointed. The only exceptions will be a currently appointed elder who is recommended to serve as presiding overseer, and currently appointed ministerial servants who are recommended as elders. In each block, the names are to be listed in the order of first and last name, and alphabetically according to last names. Use correctly spelled full names, not nicknames. Each brother's name should be verified with him, along with his baptism date.

NEW ELDER AND MINISTERIAL SERVANT RECOMMENDATIONS

When recommending a new presiding overseer, his name is to be shown in the block for NEW ELDER RECOMMENDATIONS, along with the rest of the required data. Type "PO" in the left-hand margin next to his name. In your comments on the reverse side, indicate *why* a change is needed and *why* the elder recommended is the most qualified. Review with the elders the April 15, 1983, letter TO CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT OVERSEERS. If currently appointed as an elder in the congregation, his name is also to be listed in the block for APPOINTED ELDERS.

When recommending a ministerial servant as an elder, it is necessary to show the total number of years he has served as a ministerial servant, adding the time he has served as such in both past and present congregations. For this reason, a new column has been added: "Total years as MS." In your comments on the reverse side, clearly explain how he has proved his fitness to serve as an elder and whether the congregation already respects him as such. His name is also to be listed in the block for APPOINTED MINISTERIAL SERVANTS.

When recommending a brother who was appointed in his previous congregation, the full name of that congregation should be shown in the column "Last congregation where he served." If his former elders did not favorably recommend his reappointment, the "NR" ("not recommended") column is to be marked and a copy of their letter attached. In your comments on the reverse side, explain how long he has been with the present congregation and *why* the elders feel he is qualified to serve again.

When recommending one in his late teens as a ministerial servant, instead of showing his age, provide his accurate date of birth. That is why the "Age" column has been enlarged in this block. In your comments on the reverse side, explain how he has been used in the congregation, what makes him outstanding as a youth, and so forth. Review with the elders *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1989, page 29.

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APPOINTED ELDERS AND MINISTERIAL SERVANTS

The "Appointment date" is the date stamped on the reverse side, in the box with the Watchtower Society stamp, indicating Governing Body approval. It would be good to check the files to be sure the date of appointment you list is correct. If you are unable to ascertain the date of appointment from the congregation files, put an asterisk in the space where the date is to be shown, and put "No appointment letter in file" at the bottom of that block. You may use the following abbreviations to explain "In what capacity does each serve?"

PO	Presiding overseer	AO	Assembly overseer	ACC	Accounts
SEC	Secretary	AAO	Assistant assembly overseer	ATT	Attendant
SO	Service overseer	AHC	Assembly Hall Committee	LIT	Literature
TMSO	Theocratic Ministry School overseer	HLC	Hospital Liaison Committee	MAG	Magazines
WSC	Watchtower Study conductor	RBC	Regional Building Committee	SND	Sound
CBSC	Congregation Book Study conductor	SCO	Substitute circuit overseer	SUB	Subscriptions
CITY	City overseer	SPC	Special committees	TERR	Territories

DELETIONS

All who are being recommended for deletion on the reverse side of the form must also be listed on the front as currently appointed in the congregation, including those who have recently moved. For those who have moved, show the full name of the new congregation. If an S-52 form was sent to the congregation, acknowledging the deletion of a brother between visits of the circuit overseer, do not list him again under DELETIONS. Also, do not list his name on the front side for this visit since he has already been officially deleted. In the case of those who are being deleted for reasons other than moving, death, or judicial action, you must state whether he agrees he no longer qualifies Scripturally to serve. For this reason, a new column has been added, "Does he agree?" State yes or no.

COMMENTS OF CIRCUIT OVERSEER

Considerable correspondence and delays result from insufficient information on the S-2 forms. By your providing the complete picture, the Society will not have to write in order to receive what is needed. (Compare Acts 11:4.) Twice as much space is provided on the reverse side of the new form, allowing you to write a more detailed summary of the brother(s) being recommended for appointment or deletion. Please write meaningful comments. You should frequently review the paragraph labeled "PLEASE READ CAREFULLY" at the top of the reverse side of the form, as well as the June 15, 1992, letter TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS. Also, please be especially aware of the details needed in these situations:

- 1) If a brother was reproved in the last three years or reinstated in the last five years, state *when* and *why* that occurred. If he was judicially reproved, tell us whether the reproof was announced to the congregation. Mention when all restrictions were removed and whether he has gained the respect of the congregation. Use page 131 of the 1991 *Kingdom Ministry School Textbook* as a guide. Additionally please see pages 135-6 of the textbook regarding individuals who entered into an adulterous marriage and the August 1, 1995, letter TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS regarding child molestation.

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- 2) **If a brother being recommended was removed from serving as an elder or a ministerial servant in the past**, mention the date of his removal and the *reason* he was deleted. Comment specifically on *how* the brother has made progress in the area that he was deficient. If the elders do not know why a brother they recommend was deleted in the past, they should obtain the necessary information in advance so that it can be considered at the time the recommendation is discussed with you.
- 3) **When recommending the removal of a brother**, outline the specific *reason* for removing him. Rather than simply citing a scripture (such as 1 Timothy 3:4) or writing "Not irreprehensible," provide complete details of what he did that makes him Scripturally disqualified. Explain what counsel he was given and his positive response to it or lack thereof. Tell us if he agrees with the recommendation for his deletion. If he does not and wishes to express himself, **attach his letter**. If he has been dealt with judicially, we must know the outcome—whether he was disfellowshipped, publicly reprovved, or privately reprovved. When accepting a brother's resignation, provide full details as to *why* he has chosen to relinquish his appointment.—Review with the elders *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1978, pages 31-2, regarding family men whose children engage in gross wrongdoing.
- 4) **With each appointment or deletion that is recommended**, let us know: a) if the elders are unanimous—if they are not, name the one(s) who disagree and their specific *reasons* for doing so—and b) if you agree with this recommendation—if you do not, explain the *reason*.

Weighing the qualifications of a man for congregational responsibility is a serious matter, as is initiating the removal of one already appointed. (1 Tim. 5:22) In your role as traveling overseers, we are confident you can assist bodies of elders to do these things objectively. We appreciate the good service you render in so many ways as you visit the congregations. Be assured of our warm love and prayers for you.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. v. S. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.