



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2483, U.S.A. PHONE (718) 625-3600

September 25, 1998

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

Throughout the years, publishers in many municipalities have encountered official interference with their door-to-door ministry. Usually relying on some type of solicitation ordinance, officials threatened publishers with arrest or fine if they continued the door-to-door ministry without first obtaining a solicitor's permit or license. The Society has consistently maintained that publishers are not solicitors and that they do not need to obtain a permit or license to talk to people about matters of public interest and the Bible. Nevertheless, we know that some congregations have elected not to conduct the door-to-door ministry in parts of their territory, in order to maintain peace and good relations with government officials, perhaps recalling Paul's counsel to "be peaceable with all men."—Romans 12:18.

In order to ensure that we are covering our territory with the good news of the Kingdom, the Society is interested in learning the extent to which congregations may not be covering portions of their territories because officials are applying a municipal ordinance to prohibit or interfere with the door-to-door ministry. Therefore, if you are *not* now conducting the door-to-door ministry in a portion of your territory because officials are applying a municipal ordinance to such activity, the secretary should send the Society's Legal Department (Post Office Box 8000, Patterson, New York 12563-8000) a letter *by October 30, 1998*, stating the following information:

- Municipality's (city, village, town) name.
- Approximate number of people living in your territory.
- Approximate number of people living in your territory who reside in the municipality.
- Approximate last date the territory was worked door to door.
- Names of other congregations (including foreign-language congregations) that have territory in the same municipality.

The Legal Department will then contact those congregations that send a letter to determine whether more can be done legally to resume the door-to-door ministry in the affected territory.

Thank you for helping us in our efforts to legally establish the good news. (Philippians I:7) Please accept an expression of our warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & T. Society

OF NEW YORK, INC.

c: Traveling Overseers

