

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100



October 12, 2010

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Wedding procedures and Scriptural freedom to remarry

Dear Brothers:

Much fine direction on the subject of wedding procedures and Scriptural freedom to remarry has been included in chapter 12, paragraphs 4-17, of the *Shepherding* textbook. Thus, the letter dated May 15, 1988, to all bodies of elders 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.

Proof of ordination: In some areas, local authorities require that a minister who performs weddings register and provide some proof of his ordination. In many cases, they will accept a letter signed by the body of elders confirming his appointment as an elder in the local congregation. If this does not suffice, the elder should determine the exact requirements and then, if necessary, write to the branch office requesting assistance.

Establishing Scriptural freedom to remarry: It is the responsibility of the individual to produce convincing evidence to establish Scriptural freedom to remarry. The individual, not the elders, bears the responsibility to gather such evidence. If the individual contemplating remarriage admits that he has been guilty of fornication himself after his mate divorced him, the marriage would be considered ended in God's sight. Or if his former mate has remarried or admitted to committing fornication since the divorce, this too would provide adequate evidence to free one Scripturally. (*w80* 1/15 pp. 30-31) Elders should be very careful when it comes to giving direction on whether an individual is Scripturally free and should consult with the branch office on any questions.

Each elder should make the following notation next to paragraph 4 and paragraph 9 in chapter 12 of the *Shepherding* textbook: "See letter dated October 12, 2010, to all bodies of elders."

We pray that Jehovah will bless you as you endeavor to fulfill the weighty responsibilities placed upon you as shepherds of the flock. Please accept an expression of our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,
*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

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) at this time as well.