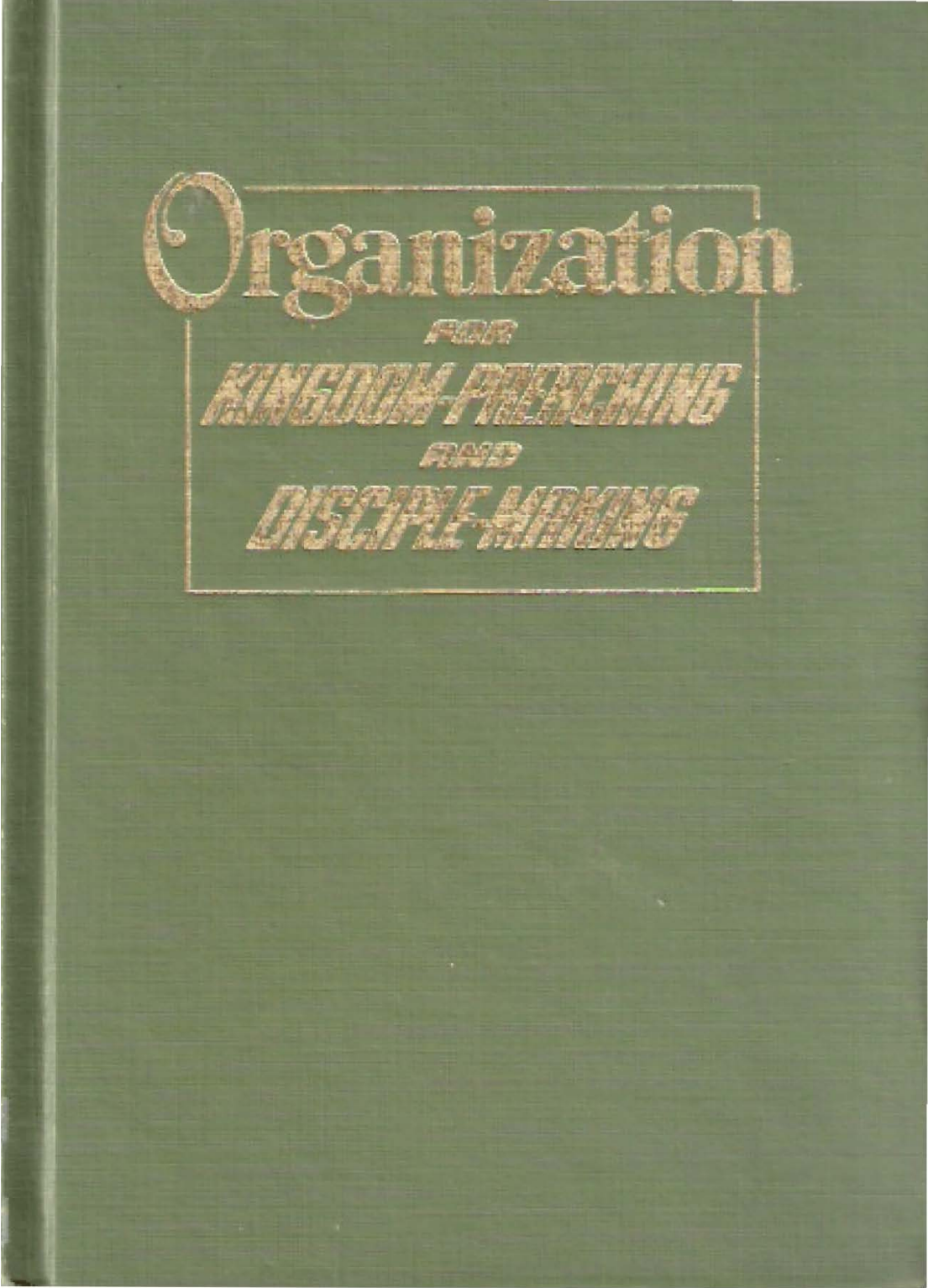


EXHIBIT K



Organization
FOR
KINGDOM-PREACHING
AND
DISCIPLE-MAKING

Organization

FOR
KINGDOM-PREACHING
AND
DISCIPLE-MAKING

"This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations." "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them."—Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20.

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CHAPTER 4

SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK OF GOD

WITH appealing warmth, the Bible describes the way that Jehovah deals with his people, saying: "Look! The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself will come even as a strong one . . . Like a shepherd he will shepherd his own drove. With his arm he will collect together the lambs; and in his bosom he will carry them. Those giving suck he will conduct with care." (Isa. 40:10, 11) He is the "shepherd and overseer" of our souls. And he has made his Son the "chief shepherd" of his flock. (1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4) Loving provisions have been made to care for that flock.

After Jesus left the earth and returned to the heavenly presence of his Father, he gave "gifts in men" to the Christian congregation. "He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ." (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12) At the start the apostles evidently took the lead in these activities, publicly declaring the good news and then shepherding and teaching those who became believers.—Acts 2:42; 5:40-42.

With an increase in the number of believers, new congregations developed, and in each of them "older men" were appointed to provide needed supervision, the kind of supervision that a shepherd gives to sheep. (Acts 14:23) But the "flock" did not belong to them. As the apostle Paul reminded overseers in the congregation of Ephesus, they were shepherds of "the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:28) And when pointing out the responsibility of "older men" in relation to the congregation, Peter wrote: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care." (1 Pet. 5:1, 2) So, as shepherds, they were to help the congregation to appreciate and maintain its proper relationship to God and his Son.

It is noteworthy that the Bible does not say that there was only one "older man," one overseer, in each congregation. Rather, it indicates that there were a

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 number of such. (Acts 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1) What was their relationship to the other members of the "flock of God"?

ELDERS, OVERSEERS, SHEPHERDS

Their designations help to make their position evident. They were to be "older men" or "elders," "overseers" and "shepherds." The term "older men" or "elders" tells us something about their qualities as well as indicating their position within the congregation. Being an older man in the literal sense is associated with having experience in dealing with life's problems, hence with wisdom and judgment. (Compare Job 32:6, 7.) So, in a spiritual sense these brothers were to be like the older men or elders of a community to whom people could look for sound counsel and guidance, and to whom problems could be brought for advice or judgment.

The term "overseer" describes their work on behalf of the congregation. In the original Greek a basic thought conveyed by this term (*e-pi'sko-pos*) is that of 'protective care and supervision' by one who visits and inspects. But this overseeing does not make them superior to their brothers. Jesus was very definite about this, saying to his apostles: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave." (Matt. 20:25-27) Though taking the lead in ministering, they would not assume the title of "leader," for Christ Jesus was their one Leader. (Matt. 23:8-11; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24) They would take the lead especially by becoming "examples to the flock." But never would it be in keeping with their position for them to act as if they owned the flock or to look upon the brothers as their servants; the flock is "God's inheritance" and he has given it to "our only Owner and Lord, Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 5:3; Jude 4) As Paul wrote: "Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are *fellow workers* for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing." —2 Cor. 1:24.

So their overseeing is well described by the further

designation "shepherd." A shepherd is assigned by the owner of a flock to guide it into well-watered and good pasture, to protect it from attack and harm, to keep the sheep from straying, and to go out and look for those that do stray or get lost. He must also care for sick or lame sheep, dressing their wounds and applying healing applications, and he needs to be careful not to set too fast a pace for those with young lambs. (Compare Psalm 23; Genesis 33:13; 1 Samuel 17:33-36.) To do this in a spiritual way for the congregation would mean hard work for the shepherds, but they were to do it "willingly" and "eagerly." (1 Pet. 5:1, 2; Acts 20:28-35) It would be a heavy responsibility, for they would be keeping watch over the souls of God's "sheep" and would themselves have to "render an account" to their Owner. They should want to be able to give a good report of their shepherding, as did God's Son at the end of his earthly course.—Heb. 13:17; John 17:6, 12.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

When the Lord Jesus spoke to Peter about 'shepherding,' he drew attention to one of the principal duties involved, saying: "Feed my little sheep." (John 21:15-17) Just as the "sheep" are figurative, so is the 'food.' The nourishment is drawn from the Word of God. (Matt. 4:4; 1 Tim. 4:6) And it is the responsibility of all who are shepherds to aid the congregation to gain that nourishment, doing so by teaching. The apostle Paul associates shepherding with teaching, saying that Christ gave to his congregation "some as shepherds and teachers." (Eph. 4:8, 11) Much of their teaching is done in the meetings of the congregation, over which they should preside.

Of himself as the "fine shepherd," Jesus said: "I know my sheep and my sheep know me." (John 10:14) Those who, as shepherds, seek to imitate Jesus also need to know well the "flock of God" entrusted to their care. They can show their concern for each one by speaking to them personally at the congregation meetings, also accompanying them in the field ministry.

However, since the Greek term for 'exercising oversight' (*e-pi-sko-pe'o*) includes the meaning of 'visiting,' it is certainly appropriate that the shepherds visit the

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brothers in their homes and even in prison, upbuilding them and contributing to their spiritual enlightenment. (Compare Revelation 3:20; Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 25:36, 39.) Paul reminded the elders of Ephesus that he had taught them, not only publicly, but also "from house to house."* (Acts 20:17-20, margin; *Mo*; *RS*; *Lamsa*; *Yg*; *Dy*; *Knox*; Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-19; 20:31) A congregation was established in Ephesus and other cities. For lack of public meeting places that could be rented or hired, the local congregation would meet in the private home of a dedicated, baptized believer (Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2), and to congregational meetings in the homes interested persons could be invited. By these means the members of the congregation would come to know the overseers well and feel free to approach them, and the overseers, in turn, would become better acquainted with the needs of each one of the "flock." It is important for overseers to be approachable, willing to listen when their brothers come to them with problems, and dealing with them in a manner that will result in refreshment, as the "fine shepherd" set the example.—Matt. 11:28-30.

* A similar work "from house to house" is referred to in Acts 5:42. Here some modern translators (*RS*; *Mo*; *NA*) render the Greek expression here (*kat' oikou*) as "at home." On this we refer to a comment made by Dr. A. T. Robertson, the author of the 1454-page book *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (1934). Referring to such a rendering, he says in his book *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Volume III on "The Acts of the Apostles," page 70, paragraph 3:

"In the temple and at home (*en toi hieroi kai kat' oikon*). This was a distinct triumph to go back to the temple where they had been arrested (verse 25) and at home or from house to house, as it probably means (chapter 2:46). It was a great day for the disciples in Jerusalem."

As regards the translation "from house to house" (*kat' oikous*) in Acts 20:20, which some modern translators would render as: "at your houses" (*AT*), "in your homes" (*Je*; *NE*), "in private" (*NA*), Doctor Robertson has this to say on pages 349, 350, paragraph 1:

"and from house to house (*kai kat' oikous*). By (according to) houses. It is worth noting that this greatest of preachers preached from house to house and did not make his visits merely social calls. He was doing kingdom business all the while as in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (1 Cor. 16:19)."

On page 107 of *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, by Dana and Mantey (1927), we read concerning the Greek preposition *kata* and its meanings according to the cases of the nouns that follow it: "114. Root meaning: *down*. In composition: *down*. . . . Also in the distributive sense: Acts 2:46, *kat' oikon*, *from house to house*; Luke 2:41, *kat' etos*, *from year to year*; 1 Cor. 14:27, *kata duo*, *by twos*; see also Luke 8:1; 13:32."

The overseers are, of course, interested in the work being done by their brothers and sisters in Kingdom-preaching and in the making of disciples. They appreciate the importance of this work in the accomplishment of God's purpose. They also realize that one's participation in this activity reflects appreciation of Jehovah, of his Son and of the issue that the Devil raised over the rightness of Jehovah's sovereignty, as well as concern for one's fellowman. So, when speaking to their brothers as a congregation and privately, the overseers endeavor to stimulate appreciation for this grand privilege of service.—Rom. 10:13, 14; Heb. 13:15.

But our walking in the way of the truth involves far more than preaching to others. When Paul wrote to Titus, an overseer in Crete, about the things concerning which to 'exhort' his Christian brothers, he emphasized their being "zealous for fine works." As the context shows, those "fine works" involve all of a Christian's activities, including his homelife, his secular work, and his obedience to law. (Titus 2:1-3:8) Titus was to speak about these matters, but, of course, he was not to intrude needlessly in the private affairs of others. And when offering counsel he was to 'hold firmly to the faithful word,' that is, to God's own Word.—Titus 1:9.

While encouraging his brothers to be "zealous for fine works," there is nothing in the Scriptures to suggest that an overseer is to try to force service from his brothers. Each Christian is to bear the spiritual yoke of discipleship as unto God and Christ, not unto men. (Matt. 11:29, 30; Rom. 14:4; Col. 3:23, 24) Any "rod" of authority granted the overseers is to be used, not to prod the "sheep" to greater speed, but to protect and rescue, or, where necessary, to correct and reprove. The Oriental shepherd equipped with rod and staff went ahead of the flock of sheep as the one taking the lead and setting the pace for the flock. (John 10:4; Ps. 23:4; 2 Cor. 13:10; 1 Cor. 4:21) Thus, the overseers would encourage the brothers to feed their minds and hearts regularly on God's Word (Ps. 1:2; Phil. 1:9, 10), to share fully in the preaching of the good news (Mark 13:10; 1 Cor. 9:16), to be hospitable to one another (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2), and to abound in similar fine works. But they would not try to make rules as to how much each one should do and when and how. Rather,

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 their desire would be to cultivate appreciation, so that the individual would respond "willingly" and out of love.—Ps. 110:3; 1 Cor. 13:3.

Of course, situations may arise in which members of the congregation deviate from Christian ways, practicing what is wrong, and then it is the responsibility of the overseers to correct, reprove and reprimand, preferably with mildness, but with severity where necessary. (2 Tim. 2:24-26; 4:2; 1 Tim. 5:20; Titus 1:5, 13) They should deal with their spiritual brothers and sisters as they would their own fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, or children. (1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Their aim should be, not to hurt by cutting speech, but to guide straying "sheep" back into the path of life and to protect the flock against any wolfish elements that might do injury to them. (Rom. 12:17-19; Matt. 18:12-14; Acts 20:28-30) If their way of dealing with the congregation shows loving concern for the "flock," they will surely gain the respect, love and cooperation of their brothers.—1 Thess. 2:7, 8, 11; 5:12-15.

It readily becomes apparent that there is much work for the elders in a congregation to do. To care for it properly, they may need assistance, and the Bible makes provision for that. In the introduction of his letter to the Philippians, when Paul mentions *e-pi'sko-poi* or "overseers," he also refers to *di-a'ko-noi* or "ministerial servants." The term *di-a'ko-noi* refers to those who are in the service of others, or attendants. The way in which Paul used the term indicates that these men had something to do with congregation arrangement. They were men ministering to the congregation by caring mainly for necessary nonshepherding matters, thus enabling the overseers to concentrate their time and attention on their teaching and other shepherding activity.—Compare Acts 6:1-6.

QUALIFYING TO BE ELDERS

How are elders put into office and thus entrusted with responsibility for shepherding the "flock"? The answer to this is indicated in the Bible book entitled "Acts of Apostles." There we learn that Paul had been chosen as an apostle by Jesus Christ, and he and Barnabas were sent out on a ministerial trip by instructions of God's holy spirit and with the laying on of hands of the

responsible men of the congregation. (Acts 13:1-3) After preaching in certain cities, they later returned and strengthened the disciples. Additionally, Acts 14:23 relates: "They [that is, Paul and Barnabas] appointed older men for them in [each] congregation and, offering prayer with fastings, they committed them to Jehovah in whom they had become believers." Because this apostolic appointment of elders was accompanied by the laying on of hands (as indicated by the Greek verb used here) some modern translators prefer to use the word "ordained" instead of "appointed." (Acts 14:23, *AV*; *Lamsa*; *Schonfield*; *Int*; vs. 22, *Dy*) So there was no popular election of elders in the congregations. Similarly, Timothy and Titus, as representatives of the Christian governing body, evidently made appointments of elders in harmony with instructions received from Paul.—1 Tim. 5:22; Titus 1:5.

The instructions that guided in the selection of elders or overseers back then are part of the inspired Word of God, and they continue to provide the basis for determining who qualify for appointment. Those instructions, as recorded at 1 Timothy 3:1-7, read:

"If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work. The overseer should therefore be irreprehensible, a husband of one wife, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, qualified to teach, not a drunken brawler, not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent, not a lover of money, a man presiding over his own household in a fine manner, having children in subjection with all seriousness; (if indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God's congregation?) not a newly converted man, for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil. Moreover, he should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil."

A comparable list of qualifications for elders or overseers is found at Titus 1:5-9, but the language used, when compared with what is found at 1 Timothy 3:1-7, helps one to get a clearer view of what is involved.

The standards are not so high that they cannot be reached by any man in the congregation. But they do

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assure that the ones accredited as elders will be persons who are good examples in the congregation of God, not persons who may be outstanding because of 'worldly wisdom.' (1 Cor. 2:6, 7) What is looked for is evidence that one conscientiously applies the counsel of God's Word to all the affairs of life. He should be, not a mere boy nor a newly converted person, but a man who has had ample experience in Christian living. However, it is not mere physical age that qualifies one to be an elder in the congregation. He should have a broad knowledge of God's Word and a deep understanding of it, coupled with genuine love for the congregation, so that others will look to him with confidence when in need of counsel and will respect his judgment. (Job 32:9) He must also have the courage to speak up when there is wrongdoing, so that he will take any needed action to correct wrongdoing and to protect the "flock" against any who would selfishly exploit them. It is noteworthy that his being "qualified to teach" within the congregation, to exhort and to reprove are important factors in his being accredited as an elder.

After listing the requirements for those who would serve as overseers in the congregations, Paul also sets out the qualifications to be met by those designated as "ministerial servants." He says:

"Ministerial servants should likewise be serious, not double-tongued, not giving themselves to a lot of wine, not greedy of dishonest gain, holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience. Also, let these be tested as to fitness first, then let them serve as ministers, as they are free from accusation. Let ministerial servants be husbands of one wife, presiding in a fine manner over children and their own households. For the men who minister in a fine manner are acquiring for themselves a fine standing and great freeness of speech in the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." —1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12, 13.

These requirements, when compared with those for overseers, indicate that the ministerial servants' responsibility would involve work other than teaching and shepherding. Yet, the high standard set would serve to protect the congregation from any legitimate accusation as to the kind of men to whom it entrusted special responsibilities. They were not to be mere youths but

"men," each one a fine example that would be viewed with respect by others. And they were to be persons who, over a sufficient period of time, had been "tested as to fitness," so that there would be assurance of their stability and dependability when entrusted with responsibility. Though their work differs from that of the elders, it is no less a part of their service to God and important to the smooth functioning of the congregation. In time, if they discharge their obligations well and also acquire the further qualifications needed by shepherds and teachers, they may be privileged to serve as elders in the congregation.

The Bible does not limit the number of elders or overseers that a congregation may have. They are mentioned in the plural number with regard to congregations at Jerusalem, Ephesus and Philippi. (Acts 21:15, 18; 20:17; Phil. 1:1) Doubtless this was true in all the congregations where there were more than one qualified brother. So Paul could rightly say: "If any man is reaching out for an office of overseer, he is desirous of a fine work." (1 Tim. 3:1) Such a privilege of service was open to any qualified brother who, because of love for Jehovah and for His "sheep," desired to share in the fine work of a Christian shepherd.

Appropriately, therefore, in each congregation of Jehovah's Christian witnesses, once a year, about September 1, those who are already appointed elders prayerfully consider whether any additional brothers who are active in service on behalf of the congregation now qualify to become elders. They also consider any who might now become ministerial servants. (If there are not at least three elders in the congregation, then the brothers serving as presiding overseer, field overseer and Bible study overseer make these recommendations, even though some of them are at the time serving only as substitutes.)

In making recommendations, the elders bear a serious responsibility before God to act in full harmony with his Word, not treating lightly any of the requirements that he has had recorded there. If there are some who now qualify for appointment, the body of elders makes a written recommendation to the governing body, sending it to the branch at its address in their country. With each name, they indicate the person's age, the date of

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his baptism, whether he professes to be of the "anointed" or of the "other sheep," and whether he is being recommended for appointment as an elder or as a ministerial servant and stating what his hitherto service position, if any, has been. This letter is signed by the presiding overseer, the field overseer and the Bible study overseer as representatives of the body of elders.

On receipt of the recommendations, the governing body through its appointed representatives makes the appointments. But this is not done according to some standard that they themselves set up. It is done in accord with what is set out in God's inspired Word, so it can truthfully be said: "The holy spirit has appointed you." (Acts 20:28) Then the newly appointed elder or elders, as notified by use of the facilities of the Watch Tower Society, may share in shepherding the congregation along with those who were already doing so, and any who have been appointed as ministerial servants may care for the duties now entrusted to them.

As long as elders measure up to the Bible's requirements for those so appointed, they may continue to serve as elders in the congregation in which their appointment is made. However, if they were to move to another congregation, they would not automatically be viewed as elders there. They would have to establish their spiritual qualifications by their Christian activity there, and then the local elders would be in position to recommend such ones for appointment in that congregation. This is also true of ministerial servants.

If an elder or ministerial servant were ever to engage in unchristian conduct of such a nature that he was disfellowshipped or was, because of wrongdoing, restricted in the assignments and duties that he could perform, the local body of elders would remove him as an elder or ministerial servant. Notification of this action would always be sent to the branch office of the Watch Tower Society. However, if he was simply unable to do some of the work, because of sickness or old age, this would not affect his appointment as an elder or ministerial servant.

The governing body may appoint men who qualify as elders to serve as overseers in any locality at any time. The governing body is not bound by the recommendations of any local group. Such recommendations

serve merely as a guide, and may even be rejected for reasons well known to the governing body.—1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5.

THE BODY OF ELDERS

What is the relationship of the elders to one another within a congregation? Christ is the one whom Jehovah has appointed to be Head of the congregation, so none of the elders occupies this position. None holds authority over the others. When writing to Timothy, Paul makes reference to a “body of elders” as having taken certain action. (1 Tim. 4:14, *margin*) All the elders in a congregation, as subordinates of Christ, serve together as a body of overseers or shepherds, cooperating for the advancement of the Kingdom interests and for the good of the entire congregation.—Eph. 4:15, 16; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2.

The equality of position and authority of the elders, however, does not mean that all are equal in qualities or abilities. These are bound to vary, some showing greater strengths in one direction, others in another. Some, because of age, years of Christian service, depth of Scriptural knowledge, especially good judgment in certain fields, or other qualities, may be particularly esteemed by the congregation as well as by their fellow elders. Thus, Paul said that there were “outstanding men” among the elders at Jerusalem, and he names James, Peter (Cephas) and John as ones who “seemed to be pillars.” (Gal. 2:2, 9) The expression “seemed to be” indicates that they were not appointed to some superior position but were esteemed as such.

Similarly, within any body of elders there may be some whose voices will receive added attention because of the esteem in which they are held. Yet this does not make them superior or infallible. Even Peter, one of those who “seemed to be pillars,” was later corrected by Paul (a man with fewer years as a disciple) for having a wrong viewpoint leading to wrong conduct.—Gal. 2:11-14.

When meetings of any kind are held, these should be conducted in an orderly manner. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Having someone to preside aids greatly in this. According to the Bible record, Peter evidently presided as chairman at early meetings in Jerusalem. (Acts

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1:15-22; 2:1-14; 5:1-3) But this did not make him superior to the other brothers. When people in Samaria accepted the good news, the record says that the apostles, evidently acting as a body, "dispatched Peter and John to them." Thus Peter himself was subject to the direction of the body as a whole. (Acts 8:14) On the occasion of the meeting in Jerusalem to determine the circumcision issue, James, rather than Peter, offered the recommendation that was adopted by the group assembled. (Acts 15:13-21) And later James is again given prominent mention in connection with a meeting of the elders in Jerusalem. (Acts 21:18) So, evidently there was some rotation of the chairmanship. No details are given as to just how long a chairman presided, but it seems good in the congregations today to have a new chairman once a year, in all congregations where there is more than one elder.

A fine model for a meeting of the body of elders is provided in Acts chapter fifteen, where the governing body, composed of apostles and older men, is reported as having met. It is notable that at the conclusion of the conference, the governing body wrote to the congregations: "The *holy spirit* and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things." (Acts 15:28) So, while the governing body discussed the matter, they recognized that it was God's holy spirit that guided them to their decision. Testimony was heard on that occasion from Peter, Paul and Barnabas as to the things accomplished through them by God's holy spirit. James called to mind the spirit-inspired prophecy at Amos 9:11, 12, and the holy spirit enabled this body of men to understand clearly the meaning of Amos' words recorded centuries beforehand. The result was that, with the delivering of the decision by letter to other congregations, they "continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day." (Acts 16:4, 5) Bodies of elders today can also count on the aid of God's holy spirit in answer to their prayers.—Luke 11:13.

It is suggested that the body of elders in each congregation meet to discuss their work about every three months. This might be done at a convenient time around the beginning of September, December,

March and June. Of course, they may convene at any time in between when circumstances make it advisable. But the arrangement for regular meetings at least every three months can aid them measurably in their efforts to work together as a body.

When the body of elders meet together to consider matters involving the flock of God, they should pray for Jehovah's direction through his Son, the Head of the congregation. (Acts 1:24, 25; 20:17, 36) Being united in their desire to advance, not their personal interests, but Kingdom interests, and having a humble viewpoint of themselves, they will be aided to speak freely among themselves and to arrive at wise decisions. —Rom. 12:3-5; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2-8.

Not only the chairman, but all the elders are overseers and shepherds of the "flock." All should actively promote the welfare of the congregation. So all are encouraged to take the initiative to present for consideration by the body of elders any matters that they realize need attention. And when other elders bring up points for discussion, it is to be expected that all will take an active interest.

It is the responsibility of the chairman, of course, to preside at these meetings of the elders. In doing so, he should keep in mind the apostolic injunction: "He that presides, let him do it in real earnest." (Rom. 12:8) He may prepare a program or agenda, scheduling the matters to be discussed and seeing that adequate time is allotted for each. At the meeting he may call on the various elders who brought up certain matters to make the initial presentation of them, if that seems to be most advantageous. Then others can be invited to express themselves. On any matter he can do much to keep the discussion moving forward by helping to keep the main points or issues to the fore, calling for discussion of them, one by one. He, along with all the other elders, can also do much to keep the discussion Scriptural, bringing to bear upon the subject any appropriate Bible texts.

At the periodic meetings of the elders, a principal matter to be given attention is the shepherding of the "flock." (1 Pet. 5:1-4) The elders can decide among themselves who is in position to give attention to the various shepherding needs of the congregation.

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Public talks ought to be planned for the congregation. Which topics are most needed by the congregation? Are there any special subjects that should be developed in order to give attention to local needs? The elders will no doubt want to determine which talks they personally will be able to deliver during the coming months and what arrangements can be made for speakers on the remaining weeks. Which ones of the instruction talks will the elders handle in the Theocratic Ministry School? It may be beneficial to discuss this, so that these assignments can be balanced with other obligations. If there are matters that need special attention on the service meetings, the meeting of the body of elders provides an opportunity to work out the arrangements. Suggestions that any of the brothers have to improve the quality of the meetings, particularly the teaching that is done, could also beneficially be entertained at this meeting.

There is much to be done in preparing and presenting the congregation meetings each week, and in many localities the elders may well need the help of other brothers. At the periodic meetings of the elders they can consider who might appropriately be invited to handle some parts on the service meetings, who might help out with instruction talks, who might read paragraphs at the *Watchtower* study, and who could care for the responsibility that goes with being chairman at public meetings. They may decide to invite some ministerial servants to give public talks in their home congregations. Perhaps a brother who was an elder or a ministerial servant in another congregation has recently moved into the area and the local elders believe that the congregation would greatly benefit from the services of that one. If so, they may decide to write to the elders of the former congregation for information as to his conduct and the spirit that he displayed there. If a favorable reply is received, they may write the branch of the Watch Tower Society recommending him for appointment as an elder or as a ministerial servant in the congregation where he now resides.

It is requested that, during December each year, the elders review the situation of the pioneers (if any) in the congregation and send reports to the branch office

where this may be beneficial. A form is provided for such use, indicating the information that is desired.

When they meet early in September, there are other matters that require special attention. If there are any ministerial servants who now meet the Scriptural qualifications for elders, it is requested that such recommendations for appointment be made at this time. Any brothers qualifying to become ministerial servants may be recommended to the governing body at the same time. Also, if any elders or ministerial servants should be removed from the list, whether due to death or moving away or because the body of elders has determined that they are no longer measuring up to the Scriptural requirements, notification of this should be sent to the branch office, if it has not already been done previously.

Since there is rotation of the chairmanship of the body of elders in each congregation where there is more than one elder, it becomes the due time at this meeting for the elders to notify the one who is to be their new chairman for the coming twelve months. The new chairman will then preside at all future meetings of the elders. This meeting in September is the due time for the body of elders to notify who of their number will care for the other positions of oversight in the congregation during the year to come. In addition to notifying the presiding overseer, notification should be given to the respective ones who are to be the field overseer, the Bible study overseer, the *Watchtower* study conductor, the Theocratic Ministry School overseer, and book study conductors for each of the book study groups. According to rotation the former overseer of the Theocratic Ministry School moves to the position of the *Watchtower* study conductor, the *Watchtower* study conductor to the position of the Bible study overseer, the Bible study overseer moves to the position of field overseer, and the field overseer moves to the position of the presiding overseer. The former presiding overseer then moves to any open position, such as congregation book study conductor.

Some individual elders in some congregations may not be able for personal reasons to conform to this pattern of rotation. In such cases the body of elders

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will decide what to do, still recognizing the rotation system.

In many congregations, due to a shortage of qualified brothers, elders who are able to do so may be requested to handle more than one assignment of overseership. In some cases the body of elders may request ministerial servants to help out by caring as substitutes for certain duties of overseers or as substitute study conductors.

If it seems beneficial to shift book study conductors from one study group to another for the next year, this would be an appropriate time to consider the matter. Such rotation has certain benefits, but local circumstances may not make it advantageous. The body of elders should handle the arrangements with consideration for the individuals involved.

Annually, in September, is a good time for the body of elders to review the various assignments entrusted to the ministerial servants. There is need for capable persons to care for the accounts, magazines, other literature supplies, assigning of territory, perhaps the operating of sound equipment, cleaning and upkeep of the Kingdom Hall, and service as an attendant at Kingdom Hall meetings. Some records that come under the supervision of the elders, as well as the making out of schedules, may also require considerable work. Decisions need to be made as to who will care for such necessary work during the year, allowing the elders to give as full attention as possible to shepherding and to "the ministry of the word."—Acts 6:1-6.

In some congregations there may be enough ministerial servants so that a different one can be assigned to each of these duties. Elsewhere, someone may care for several assignments. In some instances it would be beneficial to have more than one person assigned to share in certain work. (If there are not enough ministerial servants to care for these responsibilities, the body of elders may, in some cases, request younger brothers or certain sisters who show godly humility and devotion to Jehovah to assist in doing some of this necessary work, though they would not be appointed as ministerial servants.) The elders may decide that from year to year it would be beneficial to shift some ministerial servants from one assignment to another; in

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some cases they may ask a brother to continue to handle the same assignment. It is up to the body of elders to work out these matters in whatever manner seems to be best for the congregation.

The shifting of duties from one elder to the other should take place during the month of September regardless of whether an appointee to service has had up till then a full year in that position or not. Where a vacancy occurs in an overseer's position sometime during the year, a substitute from any of the elders can be selected by the body of elders to fill out the expiring term.

When deciding who will care for various responsibilities during the coming year, whether as elders or as ministerial servants, the elders may have in mind some new ones who are then being recommended to the governing body through the branch office for appointment. Until a reply is received on newly qualified ones, however, it would be well to hold off on the making of definite assignments of these new ones. The already existing arrangements can continue in force until the congregation is notified of new appointments.

In harmony with the Scriptures, the local body of elders has a great responsibility in connection with the shepherding of the flock of God entrusted to their care. The governing body, in accord with the requirements in the Scriptures, makes the actual appointment of elders and ministerial servants. But it is then up to the body of elders to determine, with recognition of the rotation system, who will be the presiding overseer in their congregation, and who will care for the various other positions of oversight. They also make the assignments of specific duties to the ministerial servants. These are not submitted to the governing body for appointment. This agrees with the arrangement in the early Christian congregation, because there is no evidence that the governing body assigned all the specific duties to be performed by each elder and ministerial servant in all the congregations. Those matters were evidently worked out locally.

It is requested that, as soon as possible after the body of elders has made its selection, they notify the branch office of the full name, complete mailing address and phone number (if they have such) of those brothers

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who will be the presiding overseer, the field overseer and the Bible study overseer for the year to come. This will assist the office to keep in touch with the congregation and direct its correspondence to the presiding overseer.

It is also recommended that, in the interest of good order, brief notes be made on each of the meetings of the body of elders, noting particularly the decisions made. The chairman may request someone from among the elders to do this, and then the notes, bearing the date of the meeting, should be retained in the congregation files.

While the elders do work together as a body, it is beneficial for each of them to be assigned to areas of special responsibility. In any body the various members fulfill differing functions, otherwise there would be no body. The apostle Paul shows that this is true of the Christian congregation, which is the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:12, 14, 19; Rom. 12:4-8) The same principle applies to the body of elders. Briefly, here are the responsibilities of the various overseers.

PRESIDING OVERSEER

The presiding overseer is to help coordinate the activity of all the elders so that they accomplish the most good as they work together to carry out their joint responsibility in shepherding the "flock." The responsibilities of the presiding overseer include a deep concern for the welfare of all who are associated with the congregation.

As an overseer, he should take the initiative to see that things get done. He should regularly discuss matters with the other overseers and with the ministerial servants, offering suggestions and listening to their recommendations. When problems arise, he is to take the initiative in seeing that they are given needed attention.

There are many matters that come up from week to week on which decisions must be made. It is to be expected that the presiding overseer will make appropriate decisions in order to keep the affairs of the congregation moving ahead.

However, in regard to those matters that properly are handled by the entire body of elders, the presiding

overseer should submit these for attention to the body of elders. He should be well aware of the various matters that require attention in the congregation and see that they are cared for.

A principal responsibility of the presiding overseer is to be a shepherd of the "flock." He does not do this to the exclusion of participation in the field ministry, but he does give priority to caring for those who have already given indication of their desire to be associated with the congregation of Jehovah's people. He endeavors to encourage those who are showing zeal in their ministry. He also bears in mind what the apostle Paul said to the older men of the early Ephesus congregation: "I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus laboring you must assist those who are weak," and he is glad to offer such assistance. (Acts 20:35) If any feel burdened down and in need of counsel, he will endeavor to strengthen and refresh them, in imitation of Christ Jesus, our "chief shepherd."—Matt. 11:28-30.

To keep in close touch with all who are associated with the congregation, in some places the presiding overseer may find it advantageous to visit the various book study groups once or twice during the year, spending a week or a number of weeks with each one. This affords opportunity to associate in smaller groups and to share with different ones in the field ministry. If he is visiting a group that has an elder as the book study conductor, the regular conductor will care for the meeting. Where a ministerial servant usually conducts the study, the presiding overseer may want to observe for a time or two, with a view to helping him to improve his ability as a teacher. But after that the presiding overseer, as an elder, could beneficially conduct the study himself during the remainder of the visit.

Along with the other elders, the presiding overseer should regularly share in giving public talks in his home congregation, as well as giving instruction talks and participating in the service meeting programs. There is much that he can do in this way to help the entire congregation to understand the Scriptures clearly and to see how to apply them to their own lives.

His duties include making arrangements for an upbuilding service meeting for the congregation every

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week. He may personally take oversight of these meetings each week (making assignments and perhaps caring for the concluding portion of the program or some other suitable part), or he may share that responsibility with other capable brothers. In any event, it is his duty to be sure that the service meetings are prepared and presented for the congregation.

The program of public meetings also requires considerable attention on his part. Subjects and local speakers will have been decided on by the body of elders, but arrangements may have to be made for speakers to come from other congregations, and there ought to be some provision to extend suitable hospitality to guest speakers. (3 John 5-8) Additionally, competent chairmen should be assigned for these meetings. The presiding overseer may either care for these things personally or request the cooperation of other brothers in doing so.

The branch office regularly communicates with the congregation through the presiding overseer. Letters are sent to him either for reading to the entire congregation or for the attention of certain ones of the overseers. Orders sent to the branch office for literature and handbills, as well as remittance forms and other congregation correspondence, are signed by him. He also makes provision for certain items, such as appointment letters from the governing body and reports left by circuit overseers, to be retained in a permanent file.

Where there is more than one elder in the congregation, the presiding overseer cares for that position of oversight for just one year, unless there are only two elders and the disability of old age or some other circumstance makes it impossible for the other brother to serve. However, wherever possible, there should be a new presiding overseer each year.

At the end of his year as chairman of the body of elders, about September 1, it is requested that he write a report to the branch office, using the form provided. This will give his observations on what the spiritual condition of the congregation is, what has been accomplished during the past year, and what appears to be in need of attention during the months to come. This is not a report from the entire body of elders but is the presiding overseer's report; however, it will be read

to the elders at their meeting early in September before it is mailed to the branch office, and a copy will be retained in the congregation files.

As all of Jehovah's Christian witnesses do, the presiding overseer endeavors to share regularly in the field ministry. He is very much interested in the work of Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making. He also has personal obligations that require attention. He may be secularly employed, providing for himself and his family, and that often requires considerable time. If he has a family, he needs to spend time to care for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. (1 Tim. 5:8) He also needs opportunities for personal study. So he is not able to spend all his time in caring for congregation matters. Yet he is kind enough to arrange his affairs to extend assistance, as he is able, to all the rest of the congregation.

FIELD OVERSEER

As is true of the presiding overseer, so, too, the field overseer is an elder of the congregation, entrusted by God with responsibility to shepherd the "flock." As a teacher, he shares along with the other elders the privilege of giving public talks regularly in the congregation, also taking his turn in giving instruction talks and caring for appropriate parts on the service meeting. Additionally, he may be requested by the body of elders to conduct one of the congregation book studies each week if he has the time to do so.

The field ministry, particularly the activity of Kingdom-preaching, is a special responsibility that comes under the supervision of the field overseer. (Matt. 24:14) Much is included in this.

A certain section of territory is assigned to each congregation, and the people who live there should be visited on a regular basis with the good news. All the territory—cities, towns and rural areas—ought to be given regular attention, and the work of the field overseer includes arranging for this. In most congregations arrangements will be made for a ministerial servant to do the actual assigning of territory to those who request it and to keep the records concerning it up-to-date; but the field overseer is to check on the coverage from time to time and make needed arrange-

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ments so that all parts of the congregation's territory are given regular attention.

In caring for the oversight of Kingdom-preaching, he will help to coordinate the work so that good use is made of all the various instruments provided by the "faithful and discreet slave" class for spreading the good news. This includes making sure that suitable arrangements are made for group witnessing, and that adequate supplies of magazines and other literature are available for the congregation to use.

When notification comes from the branch office that there are to be special issues of the magazines for distribution, it is his responsibility to see that the publishers are alerted to what is being planned and are encouraged to request additional supplies that they may need. Similarly, when arrangements are made for special distribution of certain issues of the magazines or other publications to particular officials or other groups of people, the field overseer is the one who will organize the activity and see that it is carried through to a successful conclusion.

Ministerial servants will no doubt care for distribution of the magazines and other literature supplies to the publishers, but the field overseer is interested in seeing that good use is made of these instruments in the field ministry.

Of great interest to him, too, is the viewpoint with which the brothers and sisters carry on their field ministry. Both from the platform and in personal contact with them he can do much to help them to view their service as an expression of their earnest love for Jehovah and their concern for their fellowman. He should exhort them to heed the apostle's admonition, which is all the more urgent in these "last days," namely, to be "buying out the opportune time for yourselves, because the days are wicked." (Eph. 5:16) It is important to spend hours in preaching to other people, and the distribution of literature is a tremendous asset in accomplishing the preaching of the good news, but, of course, only when we are motivated by love is our service truly pleasing to God.—1 Cor. 13:1-3.

In coordinating the field ministry of the congregation, the field overseer should keep in mind that not everyone's circumstances are the same and not everyone

has the same abilities. Some may be able to share in the field ministry on weekends; others, on weekdays. Certain ones may be able to spend many hours in proclaiming the good news, whereas others have obligations that limit to a considerable extent what they are able to do in this aspect of their service to God. He will help the congregation to appreciate the urgent importance of the field ministry and the value of each feature of this work, and he will gladly assist anyone to improve his ability in some aspect of the field ministry. But, instead of expecting everyone to be able to accomplish the same things, he recognizes that the entire congregation, made up of persons with a variety of gifts and abilities, works together as a united group to accomplish God's will in its assigned territory.—1 Cor. 12:14-19, 29, 30.

There are some records that come under the supervision of the field overseer. At the end of each month he collects the report cards from the pioneers (if any), tabulates the congregation's report of field ministry for the month and gives it to the presiding overseer (with the pioneer report cards) so that he can sign them and mail them to the branch office no later than the sixth of the following month. If any persons were baptized under the supervision of the congregation, instead of at an assembly, the number immersed is noted at the bottom of that congregation report. A copy of the total report of the congregation publishers is kept on a Publisher's Record card that is appropriately marked as being for the entire congregation. Then he enters on the other Publisher's Record cards each one's field service report, including the reports of regular and temporary pioneers.

If a new publisher reports field service for the first time, this makes us rejoice. But, before the report is counted, it is wise to make sure that the individual qualifies to be a publisher and that he really appreciates what it means to be publicly identified as an associate of Jehovah's Christian witnesses. So the field overseer discusses this matter with the brother or sister who is studying with the individual. He also has a personal talk with the individual, to get better acquainted with him and to commend him warmly for the progress that he is making. Then, after the field

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overseer discusses the matter with the presiding overseer, a record card may be made out for this new publisher and included in the congregation file, if the person qualifies.

In the event that some emergency arises calling for the attention of the body of elders at a time when the presiding overseer is away, the field overseer will act as chairman on that occasion. According to rotation, the brother who is field overseer will become the presiding overseer during the following year, starting in September.

BIBLE STUDY OVERSEER

The member of the body of elders who is assigned to be Bible study overseer has the same responsibilities as a shepherd and teacher as do the other elders in the congregation. But, in his case, the work of disciple-making, which includes making return visits and conducting home Bible studies, is a special field of activity that comes under his oversight.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

A fine place to begin in promoting home Bible study is within the households of those who are already associated with the congregation. Such study on a regular basis is a major factor in one's spiritual growth. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of fathers to 'bring up their children in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah,' and a regular family Bible study helps to achieve this. (Eph. 6:4) Children do not automatically become disciples just because their parents are. They will not be followers of Christ Jesus unless they are taught the things that he commanded. Even where the household is religiously divided, it is often possible for the believer, whether the father or the mother, to study with the children. The Bible study overseer, in his contacts with members of the congregation, can do much to encourage such family study of the Bible.

He also has the responsibility to help to build up the congregation's activity in making return calls on other persons who show interest when they hear about God's kingdom. Such return visits afford opportunity to give a further witness concerning the purpose of God, and at times they open the way for a regular home Bible study. The Bible study overseer can do

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much to stimulate this activity by instruction on the service meeting, by personal encouragement, by arranging for those who would like help to work with others who are experienced, and by his own good example. Not everyone has equal ability as a teacher, but all in the congregation can help to locate those who desire to be taught, and the Bible study overseer can coordinate the efforts of the congregation to care for them.

He should be very much interested in all the persons who are benefiting from the congregation's teaching program through home Bible studies. Each month he will receive the Bible Study Reports that are turned in by those who are conducting studies. These do not have to be kept permanently, but they let him know exactly what is being done in this activity each month. It is good for him to keep in close touch with those who are conducting studies, to know what progress is being made and to offer suggestions when problems arise.

At congregation meetings the Bible study overseer can be a great encouragement to newcomers by putting forth a special effort to welcome them, to engage them in conversation and to answer questions that they may have. If some of these are not yet having a Bible study in their home, he can arrange that service for them. It would be a fine thing if he would get to know the name of each newly interested person who attends the meetings and show a personal interest in the progress that each one is making in his study of God's Word. This can do much to contribute to their spiritual development.

A record of the attendance is kept in connection with all the meetings of the congregation, and this is turned over to the Bible study overseer. At Kingdom Hall meetings an attendant may be requested to keep the record; at congregation book studies, it is the book study conductor who does so. Then at the end of each month a report of the attendance for each of these meetings is turned in on a Bible Study Report slip. This information is used from time to time by the elders, so the Bible study overseer is requested to make note of it, doing so in any manner that will assure a reliable record.

CONGREGATION COMMITTEE

The presiding overseer, the field overseer and the Bible study overseer constitute a service committee for handling certain matters on behalf of the congregation. For example, they check all applications for regular pioneer service, and if the applicant meets the requirements they recommend him to the branch office for appointment. They also make appointments of temporary pioneers. And when territory adjustments need to be worked out with another congregation, these brothers can usually handle the matter. Of course, if there is some question on which they believe that it would be beneficial to consult with the rest of the elders, they may do that.

In congregations where the presiding overseer, the field overseer and the Bible study overseer are all appointed elders, and none are serving in a substitute capacity, they also constitute a judicial committee. If there are not three elders in the congregation, then they may request that an elder from a nearby congregation sit with them to hear any cases requiring their attention. Their responsibility is twofold: To keep the congregation clean and in good standing before Jehovah; also, to help those who get spiritually sick, to safeguard them from straying away from the flock of God. Whenever possible, they seek to assist persons who sincerely want to serve Jehovah acceptably, but they are also well aware of the obligation not to ignore Jehovah's righteous judicial decisions.—1 Cor. 5:12-6:6; Gal. 6:1; Ps. 119:106; Jas. 5:13-16.

“WATCHTOWER” STUDY CONDUCTOR

One of the elders presides as overseer, for a year at a time, at the weekly *Watchtower* study. His particular interest is in aiding the entire congregation to benefit to the full from the spiritual food that the appointed Head of the congregation, the Lord Jesus Christ, is providing through his “faithful steward” class.—Luke 12:42.

The *Watchtower* study conductor can be of the greatest aid to the congregation if he handles the study, not merely to achieve a routine coverage of the material, but with teaching in view. To do this, he needs to set aside time to make a special study of each lesson.

This may involve going over the material several times to get it clearly in mind. Having done this, he will be able to handle the meeting in such a way that the main points are emphasized and clearly understood and the congregation is aided to discern the application in their lives of the things being learned.—Prov. 4:7.

His responsibility as a shepherd and teacher, of course, does not end with conducting the *Watchtower* study each week. He has the same general shepherding responsibilities as do the presiding overseer and the other elders in the congregation. So his duties include aiding members of the congregation on a personal basis. This may involve offering further explanation of certain points from the study material, also providing help and encouragement to those who need assistance to participate in the meeting, so that they will thus benefit more fully from this provision. It likewise includes giving warm commendation to those who are doing well, and showing active interest in any of the "sheep" that appear to be in need of attention from a shepherd who is concerned for their welfare.

His activity as a teacher also includes the giving of public talks, instruction talks and counsel on the service meeting from time to time. However, since one of his principal responsibilities is to preside at the *Watchtower* study, he may want to limit to some extent the number of public talks that he agrees to give outside his home congregation during the year so that he can give his assignment the attention that it deserves. On those occasions when it is necessary for him to be away, however, he should make sure that arrangements are made for another one of the elders to care for the meeting.

THEOCRATIC MINISTRY SCHOOL OVERSEER

As his responsibility for a year, one of the elders is delegated to the oversight of the congregation's Theocratic Ministry School. In this capacity he has opportunity to do much to enrich the congregation's knowledge and appreciation of the Scriptures, also to help them to improve their abilities individually as preachers and teachers.

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The outline of material covered in the school is provided each year through the branch office, and the Theocratic Ministry School overseer follows this in making assignments to those who have enrolled in the school. Usually these assignments are made at least three weeks in advance so that the speakers will have ample time to prepare.

Counsel given to student speakers should be kind and encouraging. It is also helpful to everyone if explanation is included as to *how* certain things can be done and *why* they are effective. The remarks of the school overseer, however, will be most beneficial if they are not limited exclusively to analysis of speech qualities. He should prepare for each week's school session with the objective of helping the congregation to get full value from the fine *material* that is to be covered. Then, if principal points that are of particular interest are not covered by a speaker, or are inaccurately expressed, he will be able to draw attention to them, to the extent that time permits. He is not to try to review the contents of the talks given, but his appreciative comments on an important thought, how it was presented and the value of the information, can help to impress it on the minds of everyone. In this way, while individuals are being aided to improve as speakers and teachers, the attention of those in attendance is kept focused primarily on the Word of God.

This overseer can also help the congregation in his contacts with them as individuals. Some of the students may need help in understanding the material assigned to them and in finding a way to make practical application of it. His duties are not limited to the school, however. As a shepherd, he is desirous of aiding all in the congregation in any way that he can.

If the congregation has a large enrollment in its Theocratic Ministry School, it may be divided into two or more sections for the student talks. In this way each one can have opportunity to give a talk at least every three months. Where possible, elders will offer counsel to the students in the additional groups. These additional counselors will be selected by the Theocratic Ministry School overseer.

In most Kingdom Halls a library is provided for the use of the congregation. Usually it contains all the available publications of the Watch Tower Society, perhaps a variety of Bible translations, an exhaustive concordance and some other helpful reference works. It is cared for under the supervision of the school overseer.

CONGREGATION BOOK STUDY CONDUCTOR

Whenever possible, the brothers who conduct the congregation book studies should also be elders, because this assignment involves teaching. If there is not an elder available for each of the study groups, it may be that one of the elders can care for more than one group, doing so at different times during the week. But that depends to a considerable extent on his circumstances. If more book study conductors are needed, the local body of elders may request certain ministerial servants who give evidence of teaching ability to serve as substitute conductors, until such time as an elder is available. In each case it is the body of elders that assigns the brother to the book study group where he will preside.

The primary responsibility of each congregation book study conductor is teaching. To do a really fine job of conducting the study each week, the book study conductor usually has to spend more time in preparation than other brothers do. He needs to know, not only the answers to the study questions, but also the reasons for those answers and the value of the information. It should be his aim to help those who attend the study to understand, to be able to explain and to apply in their lives the truths studied. This requires conscientious effort on the part of the study conductor. As the apostle Paul wrote: "He that teaches, let him be at his teaching."—Rom. 12:7.

The book study conductor also has the privilege of aiding the publishers in his group in their Kingdom-preaching and discipling work. He can do much to help those in his group to show enthusiastic appreciation for the privilege of participating in this activity. He should endeavor to make arrangements for group witnessing at times that are convenient to those in the group, and he should be sure that there is territory on hand for them to work. When it is possible for him to be with

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them, he will take the lead at the meeting for field service and in organizing the work to be done in the territory. For those times when he is not able to be there, he will endeavor to arrange for a ministerial servant to care for the group, or, if none is available, then another publisher who is willing to accept that responsibility.

Since each book study conductor is assigned to care for a relatively small group, he can usually become well acquainted with all of those who attend the study. As a shepherd, he ought to show a warm interest in each one of them, giving personal help and encouragement to them in their field ministry, as respects the congregation meetings and in other aspects of Christian living. If any are ill or depressed, he will probably know that and can pay them a visit to build them up. If some can be aided to reach out for additional privileges of service, he should be alert to assist them. Much of the attention of the book study conductor will be directed toward helping those in his own group, but, if he is an elder, his shepherding responsibilities are not limited to them. To the extent possible, he should endeavor to show concern for the entire congregation, reaching out to aid any of the "sheep" according to their needs.

CITY OVERSEER

Where there is more than one congregation in a city, the branch office deals with each congregation separately, sending supplies directly to it and receiving its monthly service report. However, one of the elders is also appointed by the Watch Tower Society's branch office as city overseer. This is not an appointment that changes each year. He does not exercise any jurisdiction in any congregation other than the one where he serves as an elder. However, the branch office may wish to communicate with him at times in connection with arrangements for assemblies and other matters. He may also be called on by the elders of other congregations for counsel if some special need arises.

CIRCUIT OVERSEER

To assist all the congregations, it has proved beneficial for circuit overseers to spend some time with them on a regular basis. The circuit overseers are traveling

elders who are appointed by the Watch Tower Society to their circuit position. During their visit they meet with the body of elders and cooperate with them in caring for the portion of the "flock" in their care. They give a variety of discourses to the congregation. And there are daily arrangements for group witnessing with them.

The congregations visited by a circuit overseer are termed a circuit. The circuit overseer plans his route so that he will be able to visit each congregation about once every six months, serving them for about five and a half days on each occasion. In the case of pioneers, special pioneers and missionaries in isolated territory, he also stays for a full week with them, aiding and encouraging them by holding meetings, working in the field service with them and studying together.

When the congregation is notified of a visit by the circuit overseer, about two months in advance, the presiding overseer makes the needed preparations for the visit. Since his visit will be a time of increased activity in the field ministry, additional magazines may be ordered, including what the circuit overseer has requested for himself. Handbills will no doubt be ordered for the public talk that he is to give. These things ought to be done early. Then sleeping accommodations and meals need to be arranged for the visiting overseer and his wife, if he is married.

As his visit draws near, the presiding overseer arranges times for special meetings to be held with the congregation, with the pioneers and with the body of elders. Locations from which field service will be carried out need to be selected, along with territory in which to work. The presiding overseer plans for a full schedule of field service during the week with the publishers. Then, just before his visit, congregation records are gathered together at the Kingdom Hall.

On his arrival at a congregation, the circuit overseer spends Tuesday afternoon consulting the congregation records. He may read over the end-of-the-year report sent to the branch office by the former presiding overseer, and acquaint himself with the congregation to some extent by examining the Publisher's Record cards. He also examines the territory file and the congregation accounts, and takes note of the care given to literature

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supplies in the congregation. Sometime that day he sees the presiding overseer, to receive from him details concerning the program of activity for the week.

Later in the week, at a convenient time, the entire body of elders will meet with the circuit overseer. He is present, not to pass judgment on what the congregation has been doing nor to make changes, but to work along with the body of elders, for he, too, is an elder. (1 Pet. 5:1) As is customary at meetings of the elders, the local presiding overseer will be chairman. The presiding overseer will no doubt have listed in advance the matters on which they would appreciate helpful observations or counsel from the circuit overseer. The circuit overseer, too, may have noted matters that he believes it would be beneficial to discuss. These various topics or questions may be submitted to the chairman, who will call for discussion of them in a reasonable order. He may introduce certain matters himself, or he may ask another elder who is personally acquainted with the situation to do so. The circuit overseer will be invited to offer any counsel that he believes will be helpful. It is not expected that he will know the answer to every question or that he will have a background of experience with every type of situation that may arise, but he is glad to share the information that he does have. Others of the elders should feel free to ask questions and to offer observations.

In some cases what is needed is counsel on spiritual matters, and this, of course, should come from God's Word. In other cases the brothers may simply be seeking some advice that is based on practical experience, whether that of the circuit overseer or of the brothers in the congregations that he has served. The length of this meeting is determined to a considerable extent by what needs to be discussed.

If there are any matters on which individuals associated with the congregation would like to have counsel from the circuit overseer, they too should feel free to approach him during his visit. He is an "older man," a shepherd of God's "flock," and he comes to the congregation to be of help in any way that he can.

During the week of his visit all the congregation meetings will be held at their normal times, and will be conducted by those regularly assigned to do so. The

circuit overseer will attend these meetings and benefit from them along with the rest of the congregation.

On a number of occasions, however, he will address the ones assembled. For example, at the congregation book study that he attends, the one presiding may conclude the study ten minutes early that evening and invite the visiting circuit overseer to offer any words of encouragement that he may have for the group. (Compare Acts 13:15.) Similarly, on the service meeting the final half hour will be assigned to him to give a discourse.

Toward the end of the week he will conduct a special program lasting about an hour and fifteen minutes. Part of this program is a stimulating discussion of new things learned, covering information in *Watchtower* issues of the previous six months (also Scriptural articles in *Awake!*) and any of the bound books of the Watch Tower Society released during the past twelve months, while another part of the program is a Scriptural talk. At the regular time set aside for it, he also gives the public talk, one that has been especially designed for his use. And at the conclusion of the final meeting with the entire congregation he delivers another Scriptural discourse, about thirty minutes in length.

He is not present in the congregation to analyze the congregation's service record and pronounce it weak or strong, but to upbuild the brothers, and he has a fine opportunity to do this in his discourses. These are to be Scriptural discussions, helping those present to appreciate and strengthen their relationship to Jehovah and to Christ Jesus. He can aid the congregation to see the whole scope of the Christian ministry, the many opportunities that there are for them individually to advance the interests of pure worship. He can build up their appreciation for the grand privilege of serving Jehovah, and share with them helpful suggestions and encouraging experiences related to such service.—Acts 15:3.

For five days of his visit, Wednesday through Sunday, the circuit overseer will spend a large proportion of his time in the field ministry with the brothers and sisters. He has had much experience in the field ministry, and he is with the congregation to share

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the benefits of that experience with them, to assist them in any appropriate way to further the work of preaching and disciple-making. This is one of the principal reasons why he is sent to the congregation. The presiding overseer should notify the congregation in advance as to where and when the meetings for field service will be held, and encourage all who can to join in group witnessing during the week. It is beneficial for the publishers to arrange for some time to be spent in door-to-door activity and some in making return visits. If anyone would especially like to have an appointment to go from door to door with him or to have assistance with return visits or in a home Bible study, the individual can mention this to the presiding overseer, and he will gladly arrange it with the circuit overseer. Apart from those arrangements, the circuit overseer may work out his own schedule of accompanying publishers in the field ministry, depending on who is present at the meetings for group witnessing.

If the circuit overseer is married, his wife will devote as many hours as she can to the field service. She works under the direction of her husband, and in most cases he is glad to arrange for her to accompany sisters in the congregation in the field service.

Before leaving the congregation, but after his meeting with the body of elders, the circuit overseer fills out a report to the branch office on what service he rendered during his visit, making observations on the spiritual condition of the congregation, matters that were discussed with the elders, and so forth. He leaves a copy of this report with the presiding overseer of the congregation.

If he observes a seriously unhealthy spiritual condition, or finds that the plain counsel of God's Word is not being applied in the congregation, he will, of course, discuss the matter with the body of elders, and after having done this, he may take it up in one of his talks to the entire congregation. This too would be included in his report.

If serious wrongdoing develops in a congregation, and the local body of elders is remiss in shouldering its responsibility to safeguard the "flock of God" and to uphold pure worship, the Watch Tower Society through its branch representatives has the authority to

send one or more elders (perhaps including a circuit overseer) into the congregation to examine the situation and make its report and recommendation to the branch. —Acts 15:22; 16:4, 5.

Twice a year two-day circuit assemblies are arranged for the benefit of the congregations. The circuit overseer is responsible for the operation of the assembly organization on these occasions. On the circuit overseer's recommendation, the Society appoints various permanent assembly personnel: an assembly overseer, an assistant assembly overseer and a news representative. They are to work closely with the circuit overseer in caring for the assembly organization, so that the circuit overseer can give his primary attention to the assembly program. Other capable men, too, may be designated by the circuit overseer to care for various departments.

At the close of each month when the circuit overseer and his wife send their field service reports to the branch office, they also submit a report on expenses incurred, provided they were not covered by the congregations. Such expenses for which the branch office reimburses the circuit overseer include transportation. The branch office will also cover food and lodging, if some congregations are not able to make provision. In addition, a small monthly allowance is sent for personal things, and the fact that they obtain literature at pioneer rates provides a little more to keep them going in the work. They have confidence that, as Jesus promised, if they seek continually the interests of Jehovah's kingdom, the material needs will be provided. —Luke 12:31.

DISTRICT OVERSEER

Another one of the traveling elders of Jehovah's Christian witnesses is the district overseer. He, too, is appointed by the Society, and is assigned by the branch office to the section where he serves. His assignment includes participation in the program at circuit assemblies, as well as service with a congregation in the area where each assembly is held.

A number of circuits comprise a district. After corresponding with the circuit overseers as to dates when assembly facilities may be available, the branch office

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plans the schedule of the district overseer so that he will be able to serve each of the assemblies in his district. In some circuits, due to travel distance or the size of available assembly facilities, more than one assembly is arranged, and the district overseer is scheduled to spend one week in the circuit for each assembly held. Such circuit assemblies, each two days in length, are held twice a year.

On Tuesday afternoon, at the beginning of his visit, he meets with the circuit overseer and his wife (if he is married). In connection with their ministry, the circuit overseer may have in mind certain matters that he would like to discuss, and the district overseer will no doubt have helpful information that he can share. This is also an opportunity for the district overseer to learn about any special needs that the circuit may have, so that he can take them into consideration in his remarks at the forthcoming assembly. During the remainder of that week the circuit overseer will no doubt be busy much of the time with assembly arrangements, though he will probably be able to arrange some time to work in the field ministry with the district overseer.

Since the district overseer will also be working during the week with a congregation in the assembly city (unless instructed by the branch office to work with a congregation elsewhere), he needs to get in touch with the presiding overseer of that congregation sometime on Tuesday. The congregation usually is notified well in advance by the circuit overseer so they can arrange to show hospitality to the district overseer (and his wife, if he is married) by providing accommodations and meals, if possible. Before his visit the presiding overseer will also have made plans for the week's activity, and the presiding overseer will provide necessary details to the district overseer. He is there to help the congregation in any way possible.

One of his principal duties while with the congregation is to take the lead in arrangements for group witnessing, usually from Wednesday through Friday. On those days he is ordinarily able to devote most of his time to the field ministry, participating in both door-to-door preaching and the making of return visits. Where possible, he accompanies others, sharing with them practical suggestions that he has picked up over

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the years. To a considerable extent, he arranges his own schedule to accompany publishers in the field service, depending on who is at the meetings for group witnessing.

Participation in the field ministry thus has an important place in his schedule. He endeavors to devote as many field hours with the publishers as he can each month. If he is married, his wife does likewise.

On an evening arranged for by the presiding overseer, the district overseer gives a Scriptural talk of about an hour for the congregation that he is serving. If there are any matters on which the body of elders want his counsel, they may also arrange to meet with him for that purpose, possibly on the same evening that he speaks to the congregation. Of course, some evenings will probably be used in rehearsing parts for the circuit assembly.

During the two days of the circuit assembly, there is much for the district overseer to do. He is the assembly chairman, responsible to see that the program runs smoothly. He himself has a number of talks to give, including the public discourse.

At the conclusion of the assembly the district overseer sends a report to the branch office, making note of matters discussed with the circuit overseer, also with the elders gathered at the assembly, as well as his observations on the circuit assembly and the spiritual condition of the circuit itself. His accommodations, expenses and field ministry reports are cared for in the same way as those for the circuit overseer.

There is a rotation of assignments of the traveling elders every two years. This may involve a rotation of one from being a district overseer to circuit overseer and vice versa.

BRANCH OVERSEER

The branch overseer is an elder who is appointed by the Watch Tower Society and has general oversight of the congregations of Jehovah's witnesses in an entire country or group of lands.

He arranges for the sending out of literature provided by the "faithful and discreet slave," and supervises the preaching and disciple-making work in such a way that people in all the territory under the branch

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office are given opportunity to hear the good news. He sees that needed attention is given to all the congregations, circuit and district overseers, regular and special pioneers as well as missionaries, and he personally serves on assembly programs in various parts of the land.

The appointment of a branch overseer is for an indefinite time, until the Watch Tower Society may see fit to replace him.

ZONE OVERSEER

Arrangements are made by the Watch Tower Society for persons who are elders to visit the Society's branch offices and printing plants as well as all the missionary homes of Jehovah's witnesses throughout the world. These visiting elders are known as zone overseers.

As overseers, they do a work of visiting and inspecting. They examine the records of each branch, analyze its oversight of the congregations under its jurisdiction and what is being accomplished in preaching the good news and making disciples. They attend congregation meetings with the branch overseer and the missionaries and, where possible, accompany them in the field ministry. They are interested in the spiritual condition of those whom they serve and in what is being done by the shepherds in caring for the "flock of God."

So, there is, indeed, an interchange of encouragement throughout all the congregations of God, all being bound together in unity through love and the spirit of God. (Rom. 1:12; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:14) Everyone in the "flock of God" is strengthened with a sense of interdependency, just as the various parts of the human body serve for the common good of the whole body. (1 Cor. 12:12-31) And as each one is drawn close to his fellow servants in loving unity, he is also brought closer to Christ Jesus the appointed Head of the Christian congregation, and to Jehovah God, whose spirit permeates the entire congregation and whose Word guides its operation in harmony with his righteous purpose.—Eph. 1:22, 23; Prov. 3:5, 6.