



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201-2483, U.S.A. PHONE (718) 825-3600

June 1, 1998

TO ALL TRAVELING OVERSEERS

Dear Brothers:

The "God's Way of Life" District Conventions have begun. Some of you will be attending international conventions. What a wonderful opportunity you will have to encourage fellow servants from other lands and to be strengthened by association with them! Indeed, all of us can thank Jehovah God for directing us into his way of life, which is so rich and satisfying. Having many years of experience, you can testify that working hard at your theocratic assignments is truly a source of refreshment and happiness.—Eccl. 3:12, 13; Acts 20:35.

In addition to providing information regarding your new service talks beginning in September, below are a few other items that will be of interest to you.

Official Mailing Address: Occasionally, individuals or groups such as Regional Building Committees and Assembly Hall Committees, request the mailing addresses of traveling overseers. Depending on the circumstances, the Service Department may suggest that mail be sent to you in care of the Society for forwarding rather than give out your permanent addresses, which change from time to time. For your information, the current official mailing address for all circuit and district overseers in the United States is:

c/o Watchtower
100 Watchtower Drive
Patterson NY 12563-9204

Special Assembly Day Guest Speakers: This is a reminder of what the Society's December 2, 1996, letter to traveling overseers states regarding guest speakers at special assembly days. The circuit overseer, *not the Assembly Hall Overseer*, is responsible to care for the needs of the guest speaker. This involves arranging for transportation to and from the airport if needed, seeing that there is a place to stay, and making sure that meals are provided. It would be a kindness to check with the guest speaker to determine if he, and his wife if married, will need a meal upon arrival. Assembly Hall personnel are not responsible for providing this.

Circuit and District Overseers' Meeting With Local Elders: When a district overseer works with a circuit overseer while serving a congregation, the circuit overseer is to preside at the meeting with the elders and ministerial servants, as he would normally, and the district overseer should freely participate. Early in the week, the circuit overseer and district overseer should work together to prepare an agenda of items to discuss with the elders. With good planning and coordination, it should be possible to consider any recommendations, review the congregation's activity, and discuss other local needs within the 45 minutes allotted for this portion of the meeting. The district overseer should take the lead during the last 20 minutes of

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the elders' meeting, covering items on the agenda that he and the circuit overseer had agreed upon. Some district overseers have been preparing a discussion on a subject of their choice, but we prefer that this not be done. Keep in mind that this meeting is one of the quarterly meetings of the elders held during the year.—*om* 42.

Bethel Applications: The "Application for Membership in the Order of Special Full-time Servants and of the Bethel Family" (A-8) and the accompanying "Dear Applicant" letter (A-9) have been revised. We ask that you use only the current forms and destroy all versions printed before February 1998. Congregations should not stock Bethel applications. Individuals are directed to obtain these from the traveling overseers or at district conventions where a meeting is held for those interested in Bethel service.

Talk Conclusions: When concluding a talk at a congregation meeting or at an assembly, there is no need for a speaker to say Thank You to the audience. The *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*, page 175, states: "The conclusion of your talk deserves careful preparation. It should draw into sharp focus the principal points that you want remembered and drive home the theme with finality." Hence, the speaker's final words should incite the audience to action. Saying Thank You would not be necessary. It would be good for circuit overseers to share this information with elders and ministerial servants during their next visit to the congregations.

Former Child Abusers Who Move: The March 14, 1997, letter to bodies of elders, page 2, paragraph 3, gives the following direction regarding a former child molester who moves: "The secretary should write on behalf of the elders to the new congregation's body of elders and outline this publisher's background and what the elders in the old congregation have been doing to assist him." Please note an exception to this direction: The elders may have written to the branch office and given full details about a former child abuser who is currently serving as an elder or ministerial servant. In such a case, if the branch office has decided that he can continue serving in a position of trust because the sin occurred many years ago and because he has lived an exemplary life since then, it will not be necessary to pass on information about the brother's past sin if he moves to another congregation. Please have the elders make note of this clarification during your visits.

New Service Talks on Tuesday and Thursday (or Friday) Evenings: Beginning September 1998, circuit overseers will give two new service talks provided by the Society. The service talk for the Tuesday evening is entitled "Regularly Feeding at Jehovah's Table." This 30-minute outline, which addresses the importance of meeting attendance, is taken from the 1996-97 circuit assembly program letter. The circuit overseer can include encouraging statistics gathered from the congregation's records. Take time to build enthusiasm for the special week of activity, informing the congregation of the days set aside to engage in special features of the field ministry. Or you might whet their appetite for what will be discussed at meetings for field service, such as how to make good use of the *Require* brochure, how to start a home Bible study with the direct approach, and so forth. On Thursday (or Friday) evening, the service talk is entitled "God's Kingdom—Are You Getting the Sense of It?" This 40-minute outline is designed to give the circuit overseer flexibility so he can devote time to discussing the needs of the congregation he is serving that week, showing how improvement can be made.

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During the next series of visits to the congregations starting next September, the Society is not scheduling a special meeting for Saturday between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. However, depending on the needs of the congregation, circuit overseers may decide to meet for an hour with the Congregation Service Committee or with pioneers that need encouragement and help. Or there may be other matters needing attention. In the future, when no special meeting is planned for Saturday afternoons, circuit overseers should follow the above-mentioned direction.

Many of you will have the privilege this summer to promote the Kingdom work through your district convention talks or by teaching pioneer schools. With much to be done, we pray Jehovah's rich blessing on your efforts. (Prov. 10:22) Be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

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