



# WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201, U.S.A.

PHONE (718) 625-3600

May 8, 1986

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

We are writing to inform you of an adjustment in the way things are to be handled when a person in the congregation joins another religious organization.

Up to the present, someone who joins a false religious organization would be subject to judicial investigation and possible disfellowshipping. However, it has been determined that it would be more appropriate to take the position that a person who joins a false religious organization has by his actions, disassociated himself from the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. This is similar to the way we view one who joins a secular organization, the objective of which is contrary to the Bible, and, hence, is under judgment by Jehovah God.--See Our Ministry, page 151; compare Revelation 19:17-21; Isaiah 2:4.

So in the future, if it is learned that a person has taken up association with another religious organization, and thus is identified with it, a committee should be formed to investigate matters. They should talk with the individual to determine whether or not he has joined another religious organization and intends to remain with it. If it is clearly established that he has indeed joined another religious organization and intends to remain with it, then it would be fitting to acknowledge this by making a brief announcement to the congregation that the person has voluntarily disassociated himself from the congregation and is no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Thereafter, the person would be viewed by members of the congregation in the same light as those described at 1 John 2:19. (See The Watchtower of July 15, 1985, pages 30, 31.) The Society should be notified of any such disassociations on the forms provided for that purpose (S-77, S-79). These should be signed by the committee that investigates the matter.

Please note that this adjustment does not affect how we would deal with a person who still professes to be a member of the congregation but who tries to practice interfaith, who promotes a sect, or who endeavors to subvert the faith of others. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Titus 3:10, 11; 2 Timothy 2:16-18) Some who are still in the congregation may be causing division or undermining confidence in Jehovah's arrangement. This may involve or lead to apostasy. Any of such persons who do not respond to repeated admonitions in harmony with Titus 3:10, 11,

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS  
May 8, 1986  
Page 2

but who unrepentantly promote false teachings in the congregation, should be dealt with by a judicial committee and may need to be disfellowshipped. Of course, if any of these individuals disassociate themselves or join another religion, there would be no need for a judicial committee to pursue it.--Romans 16:17, 18; 1981 Kingdom Ministry School textbook, pages 166, 167; The Watchtower of April 1, 1986, pages 30, 31.

It is a pleasure to be working with you, under the headship of Christ, in maintaining the unity and peace of the congregation. (Ephesians 4:3-6, 11-13) We remember you in our prayers, and we send with this letter our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

*Watchtower B.V.I. Society*  
OF NEW YORK, INC.