

WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

CABLE WATCHTOWER

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September 19, 1988

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

A number of years ago we wrote you about an arrangement regarding health insurance for all traveling overseers and their wives which would work for the benefit of circuits and traveling overseers alike. Prior to that time some circuits absorbed the high cost of hospitalization and medical care for traveling overseers who became seriously ill. We are happy to report that since that time these expenses have generally been cared for without anyone being unduly burdened. In addition, that arrangement has been beneficial and resulted in greater peace of mind for the traveling overseers, their wives, and the circuits.

SHARING AUTOMOBILE COSTS FOR TRAVELING OVERSEERS

Now the Society is happy to let you know of a new arrangement for providing automobiles to fill the needs of our circuit and district overseers. It is hoped that this will result in a number of benefits for all concerned. Financing for this will be similar to that of the health insurance program and thus will not impose a greater burden upon small circuits than upon larger ones. Rather, as Paul said, "an equalizing might take place."--2 Cor. 8:14.

It has been observed that some circuits regularly provide automobiles for traveling overseers, and your kindness has been very much appreciated by them and by the Society. In a number of circuits, heavier vehicles such as Suburbans or vans have been purchased for use by traveling overseers. Although some circuits have been financially able to bear this expense, others such as smaller and rural circuits have not. We believe all would benefit by an arrangement through which all publishers would have the opportunity to share a portion of the total expense of providing reliable, basic transportation, a standard-size automobile, for the traveling overseers.

AUTOMOBILE LEASING

To this end the Society has investigated various options in order to provide what is needed through an equitable arrangement and at the least possible cost. It appears that this can best be accomplished by leasing cars for a three-year period, after which they will be replaced with new cars. You will be glad to know that the Society has been able to work out a very favorable high volume, low cost arrangement. We plan to lease approximately 150 cars this year, 150 in the fall of next year, and 150 in the fall of 1990. In order to get the program started, funds will be needed at the outset. We anticipate the first 150 cars will be delivered later this year.

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The Society will not be providing large vehicles of the type that will pull a trailer. Rather, we believe that good quality standard-size automobiles will adequately care for the needs of the traveling overseers without imposing an expensive burden upon anyone.

The Society feels it will greatly simplify matters if we combine this new automobile program with the health and dental insurance program, and we suggest an annual per publisher contribution of \$4.50. This does not mean that each publisher is expected to contribute \$4.50 yearly. Rather, the congregation as a whole would average \$4.50 per publisher per year. A single parent with five children and limited income would not be expected to contribute \$27.50, while a married couple with no children and a substantial income would contribute \$4.50 each. We suggest that the secretary count the number of the Congregation's Publisher Record cards in the file. Then a resolution can be presented to the congregation to cover the cost of the program. The contribution would be \$4.50 times the number of publishers. Thereafter a check payable to the circuit or that section of the circuit to which the congregation belongs (A,B,C, etc.) can be promptly sent to the circuit assembly overseer together with a brief letter as to what the check is for. If your congregation has already made its contribution to the health insurance fund for this year, based on the rate of \$1.25 per publisher, then under this new arrangement you would consider forwarding to the circuit assembly overseer, a contribution for the automobile and insurance program in the amount of \$3.25 times the number of publishers in the congregation. Otherwise, the \$4.50 rate would apply. The circuit overseer, in turn, will see to it that the funds are promptly forwarded to the Society noting the purpose for which the contribution is made. Please do not wait until your circuit assembly to do this. Rather, endeavor to handle this as soon as possible following the receipt of this letter. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

While it is true that at first only one third of the circuits and districts in the country will receive vehicles, within only two years all traveling overseers will have received their automobiles. You will be interested in some of the other benefits that will result. When a circuit has a leased vehicle, it will no longer be necessary to care for the expense of major repairs on the vehicle as this will be cared for by the 36 month/50,000 mile warranty. The car lease, registration, title costs, and automobile insurance for leased automobiles, as well as the insurance for present automobiles traveling overseers will be using until such time as they are provided with a new leased car, will be covered by the \$4.50 per capita contribution. The dental and health insurance for traveling overseers and their wives will also be included in the coverage.

The only additional expense for upkeep should be normal oil changes, filter replacement, lubrication, tune-ups, tires, etc.

This means there will no longer be a need for committees to be formed to handle such matters for circuit and district overseers. There will be no need to take up time discussing such things with elders or to pass resolutions in congregations. Thus, this new provision will greatly simplify things for everyone involved.

TRAILERS

Some traveling overseers own a second vehicle, such as a truck, for pulling a trailer. In the future, it will not be appropriate for either congregations or circuits to contribute to traveling overseers for automobile insurance on a second vehicle or for any expenses whatever relating to the purchase, upkeep or insurance of trailers or vehicles to pull them. We have advised all traveling overseers that such expenses are not to be submitted to the congregations or circuits they serve. (Compare 1 Thess. 2:6, 9.) If traveling overseers can afford the expenses involved in owning a personal trailer, it will be solely their responsibility to care for these, not that of the brothers. The only expense in connection with trailers for which the elders could take the initiative and consider covering is the parking cost for a trailer during the week that the traveling overseer serves the congregation.

The Society is encouraging the traveling overseers to weigh prayerfully their circumstances to determine if they really need a trailer. Those who feel they do will be responsible to care for the resulting expense. We will do what we can to help faithful older traveling overseers get located in assignments where they will not need to pull trailers. However, as a result of this adjustment some traveling overseers may decide to no longer use a trailer. Of course, the Society encourages the traveling overseers to stay in the homes of the brothers wherever possible. It may also help if some of the traveling overseers, especially the older brothers who have served a great many years, could stay in a Kingdom Hall apartment if one is available. In the future, congregations building Kingdom Halls that will be centrally located in the circuit that would like to construct an apartment for their traveling overseer may do so if this proves practical for them. Brothers in the circuit should communicate openly in determining where such an apartment could conveniently be located and if the circuit will need to assist with the expenses. Of course, the Society cannot assure that a circuit overseer will be able to use an apartment in a Kingdom Hall as there are a number of factors that ought to be considered.

We know you have deep affection for your traveling overseers just as the elders in the congregation at Ephesus manifested toward Paul. (Acts 20:37) It is evident that much is being done to assist them in their fine work, and we very much appreciate this spirit you show. Your efforts to provide adequate transportation and health insurance for these brothers and their wives is further evidence of that fine spirit.

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It is a pleasure to be working shoulder to shoulder with all of you in the advancement of Kingdom interests. May Jehovah's continued blessings go with you as you earnestly care for the needs of the flock entrusted to you.

Your brothers,

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

Some of the members of the Society are traveling overseas for various reasons. It is not appropriate for the Society to contribute to traveling expenses for automobiles, insurance on a second vehicle or for any expenses whatever relating to the purchase, upkeep or insurance of trailers or vehicles to pull them. We have advised all traveling overseers that such expenses are not to be submitted to the congregation or otherwise they serve. (Compare 1 Thess. 2:8, 9.) If traveling overseers can afford the expenses involved in owning a personal trailer, it will be solely their responsibility to care for them, not that of the Society. The only expense in connection with trailers for which the elders could take the initiative and consider covering is the parking cost for a trailer during the week that the traveling overseer serves the congregation.

The Society is encouraging the traveling overseers to weigh properly their circumstances to determine if they really need a trailer. Those who feel they do will be responsible to care for the resulting expense. We will do what we can to help further their traveling overseers get located in assignments where they will not need to pull trailers. However, as a result of this adjustment some traveling overseers may decide to no longer use a trailer. Of course, the Society encourages the traveling overseers to stay in the homes of the brothers wherever possible. It may also help if some of the traveling overseers, especially the older brothers who have served a great many years, could stay in a Kingdom Hall apartment if one is available. In the future, congregations building Kingdom Halls that will be centrally located in the circuit that would like to construct an apartment for their traveling overseer may do so if this proves practical for them. Brothers in the circuit should communicate openly in determining where such an apartment should conveniently be located and if the circuit will need to assist with the expense. Of course, the Society cannot assure that a traveling overseer will be able to use an apartment in a Kingdom Hall as there are a number of factors that ought to be considered.

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