WATCHTOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.
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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Public Meetings

Dear Brothers:

For many years now the Public Meeting has played a vital role in attracting newly-interested ones to the congregation and keeping us all refreshed and updated as to the application of God's Word in these critical times. It is still an important feature of the Kingdom-preaching activity and deserves the full support of all, publishers and speakers alike. Elders can give an excellent lead by always maintaining a positive and enthusiastic attitude toward these meetings.

Members of the congregation show their appreciation of this provision by their regular attendance and their diligent effort to invite and bring along interested ones. They well know that the larger the audience the greater will be the encouragement for the speaker to rise to the occasion and present an informative and motivating talk. Speakers do their part in enhancing these meetings by thoroughly familiarizing themselves with the material to be presented and by practicing to ensure that the delivery will be lively and will hold the attention of the audience.

From time to time, new public talk outlines are provided. At present the total number of outlines exceeds 100. It is expected that all speakers assigned by the congregations will use these outlines rather than talks they have composed themselves. Though a few outlines may lend themselves to the use of well-thought-out visual aids to illustrate points, keep in mind their use should be very limited.

Although some of the outlines initially called for audience participation and demonstrations, those instructions have been amended by information presented to the elders. Therefore, it would not be in order to include audience participation or demonstrations. An equivalent amount of material will need to be added to those talks to take up the time formerly taken by the audience participation and demonstrations. Similarly, we have received reminders indicating that speakers should personally read texts, not calling for volunteers from the audience or having someone do this from the platform. The speaker is in the best position to read scriptures accurately, with proper emphasis, and to make application of the material being considered. All speakers should use the assigned time to instruct, employing the art of teaching.

It is essential that only qualified men, elders and ministerial servants, be assigned to give public talks. Visiting speakers should be well recommended in their own congregation. They should be elders preferably although qualified ministerial

servants could occasionally be invited. Generally, requests for speakers should be through the presiding overseer or some brother assigned to care for such matters.--See the Society's letter of May 1, 1989, to all bodies of elders.

So that the audience can follow when scriptures are read, speakers should use the New World Translation. There may be occasions where the speaker desires to quote the New World Translation and thereafter briefly show how another translation renders a phrase or verse. Good judgment is needed in this regard.

As an aid toward developing new speakers in the home congregation, the body of elders could consider how they might use qualified ministerial servants, at the same time providing opportunity to counsel and assist them in improving speaking ability. For example, some of the outlines provided by the Society will lend themselves to use as a two-part talk--usually a 20-minute part and a 25-minute part. The first could be assigned to a new speaker and the other to a more experienced brother. Following the presentation, the body of elders or those elders present could compare notes privately and then delegate one of their number (possibly the school overseer) to offer such counsel and suggestions as may be deemed appropriate.

It might also be good to assign to speakers subjects that they have not previously worked on. Speakers can be given a choice as to the subjects of the Society's list they are to prepare.

Speakers, whether from your own congregation or visitors, should conform to appropriate standards of dress and grooming. It is preferred that speakers wear suits when giving public talks. Casual attire including sports coats should be avoided. If there are problems with dress and grooming on the part of a visiting speaker, it would be appropriate to provide his body of elders with this information.

It is best that speakers sent out to serve elsewhere should be away from their own congregation no more than once a month. Thus, the many matters that have to be looked after locally will not fall on just a few, and the publishers will not feel that they have been left on their own.

With the blessing of Jehovah on our united efforts to maintain a high standard in our Public Meeting activity, we may look forward to many enlightening and joyous sessions at our Kingdom Halls.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B.I.B.L.E. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

P.S. Please let all ministerial servants in your congregation who give public talks read this letter so they will be familiar with what is expected of them as public speakers.