WATCHTOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

CABLE WATCHTOWER

25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201, U.S.A. PHONE (718) 625-3600

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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

The Society has received some inquiries on matters of procedure involving unbaptized publishers as well as baptized members of the congregation. We would like to take this occasion to provide you with some guidelines.

Unbaptized Publishers

A question has come up as to when an announcement is to be made to the congregation that one qualifies as an unbaptized publisher. As pointed out in the "Questions from Readers" of the December 1, 1989, Watchtower, an unbaptized publisher "can turn in his first field service report when he actually shares in field witnessing." Thus, the announcement should be made to the congregation after the person (1) has been interviewed and approved by two elders, (2) has actually shared in the public ministry, and (3) has turned in a field service report. At that point, "an announcement that he is a new unbaptized publisher can be made to the congregation."--w88 11/15 17, par. 10.

How do you view an unbaptized publisher who becomes inactive and later wants to share in the ministry? You would consider him as inactive, just as in the case of a baptized publisher. If at some later time he takes up the ministry, it would not be necessary to make an announcement that he is again an unbaptized publisher but you can simply view him as reactivated.

What if an unbaptized publisher who had engaged in wrongdoing and who was announced as no longer a publisher of the good news later wants to share in the ministry? Such a person is no longer recognized as a publisher and thus it cannot be said he is irregular or inactive. Consequently, if at some later time he progresses spiritually to the point where he wishes to become a publisher, two elders (perhaps those who earlier met with him) can meet with him to determine his qualifications. If he qualifies, an announcement can be made that he is an unbaptized publisher.

Some have asked about the propriety of keeping a written record of a meeting held with an unbaptized publisher who was involved in wrongdoing. It would be good to keep such a written record. This would be true whether it is determined the unbaptized publisher is repentant or whether an announcement is made to the congregation that he "is no longer a publisher of the good news." (See November 15, 1988, Watchtower, pages 18, 19.) After the two elders have met with the unbaptized publisher and the

matter has been concluded, a written record should be prepared and placed in a sealed envelope. Indicate on the front of the envelope the name of the individual concerned, the names of the two elders who met with him, and the date of the meeting. Thereafter, the envelope should be given to the secretary who will place it in the congregation's confidential file.

Baptized Publishers

Please take note of an adjustment in the procedure to follow when handling cases involving a disfellowshipping or disassociation. The May 1, 1989, letter to all bodies of elders says at the top of page 5: "When the S-79b card is returned to the congregation from the Society, it may be stapled to the outside of the envelope." However, in the more recent letter of July 1, 1989, to all bodies of elders concerning confidential matters, it is stated on page 2, in the fourth paragraph: "Nothing should be preserved outside of this sealed envelope (including unnecessary personal notes) by any elder on the committee." In the future, please follow the direction contained in the Society's more recent letter of July 1, 1989.

In the case of a disfellowshipping or disassociation, a copy of the Notification of Disfellowshipping or Disassociation form (S-77) and any other related correspondence should be placed in a sealed envelope. The chairman of the committee should give the envelope to the secretary who, in turn, will put it in the congregation's confidential file. When the S-79b card is returned by the Society, the chairman of the committee can retrieve the filed envelope from the secretary, make out a new envelope, place the S-79b card along with the other material in the envelope, and seal it. Show on the front of the envelope the name of the person, the names of the elders serving on the committee, and the date the action was taken. Thereafter, give the envelope to the secretary for safekeeping. Keep in mind that no one outside the committee should read the contents of the envelope, not even the secretary if he is not on the committee. This procedure will ensure confidentiality. Thus, any S-79 card (including the S-78 used previously) that is not now filed in this manner should be refiled in harmony with the above direction. If and when a disfellowshipped or disassociated person makes a plea for reinstatement, the envelope may be opened by someone on the committee.

For more details regarding the handling of correspondence dealing with disfellowshippings and disassociations, please see the Society's letter to all bodies of elders dated September 20, 1984.

Be assured of our prayers for Jehovah's continued blessing as you extend yourselves in behalf of the brotherhood. We send our warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brothers,

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