WATCHTOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.
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April 1, 1992

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS AND TRAVELING OVERSEERS

Dear Brothers:

Re: Kingdom Hall Dedications

There have been many new Kingdom Halls constructed recently, and in this connection questions have arisen as to the Society's policy with regard to Kingdom Hall dedication programs. The information to follow sets out some guidelines, which we believe will prove beneficial. Please file this letter with the other Society policy letters in your permanent file for future reference as needed.

Speaker: A Kingdom Hall dedication speaker from Bethel may be requested, but such requests should be directed in writing to the Teaching Committee of the Governing Body. If a Bethel speaker is requested, we will be pleased to consider your request and assign a brother who is on the approved Kingdom Hall dedication speaker list. It would be expected that the travel expenses for the speaker (and his wife if he is married and she is invited) would be covered by the congregation(s) involved with the dedication arrangements. Some congregations may find it more convenient to have the local circuit overseer or district overseer give the dedication talk if one of them is available for the date desired. If this is done, it should be understood that if the dedication is in a congregation other than the one being visited that week, it would not be appropriate to alter the visit to that congregation by rearranging meetings so that the traveling overseer could give a dedication talk in the congregation having the dedication program. Of course, if the traveling overseer giving the dedication talk wishes to take a week of vacation in connection with the Kingdom Hall dedication, there is no objection to that. However, the Society prefers that partial weeks of vacation not be used that would require the use of a substitute traveling overseer. Where a traveling overseer is available and has a part on the program, there is no need to invite a Bethel speaker to participate. This will make it more economical for the congregations.

There may be times when a Bethel speaker assigned to serve at a special assembly day program in a circuit would be available to give a Kingdom Hall dedication talk, especially if the congregation involved is located close to the assembly site. In some cases the Bethel speaker is scheduled to serve a special assembly day program on Saturday. This would leave him free to handle a Kingdom Hall dedication assignment on Sunday morning and then return to Brooklyn sometime Sunday afternoon. If the special assembly day program is on Sunday, then he has Saturday free for a Kingdom Hall dedication program. In some cases, even if he has a special assembly day program

on Saturday as well as Sunday, it may still be possible for him to give a Kingdom Hall dedication talk on Saturday evening if the congregation(s) involved have the program in the city where the assembly is held or if it is nearby. This would save considerable expense, especially where costs for travel from and to New York are involved.

Program Format: Once the details are worked out by the elders, the presiding overseer may correspond directly with the speaker assigned to give the dedication talk. Some helpful suggestions are herein provided:

1) The dedication talk should be given in the Kingdom Hall being dedicated. Thus, there would be no need for the congregation to rent a special auditorium for the dedication talk in order to accommodate a larger audience.

2) The Kingdom Hall dedication program may be held on either a Saturday or a Sunday. If held on Sunday, an abbreviated *Watchtower* Study should be arranged, similar to what is done during the visit of the circuit overseer.

3) If a slide presentation is included as part of the dedication program, it should not be too lengthy. It has been observed that on some occasions this portion of the dedication program could have been shorter and made more interesting and enjoyable to those in attendance. Including just a few of the main procedures in building the Kingdom Hall would be sufficient. Keep such slide presentations on a dignified level. The dedication program is an appropriate occasion for giving praise to Jehovah for his direction and blessing on the project and for advancing his worship in the community.

4) Where there is more than one language group using the same Kingdom Hall, a program in each language may be arranged if such is deemed necessary. Where it is decided to have the program in a language in addition to English and this other-language program is held first, the brother giving the dedication talk in this other language would dedicate the Kingdom Hall. The entire program may be repeated in the second language except that the speaker would not dedicate the Kingdom Hall or offer another dedication prayer during his talk, since it will already have been dedicated during the first-language program. In such a case, the second-language speaker would merely mention that the building was already dedicated, and no dedication prayer is given. In those cases where more than one language is involved, elders representing each congregation should meet together to work out the details for the program to be presented in two languages.

5) There appears to be no need to have a program of more than two-and-a-half hours in length. Generally, this length would allow for some local experiences in connection with construction, a history of the congregation(s) involved, and perhaps a slide showing of appropriate length if desired. Brief interviews of key brothers in the construction project may be included in one or more of these parts, and comments should be to the point.

6) More dual and multiple Kingdom Halls in one building are being constructed. In such cases only one dedication program is needed to cover all Kingdom Halls that are part of the one complex.

7) A tour of the new Kingdom Hall may be arranged before the dedication program. If felt appropriate, light snacks or refreshments may be served but not alcoholic beverages. Many brothers have found this to be a fine time to invite businessmen and officials in the community who may have become familiar with the building work and who may have expressed a desire to see the completed building. Specially selected tour guides may be assigned to escort such businessmen and officials and make their visit comfortable. Similar arrangements may be made for other guests when needed. These arrangements are generally scheduled for the morning or early afternoon, depending on the commencement of the dedication program.

Renovated Kingdom Halls: Questions have been received by the Society as to whether renovated Kingdom Halls should be dedicated. If only minor changes or renovation is involved, there is no need for such a program. Though there is no such thing as a rededication or reaffirmation, there may be circumstances where major renovations have taken place and the floor plan and general appearance of the Kingdom Hall have been greatly changed. Considerable restructuring may have taken place. Rest rooms, classrooms, the stage, and literature and magazine counters were perhaps changed or relocated. Such major changes have, in effect, made a new Kingdom Hall. In such cases a dedication program would be in order.

Seating: Congregations may need to limit the attendance so as not to exceed the number permitted by local fire laws. This can be done by controlling the number invited to attend. If more than one congregation is involved, some have found it convenient to limit attendance to the elders, ministerial servants, regular pioneers, and their families, and to those who have been baptized for a certain number of years, perhaps 10 or 20 years or more, depending on local circumstances. Some congregations also invite those who contributed much time, effort, or materials toward the construction work. Occasionally, local city officials permit the congregation(s) to set up loud speakers in the Kingdom Hall parking area so that overflow seating can be arranged. However, there is no need for any telephone tie-line to another Kingdom Hall or an auditorium nearby simply to provide more seating so that a larger audience may hear the program.

With continued growth being experienced in Jehovah's organization, there will certainly be a need for more Kingdom Halls. Therefore, we trust the information set out above will prove to be helpful to you in making decisions in connection with Kingdom Hall dedication programs. May all things take place decently and by arrangement so that Jehovah's name will continue to be respected and praised in your territory.—1 Cor. 10:31; 14:40.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. & T. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.
For the Teaching Committee
of the Governing Body