WATCHTOWER
BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

"Look! Now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2) These words of the apostle Paul help us to see the importance of staying close to Jehovah and his organization. Yet, there may be individuals in your congregation who have stopped attending meetings and sharing in the field ministry. Therefore, we would like the body of elders to make a special effort to encourage all inactive publishers in your congregation's territory to attend the Lord's Evening Meal. The arrangements set forth below should be followed each year in connection with the Memorial.

The congregation secretary should make a list of all inactive publishers. Then the service overseer should assign elders to call on and invite them to the Memorial. (*ks91* 75) In preparation for making these shepherding calls, each elder should consider the July 15, 1993, *Watchtower* article "Tenderly Shepherding Jehovah's Precious Sheep." Reference is made to Jesus' illustration about a man who had a hundred sheep but promptly searched for one that had strayed in order to bring it back to the flock. (Matt. 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7) The article states on page 27: "In like manner an overseer should have concern for each member of the congregation. Inactivity in the ministry or in attending Christian meetings does not mean that the sheep is no longer part of the flock. He remains part of 'all the flock' for whom the elders must 'render an account' to Jehovah." It further relates: "One body of elders became quite concerned that some who had been associated with the congregation had drifted into inactivity. A list of these individuals was prepared, and special effort was made to visit them and assist them to return to Jehovah's sheepfold. How thankful to God these elders were that over a period of two and a half years, they were able to help more than 30 persons to become active in Jehovah's service once again. One of those thus helped had been inactive for some 17 years!"

After the Memorial, please make follow-up visits. Help the inactive ones to see the importance of regular association. (See *The Watchtower,* September 15, 1993, pages 20-3.) Encourage and assist them to become active again in the field ministry. Be patient and loving in rendering such assistance, recognizing that it may take a while for them to return. Also, bear in mind that the way you present matters may affect how well they receive the information.

Assisting those who are weak is a labor of love, and it will certainly bring Jehovah's approval. May Jehovah bless your efforts to assist the inactive publishers in your congregation and to lovingly "shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son."—Acts 20:28.

Your brothers,

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