



WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

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October 10, 2000

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

The past year has brought fine increase in the ministry, showing that Jehovah's people "are not the sort that shrink back . . . but the sort that have faith." (Heb. 10:39) The number of those making themselves available to serve as pioneers is especially noteworthy. An all-time peak for the United States branch territory was reached in December 1999, with 94,522 regular pioneers reporting. Many of these are pioneering for the first time, as can be seen by the fact that 20,248 attended the Pioneer Service School during the 2000 service year, nearly double the 10,818 that were enrolled the previous year. There is a need for the elders to help these new pioneers to make a success of their ministry. As the May 15, 1996, *Watchtower*, page 29, states: "A new pioneer minister may need time and encouragement before he or she attains the balance needed to succeed as a full-time Kingdom proclaimer." Longtime pioneers also need to keep making advancement in order to be productive and happy pioneers. Consider four ways that you, as elders, can encourage the pioneers and help them to find joy in their ministry.

The first way is by showing sincere personal interest in them. The Kingdom Ministry School textbook, page 24, says: "Make a periodic check to see what encouragement pioneers need, and assist them in practical ways. . . . Arrange to work with them in field service on a regular basis." Are the pioneers getting support for the ministry? Are there adequate arrangements for meetings for service? Are they experiencing health problems, financial difficulties, or other challenging circumstances? Has their share in the Pioneers Assist Others program been a positive experience? (It would be good for the service overseer to review the reminders regarding the Pioneers Assist Others program that were provided in the S-201 letter dated October 1, 1999.) Pioneers appreciate it when elders show an interest in them and make an effort to render assistance where needed.

A second way you can encourage the pioneers is by helping them to improve their skills in the ministry. Of course, many pioneers are already very effective in presenting the good news and in helping interested ones to progress spiritually. But others, particularly newer pioneers, may need assistance to achieve a balanced ministry. For example, some enjoy sharing in street work or witnessing in other public places but do not see the importance of having a regular share in door-to-door witnessing with a view to starting Bible studies. Other pioneers are effective in making initial calls but do not know how to cultivate the interest they find. Still others place much literature but need to learn how to converse with people, to reason from the Scriptures, and to reach the heart.

How can you provide assistance in a way that will build them up? *Work with them* in the ministry. *Show by your example* how they can improve their art of teaching. And *make positive*

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expressions about aspects of the preaching and teaching work to which they might give greater attention. For example, if you notice that a pioneer rarely uses the Bible when sharing in field service, prepare a simple but effective presentation that includes a Bible text, and use it the next time you work with that pioneer. If a pioneer reports few return visits, arrange to make several return visits the next time the two of you work together, so he can see how you cultivate the interest of those with whom you have spoken previously. Avoid focusing on the pioneer's deficiencies; rather, provide a positive example for him to imitate.—Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

A third way to encourage the pioneers is to give them commendation. Pioneers do much to build up the spirit of a congregation. After attending the Pioneer Service School, one pioneer was moved to write: "As pioneers, we can contribute so much more than 70 hours per month. We can share our heartfelt expressions with our congregations and can play an important role in upbuilding and encouraging others. We have learned to follow Jesus' fine example in this, always doing so with a humble heart and a willing spirit." Do you not agree that pioneers who have such an upbuilding spirit are a blessing to the congregation? Be alert, therefore, to notice the contribution being made by the pioneers, and regularly let them know how much you appreciate it.

A fourth way you can strengthen the pioneers is to pray for them. You can, of course, do this in your private and family prayers, as well as when making shepherding calls on the pioneers. However, you can also express your appreciation and concern for the pioneers when you represent the congregation in prayer to Jehovah. Many pioneers find it very encouraging when elders do this.—Eph. 6:18-20.

We appreciate that, as elders, you have many responsibilities and that individually you may be limited in what you can do for the pioneers. However, if each elder does something to encourage even one pioneer, much good will result. Thus, we encourage each of you to consider how you might put into practice the four ways discussed in this letter to strengthen the pioneers. Your loving efforts will without doubt receive Jehovah's blessing.

Please be assured of our warm Christian love and our prayers in your behalf as you shepherd the congregation of God entrusted to your care.—Acts 20:28.

Your brothers,

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

Note to the Congregation Service Committee: Accompanying this letter is an outline for the December meeting with the regular pioneers. Please arrange right away for two elders to conduct this meeting. The elders should be well prepared so that the meeting is truly encouraging to the pioneers. Other elders may attend.