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Admitted in:
New York
Connecticut
Arizona

February 16, 1996

[redacted]

Re: Confidentiality of the Judicial Committee Arrangement

Dear Brother [redacted]

I represent the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., the parent organization of the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the United States. A copy of your December 28, 1995, letter has been given to me for response. That letter requests copies of correspondence regarding you and your wife that a judicial committee may have sent to the Watchtower Society.

From the date of your baptism and your joining the organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, you professed the Christian faith, agreed to adhere to the doctrine of Jehovah's Witnesses, and agreed to submit to the rules and procedures of the ecclesiastical government of Jehovah's Witnesses. One of the policies of Jehovah's Witnesses is that all matters brought to the attention of congregation elders and any correspondence between the congregations and the Watchtower Society that deal with the membership status of individual members shall remain confidential.

Jehovah's Witnesses' policy of strict confidentiality will protect you personally from any publication of information that may be in the congregation's files or the Watchtower Society's files. Most state legislatures and courts have realized the need for confidentiality regarding communications between clergymen and members of their congregation. Such recognition has even extended to the grant by most courts of a privilege not to disclose in court any confessions of unlawful acts by a person to a clergyman communicated in confidence while such a person is seeking spiritual advice.

There are Federal Freedom of Information Act laws and Federal Truth in Lending Regulations that impact the keeping of government files and credit bureau files on individuals. Such laws do not apply to the files of congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses or the files of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

[redacted]

If there is some matter of concern relative to any alleged breach of confidentiality by the elders or your allegedly being slandered, I encourage you to pursue the steps outlined at Matthew 18:15-17. Please accept this expression of warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brother,

Mario F. Moreno

MFM:rjb

c: Body of Elders, [redacted] Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, [redacted]
Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.