

WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

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January 24, 1991

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

We know that all of you rejoiced to see the evidence of Jehovah's blessing upon our worldwide preaching work as indicated by the report in the 1991 Yearbook. It is, indeed, a pleasure to see over four million publishers of the good news, with more than 301,000 new ones motivated to symbolize their dedication by baptism!--1 Cor. 3:5-9.

In the United States field, we have likewise seen Jehovah's blessing upon our efforts in the field ministry this past year. From the time we adjusted our method of presenting the Society's publications, fine results have been realized. It is now clearer to all that our preaching work should not be classified as a commercial activity in any way. Much literature continues to be put in the hands of people who express a desire to read it. On the average, we are conducting over a half million Bible studies in households throughout our territory. It was encouraging to see that 47,234 of these Bible students were baptized in the 1990 service year.

We look forward to Jehovah's continued blessing upon our work in the ministry. We can expect that blessing as we strive to discern His will and then carry out our work even though conditions get more difficult. (Eph. 5:15-17) Let us all continue looking prayerfully to Jehovah for direction so our ministry will remain fruitful and an honor to Him.--Phil. 1:9-11.

The Society has received a few questions regarding our simplified literature distribution arrangement. Some have also asked for information concerning donations made for the advancement of Kingdom interests worldwide. We are pleased to consider these matters with you as we unitedly strive for a fruitful ministry.

How are the funds contributed to the Society's worldwide work used?

These funds are used to care for expenses for all facets of the worldwide work. These expenses include the purchase of paper, presses, and other materials connected with the printing of the publications. They include expenses involving building programs such as the Watchtower Education Center at Patterson, the buildings built and renovated at the Brooklyn headquarters to house the growing Bethel family there, as well as the building of branch facilities throughout the world. These funds are used to provide for the basic needs of our missionaries, special

pioneers, and traveling overseers who are busy in the preaching work throughout the worldwide field. Shipping publications and cassettes to all parts of the world has become costly. Conventions must be held in stadiums that do not belong to the Society. So these are a few of the ways these funds are used. Thus, contributions received support the worldwide work.

Are we not "donating twice for the literature" if a donation is made at the time we get literature and then when we put donations received in the field in the contribution boxes designated for the Society's worldwide work?

No. Donations that go into the contribution boxes for the Society's worldwide work are not only "for the literature." Both publishers and sincerely interested persons in the field receive the literature without charge. When publishers make their donations, it is in support of every aspect of the worldwide work. Publishing literature is just a small part of this. That is why when donations are received from interested ones in the field, we should not say that the donation is "for the literature." As we explain to them, those who sincerely desire to read our literature receive it without charge. Any donations such ones give will be used to care for expenses involved in the worldwide work. The same is true of donations made by publishers.

Should publishers and pioneers feel obligated to contribute to the Society's worldwide work each time that they receive literature at the Kingdom Hall?

No. As stated in the April 21, 1990, letter to all congregations in the United States: "Publishers may . . . make their own donations to support the worldwide work according to their ability and desire, whenever they choose to do so.--2 Cor. 8:10-15; 9:6-14." Some have chosen to make their donations at the time they pick up a literature supply. They do this because it serves as a convenient reminder of their privilege and responsibility to support the worldwide work regularly. Others contribute personally at the same time they put in the voluntary donations received from interested ones met in the field ministry. Many have decided to make a specific donation each week. Still others set aside an amount for the worldwide work each month, just as they do for Kingdom Hall expenses. Whenever it is done, each one has to determine what he or she can personally do in support of the worldwide work. Such giving should be done in an orderly way in accord with how the giver is prospering. (1 Cor. 16:2) When we make such donations, we must have in mind that we are not simply contributing to cover the cost of producing the literature, but rather, we are supporting all facets of the worldwide work.

Do we have to mention to a householder our willingness to accept a modest donation to the Society's worldwide work each time we call back on him?

January 24, 1991

Page 3

No. The May 1990 *Our Kingdom Ministry* article "Use Our Literature Wisely" stated: "In some cases, the subject of donations for our worldwide work may be awkward to discuss." Good judgment needs to be used in this regard. We want people to have clearly in mind that ours is truly a Bible educational work and not a commercial activity. We are not soliciting donations. It is generally good to explain clearly how our work is supported by voluntary donations when we initially leave literature with interested ones. If we keep in mind that we leave literature only with those who show interest and who express a desire to read our literature, then this aspect will generally be cared for. Many of such interested ones take the initiative to offer donations voluntarily on subsequent visits. Others may ask 'how much does it cost?' We can briefly state that ours is not a commercial work, explaining that we offer our literature to interested ones without charge. They can be informed that any who desire to support the worldwide work can make a modest, voluntary donation. From time to time as appropriate we can bring up supporting the worldwide work of the Society if the person on whom we make the return visit does not do so.

We should keep in mind that even though we offer our literature to interested ones without charge there are many costs involved in publishing and distributing our literature. We have confidence that God's spirit will move his servants and interested ones in the field to make their voluntary donations to cover these costs and the costs of all other aspects of the worldwide work.

If a householder gives a comparatively generous donation, should we be moved to give him additional literature?

Not necessarily. You can use your good judgment in this regard, taking into consideration the interest in reading the literature that he or she manifests. On subsequent visits literature that meets a particular need of the householder might be left without mentioning a donation. Of course, if the householder takes the initiative to offer a further donation, such can be graciously accepted. We must keep in mind that the donation is to support the various facets of our worldwide work, which includes our building program, the missionary work, the special pioneer work, in addition to our publishing of literature.

Since we want to use our literature wisely, what adjustments might this have on our offering literature in street witnessing?

In doing street witnessing, it is appropriate to approach people with the magazines or publications in your hand. Our goal should be to try to have a conversation with people. In that way we can determine whether the person contacted is interested and will agree to read our magazines. If it is possible to briefly discuss one of the articles in a magazine that would be ideal. It would also be possible to explain how our work is done by

volunteers and is not a commercial business, but it is done worldwide and is supported through voluntary contributions. In some instances, a publisher may have to walk along with the person while conversing about the magazine's contents and benefits.

However, we should be discerning and considerate. Many of those we meet on the streets may be in such a rush that it would be hard for us to detect their interest. In such cases, it may be better to simply offer a tract to whet their appetite for more of our literature when they meet us again and can pause for a discussion. By being consistent in doing street work at certain locations and times, people will get acquainted with us and may be happy to discuss matters when they have opportunity, thereby giving us enough time to determine their interest. We want to use our literature wisely. Therefore, we should endeavor to choose the appropriate time to offer literature. Our doing so will enable us to arrange to follow through on the interest and have time to explain the nature of our work.

We hope these comments will clarify the major questions that have come up relative to our simplified literature distribution arrangement. More will be said in *Our Kingdom Ministry* in the months ahead. All of us should have in mind Paul's words at 2 Corinthians 9:7-14. [Read.]

Although funds received for the worldwide work have diminished somewhat over the last year, we are confident that Jehovah will continue to bless these arrangements. As new fields open up in Eastern Europe and other countries of the world, the generosity of the brothers in lands where economic conditions may be better will provide what is necessary to meet the needs of brothers in the less affluent lands. (2 Cor. 8:13-15) Individually we are being given opportunity to support the work to the full extent of our capacity both in the field service as well as in a material way.

Your brothers,

Watchtower B. V. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

NOTE TO THE ELDERS: Do not make copies of this letter. It should be read at the first Service Meeting after it is received. Please do not put it on the information board. This letter should be kept in the congregation file and so can be referred to by the elders who wish to discuss any matters with anyone.