

Traveling Overseer Guidelines

Revised 4/6/99

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- (d) Circuit Assembly Confirmation (S-328a) forms for upcoming assemblies
- (e) Assembly Hall Committee information
- (f) Assembly Hall information
- (g) Regional Building Committee information
- (h) Correspondence regarding Ministerial Training School graduates in the district
- (i) Information concerning brothers in the district who might be considered for added privileges, such as substitute or regular circuit work
- (j) A list of things that need the attention of the incoming district overseer
- (k) Correspondence concerning any serious problems

4. WEEDING FILES: Before moving to a new assignment, traveling overseers should weed the file of unnecessary items. Unless otherwise specified, routine correspondence can generally be discarded after five years.

two elders could inform the third elder on the committee of the conversations they had with the imprisoned wrongdoer. In that way the judicial committee could render a decision based on an actual meeting with the individual. It would **not be proper for a judicial committee to handle the case over the telephone** with a conference-line arrangement. If it is not possible to meet with the wrongdoer, the elders should write to the Society for direction.

8. **APPEAL COMMITTEES:** Individuals have a right to an appeal when disfellowshipped. It is necessary for judicial committees to **wait seven days** before announcing a disfellowshipping, even if the individual says he will not appeal. People sometimes change their minds. If the individual appealed the decision after the announcement was made but before the seven days expired and then the disfellowshipping was rescinded, it could raise unnecessary questions in the minds of some.

9. If an appeal is made, an appeal hearing should be arranged for, even if the basis for it is questionable. The judicial committee chairman should promptly contact the **circuit overseer**, since he is the one **authorized to designate elders** to serve on the appeal committee. The circuit overseer will also designate who should serve as chairman. If possible, elders selected by the circuit overseer for hearing the appeal **should not be from the same congregation** as the original committee.—*ks*91 124-5.

10. When the circuit overseer selects elders to serve on an appeal committee, he should remind them to review before and during their deliberations pertinent information in the Kingdom Ministry School textbook and on the reverse side of the Notification of Disfellowshipping or Disassociation (S-77) form.

11. **JUDICIAL RECORDS:** In some cases elders have been very lax about keeping records of judicial proceedings. If later it becomes necessary to reopen a case or present information to an appeal committee and the elders cannot recall what was said or decided, this can be a problem.

12. The congregation's **confidential file** should be accessible only to the elders. Notes of the proceedings of a case should be kept in a **sealed envelope**. This is true in cases of reproof as well as when disfellowshipping action has been taken. Usually only the elders who handled the judicial case or a committee selected to hear a request for reinstatement would open the envelope. When circuit overseers check the congregation file, it would be good for them to make sure judicial matters are being properly filed. However, traveling overseers should not open sealed envelopes.—*km* 2/74 8.

13. If an individual is reinstated, the **records should be kept** for five years following reinstatement or longer if deemed advisable. In cases involving child molestation, all records should be marked "Do Not Destroy" and should be kept indefinitely.

selves and the congregation before they can be reappointed. This involves building up a convincing record of righteousness that serves to counterbalance the effect of the past wrong. Depending upon the gravity of the wrongdoing, this might take five, ten, or more years. In cases of great scandal, he might not live it down sufficiently in his lifetime so as to qualify as an elder or a ministerial servant.—Titus 1:6, 7.

16. A brother who enters into an **adulterous marriage** would not qualify to serve as an elder or a ministerial servant at least until the death or remarriage of his former mate, if ever. Thus, if a brother was divorced in the past, a clear description of the circumstances surrounding the divorce must always be included with the recommendation for his appointment. How long ago did it occur? Was it before or after his baptism? Was it a Scriptural divorce? Who committed the adultery? What responsibility did the brother have for the breakup of his marriage? Did he remarry? If so, when? Are love and devotion evident within his new marriage? Does he have the full respect of the congregation?—*ks91* 135-6.

17. Extreme caution should be exercised if a **former child molester** is being considered for recommendation as an elder or ministerial servant. Those who are appointed to privileges of service in the congregation are put in a position of trust and are judged by others as being worthy of trust. The congregation would, therefore, be left unprotected if someone who had been a child abuser was prematurely appointed. If one had engaged in this kind of sexual wrongdoing or had been disfellowshipped for such an offense, it would be many years, if ever, before he could be recommended for further privileges. To be considered also is the loss the Society could suffer. Court officials and lawyers will hold responsible any organization that knowingly appoints former child abusers to positions of trust if one of these thereafter commits a further act of child abuse. This could result in costly lawsuits, involving dedicated funds that should be used to further the Kingdom work. So, legal considerations must be weighed, as well as the degree of notoriety, the extent of the misconduct, the number of years that have passed since the sin occurred, and how the brother is now viewed by the congregation and people in the community, including those he victimized. In all such cases, the Society should be fully informed of the person's background and all the factors involved.—See the Society's March 14, 1997, letter to elders.

18. If there is any doubt about a man's qualifications, it is better to wait until the circuit overseer and the body of elders are sure.

19. **RECOMMENDING PRESIDING OVERSEERS:** Any change in presiding overseer that has been made **between visits** of the circuit overseer is **temporary** until a presiding overseer is recommended at the time of the circuit overseer's visit and an appointment is made by the Society.

20. If consideration is being given to recommending a new presiding overseer, the circuit overseer should read the **Society's April 15, 1983, letter** to traveling overseers in its entirety to the body of elders. This should be done early in the week of his visit, preferably on Tuesday evening following the congregation meetings that night. The letter should again be read to the elders later in the week when actually considering recommendations with them. This letter should not be loaned out but is kept in the possession of the circuit overseer.

21. When recommending a change of presiding overseer, circuit overseers should be sure to state clearly why the change is needed and why the brother being recommended is the best choice. The recommended brother's name should

TRAVELING OVERSEER GUIDELINES

Effective: May 1, 1999

Revised: October 4, 1999

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Traveling Overseer Guidelines
English (tg-E)

2. Substitute circuit overseers should be acquainted with the circuit file and its whereabouts. Then, if the circuit overseer must be absent from his assignment because of illness or an emergency, the substitutes will know the circuit file well enough to submit routing, handle circuit assembly matters, and so forth.

3. DISTRICT FILE: The following should be kept in this file:

- (a) Information regarding adjustments of district boundaries, additions or deletions of circuits, and so forth
- (b) Routing information for at least one round in the district
- (c) Copies of the last District Overseer's Report on Circuit Assemblies (S-313) for each circuit, along with any pertinent correspondence with the Society
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11. JUDICIAL RECORDS: In some cases elders have been very lax about keeping records of judicial proceedings. If later it becomes necessary to reopen a case or present information to an appeal committee and the elders cannot recall what was said or decided, this can be a problem.

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13. If an individual is reinstated, the **records should be kept** for five years following reinstatement or longer if deemed advisable. In cases involving child molestation, all records should be marked "Do Not Destroy" and should be kept indefinitely.

disfellowshippings of those being recommended to the Society for appointment. If a brother is being recommended who was reprovved during the last three years or reinstated during the last five years, the following information should be provided: (1) the action taken; (2) the date of the action; (3) whether an announcement was made to the congregation (in the case of a reproof) and the degree of notoriety involved; (4) when the last restriction was removed; and (5) whether the brother has regained the respect of the congregation.—*ks91* 131.

16. Traveling overseers need to **be careful about recommending** brothers for appointment **too soon** after their being removed as elders or ministerial servants because of wrongdoing. A quick reappointment under those circumstances tends to minimize the seriousness of the wrongdoing in the eyes of the wrongdoer and may be disturbing to those who remember his bad course. (1 Tim. 5:22) Brothers removed for wrongdoing have to live down the reproach they brought on themselves and the congregation before they can be reappointed. This involves building up a convincing record of righteousness that serves to counterbalance the effect of the past wrong. Depending upon the gravity of the wrongdoing, this might take five, ten, or more years. In cases of great scandal, he might not live it down sufficiently in his lifetime so as to qualify as an elder or a ministerial servant.—Titus 1:6, 7.

17. A brother who enters into an **adulterous marriage** would not qualify to serve as an elder or a ministerial servant at least until the death or remarriage of his former mate, if ever. Thus, if a brother was divorced in the past, a clear description of the circumstances surrounding the divorce must always be included with the recommendation for his appointment. How long ago did it occur? Was it before or after his baptism? Was it a Scriptural divorce? Who committed the adultery? What responsibility did the brother have for the breakup of his marriage? Who initiated the divorce and did both parties sign the divorce papers? Did he remarry? If so, when? Are love and devotion evident within his new marriage? Does he have the full respect of the congregation?—*ks91* 135-6.

18. Extreme caution should be exercised if a **former child molester** is being considered for recommendation as an elder or ministerial servant. Those who are appointed to privileges of service in the congregation are put in a position of trust and are judged by others as being worthy of trust. The congregation would, therefore, be left unprotected if someone who had been a child abuser was prematurely appointed. If one had engaged in this kind of sexual wrongdoing or had been disfellowshipped for such an offense, it would be many years, if ever, before he could be recommended for further privileges. To be

considered also is the loss the Society could suffer. Court officials and lawyers will hold responsible any organization that knowingly appoints former child abusers to positions of trust if one of these thereafter commits a further act of child abuse. This could result in costly lawsuits, involving dedicated funds that should be used to further the Kingdom work. So, legal considerations must be weighed, as well as the degree of notoriety, the extent of the misconduct, the number of years that have passed since the sin occurred, and how the brother is now viewed by the congregation and people in the community, including those he victimized. In all such cases, the Society should be fully informed of the person's background and all the factors involved.—See the Society's March 14, 1997, letter to elders.

19. If there is any doubt about a man's qualifications, it is better to wait until the circuit overseer and the body of elders are sure.

20. **RECOMMENDING PRESIDING OVERSEERS:** Any change in presiding overseer that has been made **between visits** of the circuit overseer is **temporary** until a presiding overseer is recommended at the time of the circuit overseer's visit and an appointment is made by the Society.

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22. When recommending a change of presiding overseer, circuit overseers should be sure to state clearly why the change is needed and why the brother being recommended is the best choice. The recommended brother's name should be listed in the section for new elder recommendations on the front of the S-2 form with "PO" printed in the left margin next to his name. A completed S-29 form should accompany the recommendation.

23. Circuit overseers should not be quick to **ask brothers to move** to another congregation to serve as presiding overseer. Granted, a situation might arise in a congregation wherein assistance is needed and all on the body of elders agree that it would be practical for a capable elder serving nearby to transfer, but this should be the exception. Circuit overseers should be slow about making such a recommendation. It is generally better to work with the elders already on the body, pro-

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Traveling Overseer Guidelines
For United States of America
English (tg-E Us)

should be men who are experienced, spiritual, balanced, impartial, up-to-date in reading and studying Christian publications, able to deal with others in a kindly way, having high respect for the Bible and its principles, and capable of making wise decisions. If possible, the elders selected by the circuit overseer for hearing the appeal **should not be from the same congregation** as the original committee. They should not be related to or have a special relationship with either the elders on the original committee or the one making the appeal.—*ks91* 124-5, 149-50.

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22. If consideration is being given to recommending a new presiding overseer, the circuit overseer should review the points listed below with the body of elders. This should be done early in the week of his visit,

CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT FILES

- (p) Information regarding pending problems that were handled and what might be done to follow through in 'correcting things that are defective.'—Titus 1:5
- (q) Hospital Liaison Committee information
- (r) Regional Building Committee information

2. DISTRICT FILE: The district overseer should maintain a well-organized file of information pertinent to district activity. The following items should be kept in the district file:

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