

WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

September 1, 2000

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

Adjusted procedures for reporting disfellowshippings and disassociations in harmony with data protection legislation have been in use now for several months. Implications of the Data Protection Act continue coming to light and by experience, we have also noted some areas where further refinement would be appropriate. These adjustments will considerably simplify your work as elders, while keeping our record-keeping in line with Caesar's requirements.

Instead of completing three Notification of Disfellowshipping or Disassociation (S- 77) forms, we are now asking you to complete only one, along with one Summation of Disfellowshipping or Disassociation (S- 77a) form. After processing the forms, the Society will make two copies of the S- 77 and will send these copies to the congregation. Both should be kept in a sealed envelope in the congregation's confidential file. As before, there should be no S-77a form in your files. When a disfellowshipped or disassociated person dies or is reinstated the secretary will fill in the necessary details at the foot of both S- 77 forms and return one to the Society. The other form is placed back in the congregation's confidential file in a sealed envelope.

We have found that a number of committees have not been completing the whole S- 77 form, especially in cases of disassociation. Remember that this form is disclosable. An incomplete form gives a poor impression and could give an outsider or someone critical of our work an opportunity to cause problems for the local elders or the Society. Therefore, you will notice that some questions have been reworded slightly and a number of "N/ A" (not applicable) boxes have been added. This is to help you give an answer to every question. It is important that all questions "a" to "n" are answered. If the committee feels that an explanation of one or more of the answers is needed, this can be included on the S-77a Summation form. However, do not write any additional comments on the S-77 Notification (checkbox-style) form. The very design of this form is to help avoid such extra remarks.

As we have stressed before, take care to follow closely the instructions on the S- 77 form. These instructions should be carefully read and followed each time a committee is formed and when preparing to notify the Society of a case of disfellowshipping or disassociation.

Enclosed you will find three sets of revised forms for reporting disfellowshippings and disassociations. (One set comprises 1 S-77 and 1 S-77a.) Be sure to destroy all unused forms currently in your files (that is, any older than 8/00). If you do not destroy old forms you will end up following instructions that have been superseded. This will result in extra work, or may even pose problems, both for the Society and the judicial committee which is unnecessary and avoidable.

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When the Society returns the two copies of the S- 77 form to the congregation following a disfellowshipping or disassociation, a set of one blank S-77 form, one blank S-77a form, and one special blue envelope will be included. This will keep the congregation's supply replenished. If more forms are needed do not make photocopies. Either borrow some from a nearby congregation or request a reasonable supply from the Society.

During these last few months of adjustment, Congregation Service Committees have been making sure that congregation files comply with the Data Protection Act. In the process, many have been finding that a surprising number of records are missing. This causes us some concern for the future. Our current direction has been that action taken and reported on the new checkbox-style S-77 forms does not need to be recorded on the list "Specialized Shepherding - Isaiah 32: 1, 2." This is because the necessary information appears on the S- 77 form kept in the congregation's file. But, what if the form is misplaced or lost?

So that vital information is not lost, we believe it would be better for all disfellowshippings and disassociations to be entered on the "Specialized Shepherding" list as well as being shown on the S- 77 form. Therefore, the "Specialized Shepherding" list will show all cases of disfellowshipping, disassociation, judicial reproofs, reinstatements, reinstatement hearings, cases of wrongdoing on the part of unbaptized publishers, and alleged wrongdoing investigated but held in abeyance in line with Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock page 100, paragraphs 2, 3.

We are sure judicial committees will appreciate the reduction in the number of forms they are required to complete. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and good wishes.

Your brothers,

Watch Tower B. & T. Society of Britain

[Official stamp appears here.]

