

# WATCHTOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, INC.

25 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201, U.S.A. PHONE (718) 625-3600

SCH:55K December 24, 1992



Dear Brothers:

We received your letter of December 17 in which you inquire about handling a situation involving a brother who has been guilty of serious violations of the law in the past.

You explained that you have received information indicating that this brother "committed several murders and crimes before his baptism." You ask if "Florida law obligates some action on our part. Florida law enforcement authorities have no knowledge of this matter."

As elders, you have no obligation to reveal information of this type to the authorities. Any information that you have obtained while fulfilling your duties as elders is strictly confidential. What he does about paying his debt to Society is largely up to him and his conscience. Since he is apparently a fugitive from the law, he obviously would not qualify for any extra privileges of service in the congregation.

You state that you have "one report of his smoking marijuana with his co-workers which may have been after his baptism." We assume that is the reason that you feel a need to meet with him. Since he is a dedicated brother and he is presently attending the meetings, there is a need to investigate to determine if some type of congregation action is necessary. Likely the best approach is to arrange for two elders to talk to him informally to make some discreet inquiries about his current conduct. If there appears to be substantial evidence of serious wrongdoing, then a committee should be formed to hear the case.

As we believe you understand, it is imperative that the elders maintain strict confidentiality about his past. If the elders inadvertently reveal his past wrongdoing, undoubtedly it will result in major repercussions to him and his wife. So, handling this case calls for good judgment and discernment. We trust you brothers can handle things appropriately. Write to us again if you need further direction.

We pray Jehovah's direction as you endeavor to fulfill your weighty responsibilities as shepherds of the flock. We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

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