

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

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February 15, 2002

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

It was a delight for us to meet with you at the Kingdom Ministry School, held in the United States branch territory during November and December of 2001. This letter is to provide you with written direction on various matters that were considered at the school. Please arrange a special meeting of the body of elders to give consideration to the direction contained in this letter, as well as to the February 14, 2002, letter to all congregations in the United States, regarding adjustments that were announced at the Kingdom Ministry School.

Congregation Book Study Overseers: While the Congregation Service Committee is authorized to assign publishers to book study groups, it is the body of elders that makes all assignments of Congregation Book Study overseers. As soon as possible after receiving this letter, the elders should review these assignments to make sure that the most qualified brothers are being used.

The responsibilities of the Congregation Book Study overseer include the following: teaching at the book study, taking the lead in evangelizing, assisting all in the group to progress in their ministry, shepherding the group and assisting those who are weak or inactive, and collecting the monthly field service reports. Because the responsibility of being a Congregation Book Study overseer is a serious one, an elder should be used if available. The body of elders will need to exercise good judgment in deciding which brothers can serve most effectively as Congregation Book Study overseers. If needed, an elder might care for more than one group, doing so at different times during the week. This, however, would depend on his circumstances. If an elder is not available, a capable ministerial servant could be used as a substitute until such time as an elder can take over. (*om 44*) The elders who are *most qualified to fulfill all the aspects of the assignment* should be used. If an elder is a good teacher but is unable or disinclined to fulfill the other aspects of the responsibility, he may not be the most qualified elder to serve in this capacity.

Ministerial servants who are used as substitutes will be termed "Congregation Book Study servants." They should work closely under the supervision of the elders. Though they conduct the weekly book study, take a zealous lead in the field ministry, and collect the monthly field service reports for the group, they should not take it upon themselves to make shepherding calls on those in the group. However, under the direction of the elders, they can make spiritually encouraging visits on certain ones in the book study group, sharing scriptures and information from our publications. Of course, if a matter of a serious nature comes up, they should not try to handle the matter but should refer it to the elders. Likewise, they should work under the direction of the elders in giving assistance to those in their group who are spiritually weak or inactive. The elders need to make sure that ministerial servants who are used as Congregation