

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

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February 14, 2002

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers:

In November and December of this past year, 80,198 elders and 62,871 ministerial servants in the United States branch territory attended the Kingdom Ministry School. At this school, the Governing Body announced a number of adjustments in theocratic arrangements. We are pleased to notify you of these adjustments, which go into effect as of the date of this letter.

**The Congregation Book Study:** The designation for the elder who presides at the book study is being changed from "Congregation Book Study conductor" to "Congregation Book Study *overseer*." This new designation more accurately reflects the full scope of responsibility that the assignment entails. In addition to conducting the weekly book study lesson, the Congregation Book Study overseer is responsible to take the lead in evangelizing, to shepherd conscientiously all in the book study group, and to assist those who are weak. Indeed, all the Scriptural aspects of an overseer's work apply within the book study arrangement.—Acts 20:28.

As the new designation indicates, this is a responsibility that will normally be cared for by an elder. If there are not enough elders available, the body of elders may assign a capable ministerial servant to care for a book study group until an elder becomes available. A ministerial servant who is used in this capacity will be termed a "Congregation Book Study servant." Such a ministerial servant does not function as an elder in the congregation. Rather, he works under the direction of the elders in caring for his responsibility.

A new arrangement involving book study assistants was announced at the school. The book study overseer may arrange to observe the assistant conduct the book study *once every two months*. This will enable the overseer to offer constructive counsel to help the assistant improve in teaching ability.

**Reporting Field Service Activity:** An adjustment is being made in the way the monthly field service reports and Bible study reports are collected. The Congregation Book Study overseer may now collect these reports from the publishers and pioneers in his book study group. Individual publishers may put their reports in the box at the Kingdom Hall if they desire or are otherwise unable to give them to their book study overseer. The book study overseer will see that reports collected for the group are promptly given, along with the book study attendance figures, to the secretary for compiling. This needs to be done *prior to the sixth of each month*. Each congregation publisher and pioneer should endeavor to submit his report punctually at the end of each month.

Also announced at the Kingdom Ministry School was a new provision that is being made for those who are very limited because of advanced age or because of being shut-ins, confined to nursing homes, or incapacitated. These brothers and sisters may report their field service in

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15-minute increments rather than in full hours. Even if they witness for just 15 minutes during a month, this should be reported, and they will continue to be counted as regular Kingdom publishers. This arrangement also applies to those who are temporarily limited, perhaps being unable to move about during a month because of serious illness or injury. Please note that this new provision is only for those who are *very limited* because of the aforementioned reasons. The Congregation Service Committee will determine which publishers qualify for this arrangement.

We join with you in praying that Jehovah will richly bless these adjustments. May our united efforts in doing Jehovah's will serve to his praise and honor.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

**Note to the presiding overseer:** Please have this letter read to the congregation at the next Service Meeting.