

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

How happy we are to be part of the forward movement of Jehovah's organization in these last days! As we cooperate fully with the faithful and discreet slave class we become better quality tools in Jehovah's hands. (Isa. 60:17) That is why we are all happy that through the April 2003 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, Jehovah has drawn the attention of all his people in Ghana to the serious spiritual dangers that our children face in boarding schools. The clear information has served as an eye-opener for all parents because whereas some did not know what their children face in those schools, others did not give much thought to what should be done to protect their children. Now that we know the true situation, those who have their children in boarding schools need to immediately do something about it. We are therefore providing you with the Governing Body's direction on this matter.

Some congregations have arranged for meetings to be held at the boarding school facilities where children of Jehovah's Witnesses attend. These meetings are set up in addition to or parallel with regularly scheduled meetings held at nearby Kingdom Halls. **The Governing Body has determined that this should not be done.** Please note that this is an adjustment to the point of the question found in paragraph 14 of the April 2003 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert, where it says: "Will the authorities allow local elders to conduct meetings at the school with the children?" However, if local publishers are willing and able to help such youths by perhaps having a weekly Bible study with them, including sharing with them highlights from the local congregation meetings, then that would be fine. The father, if a baptized Witness, would be responsible to arrange for such in a congregation near the boarding school. However, it would not be appropriate to have auxiliary or parallel meetings in the boarding school facilities to accommodate the Witness youths that are attending such schools.

Such a situation of course raises questions concerning the qualifications of appointed elders or ministerial servants and pioneers who send their children to boarding schools, especially where the authorities prohibit students from leaving the school premises to attend congregation meetings held at the local Kingdom Hall. If an appointed brother sends his child to such a school, this would disqualify him from continuing as an elder or ministerial servant. The same would apply to one serving as a pioneer. A parent may not necessarily be disqualified if the child is able to share fully in the congregation's activities and other adequate safeguards of the child's spirituality are in place. However, even if a child would be free to attend congregation meetings, the father still might not qualify to continue serving as such if the school also required the child to attend religious services conducted at the school. Apparently some schools do have such a requirement. Or, if the school allows the child to attend congregation meetings, but it turns out that the child does not actually attend, this will likely disqualify the father. In addition, circumstances may develop, such as the child getting involved in some kind of wrongdoing that would indicate that the father is not presiding in a fine manner over his household, thus necessitating his removal as an elder or ministerial servant.—1 Tim. 3:4, 5.

In view of the above guidelines, all elders and ministerial servants who have a child or children in boarding schools are being given up to December 31, 2003, to make adjustments as outlined in the April 2003 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert. If by that date the necessary adjustments have not been made to safeguard the children, then such parents will have to lose their service privileges. With this in mind, brothers should start now, before the academic year ends, making adjustments. Please inform all affected parents who enjoy some privilege of service of the deadline.

Starting January 1, 2004, traveling overseers visiting with the congregations will inquire to see if any appointed brothers have failed to follow these directives from the Governing Body. Such ones will have to be removed. Elders and traveling overseers will want to be sure that all those who will be recommended in the future for appointment in the congregation qualify according to these Scriptural requirements.—1 Tim. 3:4, 5.

It is our hope that to protect our children all of us will have the proper view of Bible principles and make the necessary adjustments as outlined above. Please be assured of our appreciation for your hard work and the fine example you show to the flock of God.

Your fellow workers,

*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah's Witnesses*