

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100

November 1, 2003

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

Ever since the insert entitled "Preach the Good News Everywhere" appeared in the September 1996 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, many have taken the initiative to reach people in public places with the Kingdom message. Herewith, we are providing guidelines to help you further expand the witnessing work. After you have reviewed this letter, choose one or two features of the ministry that may offer the greatest potential in your territory. After these priorities have been addressed and are working well, other features could be implemented progressively.

Survey your assigned territory. Make a list of places and events, such as colleges, universities, shopping malls, flea markets, major transportation terminals, nursing homes, harbors, county fairs, and consumer shows that might offer opportunities to reach more people with the good news.—See the November 1998 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 6.

Organize the witnessing work. A capable elder, or elders, should be assigned to organize the work at each establishment. Be sure you fully understand any regulations and requirements of the authorities and clearly explain these to experienced publishers approved to participate in this feature of the ministry. Use only qualified publishers who are able to represent the good news in an exemplary manner. (1 Peter 3:15; See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2001, p. 23.) They should make every effort to cooperate with security personnel, complying with whatever regulations and requirements the managing authority has established to govern activity on the site.—Romans 13:1-3.

Analyze results being obtained. Periodically reassess the witnessing activity that has been put in place. Adjustments may be necessary to ensure that the arrangements are practical and effective in reaching the most people possible with the good news. When the circuit overseer visits your congregation, update him on what is being accomplished.

Witnessing at airports and shopping malls. Seek permission to witness in such areas by approaching the administrator or manager of a facility. The brother assigned to do so should explain that he is making application in his own behalf. No name, title, or address should be written on the application that would suggest that the applicant represents Jehovah's Witnesses as an organization. He should emphasize the beneficial aspects of our ministry and assure them that our presence on the property would create neither cleaning nor security problems.

If there are insurance or indemnity requirements, it may be possible to have them waived or reduced by explaining that since our ministry is conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner, our activity is not a threat to any person or property. If a waiver is not granted, the publisher(s) involved in seeking the permission must make a decision as to whether to obtain insurance and agree to indemnify the establishment, as the branch office will not provide such insurance.

Annual events: Some congregations have organized a witnessing effort at annual events, such as fairs, consumer shows, and other public forums. A table or booth might be allowed from which publishers can distribute literature and engage in Bible discussions with visitors.

College and university campuses: It is necessary to approach a school official or the office of the Dean of Students. Explain that you are interested in providing Bible education on campus and would like to know what is required to do this. If you encounter difficulty in preaching at an institution that is run by the state, as opposed to a private institution, please contact the branch office for further direction.

Some colleges and universities stipulate that a club or organization representing Jehovah's Witnesses must be formed on campus before we are allowed to engage in any witnessing activities there. In view of the prerequisites that these institutions place on such clubs and the requirements that they stipulate, we feel it best not to pursue this method. Where problems of this sort are encountered, there may be other ways to reach students who live on campus, such as through telephone witnessing. (This replaces the letter dated January 2, 1981.)

Tables and booths: In many shopping malls, at airport terminals, and on college campuses, brothers have been permitted to set up a simple but attractive table or booth with a display of literature, doing so as often as permitted and in a location designated by the facility or institution. In some airports those setting up a table with literature are forbidden to approach passersby. In each situation it is advisable to confirm what the rules and regulations are and convey these to the publishers. Avoid using questionnaires or survey forms to poll people's interests. It may be best to distribute only tracts, magazines, and brochures, not books and Bibles.

If visitors inquire about how our work is funded, the donation arrangement may be explained. If someone offers a donation, it may be accepted as long as this does not conflict with the rules of the establishment. In that event, the publisher may explain that donations can be sent to the address listed in the literature. Contribution boxes should not be set up.

Nursing homes: Some publishers have had good success in reaching this elderly population by approaching the activities director of the facility and volunteering their help in meeting the spiritual need of the residents. It may be explained that volunteers from the congregation would be pleased to conduct a free weekly Bible study with anyone who wishes to attend. Oftentimes, the staff, family members, visitors, and volunteers will join in the study.

Jails and penitentiaries: See the April 2003 *Our Kingdom Ministry* Question Box and December 28, 2000, letter to all bodies of elders, and follow the direction provided.

Harbor witnessing: Harbor witnessing is a specialized ministry that requires specific direction as to how it should be done and who should participate. If there is a major harbor within your congregation's territory, please write to the branch office for further instruction, including the name, location, and size of the port. If you have a program in place to do ship witnessing, please write and tell us what harbor is being worked, what is being done, and who has oversight of the arrangement.

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

November 1, 2003

Page 3

You may write the branch office if further direction is needed regarding the foregoing. We pray for Jehovah's rich blessing upon your efforts to reach all honesthearted ones in your territory. We send our Christian love and best wishes for your success.—Ecclesiastes 11:6.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Traveling overseers