

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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October 2, 2006

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

Indications are that the publication *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* is having a profound effect on the worldwide preaching work. One branch office reports that they have received so many congregation requests for the *Bible Teach* book that they are having difficulty keeping the book in stock! This illustrates that our brothers have confidence in this study publication and that with Jehovah's blessing it will be instrumental in helping many to learn the truth of God's Word. In view of Jesus' command to 'teach people to observe his commandments,' what can you do to assist the regular pioneers in your congregation to start Bible studies?—Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 3:6.

Set an example: When writing to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul encouraged: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) Timothy was so attentive to Paul's Christlike ways that Paul could wholeheartedly recommend him to the congregation as stated at 1 Corinthians 4:17: "That is why I am sending Timothy to you . . . He will put you in mind of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus." His reference to "methods" would not only embrace his personal Christian conduct but his active ministry as well. (w84 8/15 p. 16) Some of Paul's "methods" likely included those involved in making disciples. As congregation elders, our example should put the pioneers and publishers in mind of Paul's "methods." We might ask ourselves, do I conduct a study in the *Bible Teach* book? If not, do others see me exerting myself and putting forth a sincere effort to start a home Bible study?

If possible, strive to work in the ministry with each regular pioneer in your congregation during this service year. As you do so, endeavor to be a good example in your efforts to start Bible studies. In some cases, it may be appropriate to offer and demonstrate a home Bible study on the initial call. If that is not possible, record all interest, and arrange to follow up as soon as possible. Afterward, discuss with the pioneer how you plan to return with the goal of starting a Bible study. Then later, let him know how your call is developing. Your enthusiasm for starting Bible studies will be contagious.

Take the lead as Congregation Book Study overseers: The book study overseer and his assistant are in a unique position to assist regular pioneers. They can review the *Congregation's Publisher Record* (S-21) cards to learn which pioneers need help in starting or conducting a home Bible study. Arrangements can be made to work with those needing help. As you work with the pioneers in your book study, take time between doors to discuss the householder's reaction. Kind, practical suggestions can help the pioneer improve his effectiveness.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Matt. 12:34) If elders' hearts overflow with love for Jehovah and the ministry, it will spill over into the congregation. Therefore, whatever encouragement is given to a regular pioneer should be positive and in no way discourage him if he is not conducting a Bible study.

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October 2, 2006

Page 2

Present motivating Service Meetings: In 1926, monthly meetings were held to share field service experiences and discuss successful methods of witnessing. Then in 1928, Jehovah's organization started urging congregations to have such meetings each week. Four years later, congregations began to replace those meetings with what is now known as the Service Meeting. The purpose of the Service Meeting then and now is to use talks, discussions, demonstrations, and interviews to provide specific help in connection with all aspects of the Christian ministry, including starting Bible studies.

The Service Meeting is an appropriate means to encourage all, especially regular pioneers, to start Bible studies. At the next quarterly meeting of elders, we encourage you to discuss topics that can be presented on local needs parts to assist publishers and pioneers to start Bible studies. An abundance of information regarding this subject can be found in the *Watch Tower Publications Index* and *Watchtower Library* on CD-ROM. To illustrate, an elder doing research to prepare a talk would find in *Watchtower Library* the main heading "Bible Studies." Under that heading are the subheadings "prayer to obtain" and "starting," each with appropriate references. Elders selected to speak on the subject of starting Bible studies should convey the information in a way that is practical, balanced, and upbuilding, fitting for the local territory. Additionally, prayers at the conclusion of congregation meetings should regularly include petitions to Jehovah to bless the Bible study activity.

'The field is white for harvesting.' (John 4:35) How happy we are to work alongside so many pioneers in the harvest! We pray that each elder will do his part to encourage regular pioneers to endure in the "work that is good" by starting home Bible studies.—Rom. 2:7.

Your brothers,
*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

PS to presiding overseer:

Please promptly arrange for this letter to be read to the body of elders. Accompanying this letter is an outline for the December meeting with the regular pioneers and special pioneers as well as any missionaries serving in the field. The body of elders should choose two of their number to conduct this meeting. The elders should be well prepared so that the meeting is truly encouraging to the pioneers. Other elders may attend.