

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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March 5, 2008

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Managing congregation literature inventories

Dear Brothers:

It is very encouraging to note the increased level of activity among Jehovah's people as we get deeper into the last days of this system of things. The 2007 service year brought new increases in many aspects of the preaching work. Our printed publications played an important role in this increase. Though we want to make wide use of such publications as the *Bible Teach* book, we also need to be wise in how we use our literature. It is the responsibility of the congregations to stock adequate supplies of publications for the field without over-requesting, which would result in large quantities of literature sitting on the literature shelves. We realize this can be a challenge, and this letter will provide some suggestions that should be helpful.

A recent review of congregation literature inventories revealed that in some cases there were significant quantities of special-request items being stocked. This included large supplies of annual items from previous years, such as calendars, *Yearbooks*, and bound volumes. There was also an abundance of audio and video items (CDs, CD-ROMs, MP3s, and DVDs) reported in the inventory. As you can imagine, all of this represents a significant amount of wasted funds if the literature is not being used by the publishers. It is very important to follow the instructions found in section 3 of the *Literature Request Guide* (S-15a), where it states: "Special-request items should be submitted by the congregation only when specifically requested by an individual." Special-request items are not to be stocked by the congregations just in case someone might want to obtain one later. Before literature requests are submitted, the literature coordinator should verify that each special-request item has been requested by a publisher. Careful attention to this matter will help ensure that each item is put to use immediately after it is received in the congregation.

For items that are regularly offered in our ministry, such as the *Bible Teach* book, it is important to have a sufficient supply on hand so that the items are available to the congregation. However, for items that are not regularly used in literature campaigns, please request conservatively. It has been observed that some congregations routinely have a large number of books and hundreds of brochures in stock when often only a few are actually distributed each month. It is recommended that you request only enough to maintain a two or three months' supply of most items. You may request a smaller quantity more frequently in order to ensure that the inventory does not become overstocked. For many congregations, that may mean stocking only five or ten of most of the brochures and similar amounts of many of the books that target a limited audience.

When requesting literature for campaigns, make good use of the *Monthly Movement of Literature* (S-28) forms. Usually, a good estimate of how many books are likely to be distributed can be ascertained by reviewing similar campaigns in the past. After the campaign is over, be careful not to use the movement during the campaign as the basis for replenishment the next month. You likely need only a small fraction of the campaign quantity on hand. Larger quantities

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should not be requested until the publication is listed as a campaign item in a future issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*. Some of the literature offers for older publications are scheduled to help move these publications out of the Kingdom Hall and into the hands of interested ones. During these offers, if you do not have copies of a specific book, it is better to place other items rather than requesting more from the branch office. Unless you have a specific need, it may not be necessary to have copies of the older books on hand. They can be requested when a publisher makes a specific request.

Periodically, the service overseer should review the inventory with the literature coordinator to ascertain which items may be overstocked. An announcement can be made to the congregation so all will be aware of items that can be added to personal libraries or placed with interested individuals in the field ministry. If space allows, you may be able to display some of each of the overstocked publications at the counters for a short time so the brothers can select the ones they need for their libraries. You may also notify surrounding congregations of your overstocked items to determine if they can make use of them.

In the future, the branch office may automatically reduce or constrain a congregation's request for items that are normally slow-moving. In some cases, a congregation might have a legitimate need for a quantity that is larger than the constraint will allow. If that exception applies to you, please contact the branch office by telephone and explain the nature of the request. If approved, the constraint will not be applied to your request.

We trust that the suggestions contained herein will assist you in reducing overstocked literature and avoiding future overstocks.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Traveling overseers

PS to Congregation Service Committee:

Although this letter should be routed to the body of elders, a copy may be made for review by the literature coordinator and literature servants. Thereafter, it should be retained in the congregation's file with other correspondence related to magazines and literature.