

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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

February 7, 2011

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Caring for the needs of the blind

Dear Brothers:

Two men on the roadside cried out loudly, "Have mercy on us!" Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" They answered, "Let our eyes be opened." Jesus touched their eyes, and immediately they received sight. (Matt. 20:30-34) Besides being anointed to declare the good news, Jesus was also sent forth to grant a recovery of sight to the blind. This and other examples in the Bible tell us how Jehovah and Jesus feel about people who are blind. Today, we need to give special attention to the blind, both in the congregations and in the field.

The branch office produces many publications for the blind and visually impaired in numerous Braille languages in embossed-paper format and in audio format with Braille labels. Additionally, as announced in the August 2008 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 3, publishers who are blind have the option of receiving electronic files of selected publications via e-mail for use with Braille notetakers or screen reader programs. These Braille items are produced in various languages and grades. Therefore, before you submit a request, it is important to know whether the blind person can read Braille and, if so, which language and grade of Braille he can read. Only when a request for a screen reader file is submitted would the grade not be needed, since these text files are converted to audio format by the screen reader software.

To help congregation elders with requesting Braille literature, *Braille Request Guidelines* has been provided along with this letter. Additionally, the *Braille Publications List* (S-58) and the *Braille Request Form* (S-59) are available for download in the *Forms* section of the jw.org Web site. In the future, elders will be able to request Braille publications electronically from the jw.org Web site. Information regarding this enhancement will be supplied as it becomes available.

Congregation elders should be alert to inform the circuit overseer as soon as they are aware of a visually impaired elder who may need a copy of the *Shepherding* textbook in Braille or a visually impaired pioneer who may need the Pioneer Service School textbook in Braille. Both textbooks are produced with the Scriptural references included. Additionally, *How Parents Can Protect Their Children From Misuse of Blood* (S-55) and the annual pioneer outline and encouragement letter in Braille may be requested directly from the Shipping Department.

If someone is found in the ministry who is blind and shows an interest in the truth, you can request a publication or two in Braille to cultivate his interest, such as a tract, a brochure, or the *Bible Teach* book. Braille literature is distributed without charge to persons interested in the Kingdom message in the same way that other literature produced by Jehovah's Witnesses is distributed. Please note, however, that producing literature in Braille is costly. This is particularly true of the *New World Translation* in Braille, which in English is a 20-volume set. Therefore, the Bible should only be requested for publishers or for Bible students who have made their advancement manifest, for example, by attending congregation meetings.

Re: Caring for the needs of the blind

February 7, 2011

Page 2

A publisher who is blind will normally require additional help from the congregation. This may involve helping him to get to and from congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Assistance may be needed in order for him to share in the ministry or to prepare for meetings. Having Jesus' view of the blind will prompt the elder body and the publishers to provide this needed help. The elders should regularly check with each blind publisher to see if he needs further help in his service to Jehovah.

It is a privilege to assist those who are blind, whether they are in the congregation or we meet them in the field. Your continued effort to help these ones does not go unnoticed by our Creator.

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

cc: Traveling overseers