

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



The Ridgeway, London, NW7 1RN Telephone: 020 8906 2211

SDH:SSK April 25, 2012

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: School for Congregation Elders

Dear Brothers:

We are pleased to provide an update regarding the School for Congregation Elders, and to give helpful reminders and guidelines to elders who have yet to attend.

The School for Congregation Elders started in March 2011, in Great Britain and in January 2012, in Ireland. At this point over 6,000 elders have graduated from this excellent school. We have received many appreciative comments about how much the brothers have enjoyed the experience.

In most cases, invitations are sent about six months in advance. As a rule, each of the elders in a congregation will be invited to attend within a few weeks of each other. If new elders are appointed or move into the congregation before the local body of elders attend the school, the body of elders would notify the branch office accordingly. If possible, we will endeavour to include them in a local school. If not, please reassure these ones that they will be invited to the school at some later time. New elders appointed after your congregation has attended the school, should not contact the branch but rather wait for an invitation to be sent. Invitations will now be sent electronically to each elder's personal inbox connected to their jw.org account. If you have any questions regarding your personal inbox account, please contact your congregation coordinator or congregation account administrator.

We understand that some students may not be able to attend on the assigned dates. In that case, the elder should endeavour to exchange the assigned week with another elder in his congregation. If that is not possible, he should contact the Theocratic Schools Desk at the branch office. In some cases elders have swapped dates but not informed the branch office. Please note: *Elders who are not officially enrolled will not be admitted to the class.*

Likely, it will require elders to adjust their personal affairs in order to attend the entire class to which they are assigned. Some brothers are elderly or infirm and may feel unable to attend. Rather than decline the invitation, these elders may be warmly encouraged to attend whatever days or part days they are able, but only during the *assigned week*. They should note this on their acceptance form.

In Britain, the school is being conducted in English only. If an elder needs to attend the school in another language, his body of elders may write to the Britain branch office regarding his request. They should provide his name, his language choice and the location where he would like to attend. If appropriate, we will contact the relevant branch about the request. Of course, the elder must arrange his own travel and accommodation. Incidentally, a brother can only attend *one* school.

In preparation for the school some well-meaning elders have made "workbooks" of the reference material to be used in the school and distributed these to other elders. Please note that no "workbooks" should be made, and that the entire course should be kept *CONFIDENTIAL* from other elders who have not yet attended.

At this time, the use of *iPads* and similar devices is not approved at our schools for theocratic training, whether they are held in the field or at Bethel. This direction applies both to instructors and to students in the classroom.

Our schools, with the exception of the Theocratic Ministry School, are not viewed the same as our congregation meetings. They are designed for a select student body, and often include discussions of matters that are more confidential in nature. Hence, at this time, we prefer that those enrolled in these classes should use only hard copies of our publications that they can mark and take notes in. Using electronic devices with their many functions during class poses the risk both of distraction (with email and other applications) and the breach of confidentiality, either through the simple distribution of electronic notes, or through others having easy access to the same electronic device on other occasions.

In addition to the possibility of a technical problem occurring, the use of an electronic tablet in this setting could prompt others to feel that they too should invest in such a device, and since many brothers cannot afford an *iPad*, using one in the classroom setting could, in effect, create “class distinctions.” (Jas. 2:4) For similar reasons, the use of personal laptops in the classroom is not allowed either. Of course, what each one does in preparation for each day’s lessons is a personal matter.

As these “last days” draw to a close, we treasure how our “Grand Instructor” provides us with education and timely spiritual training that cares for the needs of his precious sheep. (2 Tim. 3:1; Isa. 30:20) We take this opportunity to commend you for your fine work and loving care of the congregation. Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

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

cc: Travelling overseers