

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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TO ALL CONGREGATIONS

Re: Property Ownership

Dear Brothers:

We rejoice with you to see the growth taking place in our branch territory. We know that as a result of the growth, the formation of new congregations and the need for Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls arises. In order to care for proper legalization of Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and any property, we would like to clearly lay out new direction that takes immediate effect.

The Governing Body has approved that with immediate effect all properties owned by Jehovah's Witnesses in Ghana be held in the name of the legally registered corporate entity Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Ghana (WTBTS of Ghana). What this means is that title to all future properties acquired for Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls would be held by WTBTS of Ghana. This change also applies to all other properties already acquired by Jehovah's Witnesses, these should be considered to be in the name of WTBTS of Ghana.

For many years, there has been the trustee arrangement whereby appointed trustees of the congregations or circuits hold title to property on behalf of the congregations or circuits, as discussed in the memorandum dated April 1, 1996, on Information Regarding Ownership of Kingdom Halls. This arrangement has allowed congregations to be viewed as owning the Kingdom Hall. We truly appreciate the way that you have been following the direction provided for Kingdom Hall ownership mentioned in previous years. Now, however, resolutions would no longer be passed in congregations appointing trustees, neither would it be necessary for appointed trustees to sign a Declaration of Trust.

The Governing Body has further approved that since all properties would now be held in the name of WTBTs of Ghana, the loan arrangement by which many properties have been purchased and built upon is being discontinued. In place of the loan arrangement a **monthly contribution for use of Kingdom Halls** is being implemented. The rest of this letter will spell out how this new arrangement will be handled in our field and will answer questions that come up with this new policy:

- 1. What is the reason for this new policy?** Legally, congregations and trustees are not recognized by the Government to hold property as they are not registered. Therefore, by this adjustment we seek to conform to a proper and organized way to acquire and own property which will put us in line with Caesar's laws.—1 Cor. 14:40; Rom. 13:1.
- 2. Who would be responsible for the Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and Landed Property now that WTBTs of Ghana will be the title holder to all properties?** The congregations and Assembly Hall committees will still retain oversight responsibility of all properties belonging to WTBTs of Ghana. Thus caring for the upkeep and maintenance of the buildings and property is still the responsibility of every congregation and dedicated, baptized Jehovah's Witness. However, in order to care for matters legally the branch office now becomes the title holder to all properties. Thus, as all congregations have been directed, selling and acquiring land should be channeled through your circuit overseer to the branch office. Likewise with Assembly Halls, purchase and selling of property should always be coordinated by the branch office.
- 3. How would title holding congregations be viewed now?** Kingdom Halls used by more than one congregation have a title holding congregation, usually the mother or original congregation. Where there is only one congregation using the Kingdom Hall, it is viewed as the title holder. Such congregations would now be viewed as *caretaker congregations*. Communication on matters concerning a particular Kingdom Hall, between the branch office and the congregations using the hall, would be channeled through the caretaker congregation. The arrangement to have Kingdom Hall Operating Committees care for the maintenance of Kingdom Halls will continue. Their constitution and

functions as outlined in *Our Kingdom Ministry* and past correspondence still hold. (See May 1997 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert; S-42 [Instruction for Kingdom Hall Operating Committee Accounting]; T-36 [Information Regarding Ownership of Kingdom Hall dated April 1, 1996]; letters to elders dated June 24, 1997; June 14, 2003; and November 28, 2008).

- 4. How would Land Purchase, Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall Construction be financed now that the loan arrangement is being discontinued?** As is our present policy which is mentioned in point 2, approval for any land purchase, Kingdom Hall or Assembly Hall construction comes first from the branch office. The funding for these projects also has not changed with this new arrangement. Funding for Kingdom Halls and/or Kingdom Hall property is cared for by the congregation with necessary support from the branch office. Funding for Assembly Hall projects and/or land acquisition are cared for by voluntary donations from the congregations, circuits, and if necessary needed support from the branch office. These funds are collected from our contribution boxes labeled, “Worldwide Work,” “Local Congregation Expenses” and the “Kingdom Hall Construction Worldwide.” As the arrangement is now, whatever monies are collected from this third box should be sent directly to the branch office at the end of every month together with the contributions for the “Worldwide work.”
- 5. What is involved in the new arrangement to contribute monthly for the use of the Kingdom Hall?** As has been mentioned above, this replaces the loan arrangement that has been cancelled. Congregations that have already not done so are expected to pass a resolution on how much they can contribute monthly for the use of the Kingdom Hall. *It is encouraged that the resolved amount be revised annually during the month of May.* (See letter to all congregations dated May 29, 2009). The amount resolved should be sent with the monthly remittances to the branch office. For resolved monthly contributions, the congregation should write: “**Monthly contribution for Kingdom Hall Use**” on the line designated “Other Contribution” on the Contribution Remittance Form (S-20). NOTE: Resolved monthly contributions for use of the Kingdom Hall are to be derived from the congregation’s general contributions, that is, the “Local Congregation Expenses” contribution box. These monies are not to be taken from the congregation’s

contributions to the “Kingdom Hall Construction Worldwide” contribution box. It is hoped that these contributions would help to continue with land purchase and the many Kingdom Halls that need to be built.

6. **Which congregations would now be responsible to make a “Monthly resolved contribution for Use of the Kingdom Hall”?** Only congregations which:
 - a. Are presently under the monthly contribution arrangement.
 - b. Will need funding for a Kingdom Hall, property for a Kingdom Hall, major renovation or funding for an Assembly Hall property or building.
7. **What should congregations that benefited from a loan and are still repaying do?** All such would be allowed to complete the payment of their loan. This would be noted on the monthly remittance as they are presently doing.
8. **What about congregations that had a loan but have finished paying?** You would not have a *resolved* monthly contribution. You would only contribute as normal having the three contribution boxes in your Kingdom Hall—“Worldwide Work,” “Kingdom Hall Construction Worldwide” and “Local Contribution,” which you regularly submit to the branch office along with any resolution that your congregation may have decided to give to the Worldwide Work. Point 6 clearly identifies the only time a congregation would be expected to submit a *resolved* monthly contribution.
9. **Should congregations that procured land and built a Kingdom Hall without funding from the branch office also send a *resolved* monthly contribution toward the use of the Kingdom Hall?** No. Only those who are directed as mentioned under point 6 would be required to do so.
10. **What should congregations that meet in rented buildings or premises not belonging to WT BTS of Ghana do?** Contribute, using the three boxes stated in point 8.

11. How should we view the letters dated May 29, 2009, and December 7, 2009, received from the branch office on the subject of Annual review of Kingdom Hall Financial support? The main thrust of these two letters, which is contributing toward the financing of Kingdom Hall building, has not changed. Yearly, reviewing the strength of our contribution should be done. Those who are presently under the loan repayment contributions would continue as they have been until their loan is complete. Those who are presently under the monthly contribution for use of the Kingdom Hall would also yearly review the strength of their monthly contribution so that other congregations can benefit from having a Kingdom Hall built for them.

Jehovah is progressively guiding his people through these critical times, giving them wisdom from above that is necessary to keep the preaching and disciple-making work moving speedily in the face of many snares laid by Satan. (Ps. 32:8; Isa. 30:21) Therefore, this new arrangement which seeks to “give Caesar’s things to Caesar” will allow us the legal footing so that all congregations can continue to worship Jehovah undisturbed by those that may seek to cause us trouble.

We truly appreciate all your loving labor and financial support of Kingdom interests. Please accept our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your fellow brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c. All Traveling Overseers