

# Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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June 1, 2013

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Living accommodations of those pursuing higher education

Dear Brothers:

In the letters to all bodies of elders, dated August 15, 2009, and March 6, 2012, we received guidelines to help us to review the qualifications of an appointed man if he, his wife or children are pursuing higher education.

We are very happy to see that many elders are using these guidelines as they seek to get Jehovah's thinking on such matters. Many elders have considered with their families the information in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 2008, page 4, paragraph 10, which states: "What, though, of higher education, received in a college or a university? This is widely viewed as vital to success. Yet, many who pursue such education end up with their minds filled with harmful propaganda. Such education wastes valuable youthful years that could best be used in Jehovah's service."

With such references many are refocusing their goals and plans for their children toward the full-time service and away from the live-for-today spirit of the world. However, since pursuing higher education is for each family to decide, a question has arisen regarding some who feel it is necessary for their child to pursue higher education: What should be done if a brother sponsors his adult child in a course of higher education, and arranges for the child to stay in rented accommodation with others, away from the family home?

The qualifications of the brother would have to be reviewed. The elders would consider prayerfully all the questions in the above letters but they would also consider the following:

*The Watchtower* of July 15, 1982, pages 14-15 said: "Does this mean that it is wrong to attend a university? This is something each parent should decide for his own child. However, in doing so, he should consider the above facts. **It may be that the student can stay at home and attend college. Or perhaps he can stay with relatives who will keep a close watch on his associates and strongly encourage him to keep active in his Christian responsibilities.** But considering all circumstances, will it be worth the time and effort? Will it equip him the better to serve his God?"

*The Watchtower* continues: "Many parents feel that the potential benefits of a university education are not worth the possible horrendous costs, **especially where the children would have to go unsupervised to another city or country.** Instead, they direct their children toward some trade. For example, while in secondary school, are there courses in various trades that could help a youth to learn a skill that would enable him to make a living after he graduates?" (Bold type ours.)

Also, the letter of March 6, 2012, says: "The 'fight for the faith' is especially challenging when one **leaves the good influence of his home and congregation** and places himself in the university environment. (Jude 3) Besides involving bad associations, higher education often erodes faith in Jehovah God and in the Bible." (Bold type ours.)

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Lastly, recall question 8 in the March 6, 2012, letter which asks, “Does the pursuit of higher education interfere with regular meeting attendance, meaningful participation in field service, or other theocratic activities?” How difficult it would be for a father to truly answer yes to this question if his son or daughter lives away unsupervised!

Therefore, during the circuit overseer’s next round of visits, he will consider this letter with all bodies of elders. The purpose will be to help all appointed brothers to be examples to the flock, preside over their “household in a fine manner” and to maintain their own freeness of speech, as well as that of the entire body of elders.—1 Tim. 3:4, 13; Titus 1:9.

In some cases a youth may leave home to pursue higher education against the wishes of his parents. If the father is an appointed man and has done all he can to assist the youth to consider making the right choice then it may be that he would still qualify as an appointed man. However, if the child left home against his advice and the father still sponsors the child, perhaps paying for his school fees or accommodation, then the father would be considered a supporter of the child even though he may say the child left against his wishes.

If there are young Witnesses present in the congregation because they left their family home to pursue higher education, elders are encouraged to find out if their fathers are appointed men or not. If they are, please write and inform the elders of their home congregation of what is written in this letter so that the elders there may review the qualifications of the father, sending a copy of the letter to the branch office.

Also, if an elder, a servant, or a pioneer, has sent his child away to pursue higher education, the elders should inquire as to the living conditions of the child and arrange to review the qualifications of the responsible parent. As stated in the March 6, 2012, letter, such reviews are best handled during the next visit of the circuit overseer. If the review results in recommending the removal of a brother and if he does not agree with the decision, he may be invited to express his reasons in writing, and this should be sent along with the circuit overseer’s report.

We take this opportunity to remind you that each elder should make the following notation next to the subheading “Situations That May Raise Questions About an Appointed Man’s Qualifications” before paragraph 15, of chapter 3, in the *Shepherding* textbook: “See letter dated March 6, 2012, to all bodies of elders for direction on considering the qualifications of appointed men in connection with higher education.”—For additional information see our letter on higher education dated August 15, 2009.

We hope the above will assist you in reviewing the qualifications of any appointed men who send their children away from the family home for the sake of pursuing higher education despite the repeated warnings that we have received from the faithful slave.—Ezek. 3:17.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation  
of Jehovah’s Witnesses*

c: Traveling Overseers