

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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

January 13, 2014

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

Re: Territory seldom worked

Dear Brothers:

In South Dakota, Steve was told by his visitors that over eight million people around the world are studying the Bible with the use of the *Bible Teach* book. Steve responded enthusiastically: "I want one of those books!" He had a violent and troubled past and was distraught after having lost a loved one in death. The publishers returned two days later and used many scriptures to explain to Steve the condition of the dead and the resurrection hope. Steve lowered his head and cried. He related: "After you left, I prayed to God that he would help me know if what you were telling me was true. I now believe that what you are saying is true. I've had so much pain buried in my heart for so long. You have helped me over a hurdle." In Texas, after accepting comfort from the Bible and a Bible study for her entire family, a woman stated: "This town needs Jehovah's Witnesses!" In Alabama, a woman had tears of joy when her visitors shared spiritual truth with her and expressed their concern for her. She had quit her church earlier that month because she was not learning anything of value and was disgusted by the hypocrisy of the pastor. The woman was highly interested in our home Bible study arrangement after seeing it demonstrated with the *Bible Teach* book. In Minnesota, a man said to his visitors: "I saw you coming, so I went to get this book." He held up a *Bible Teach* book and said that when he was in prison, he stole the book. When asked if he had read it, he replied that he was going to read it on the weekend while he was fishing. A Bible study was immediately started, and chapter 3 was discussed. One publisher related: "There are many people just waiting for Witnesses to call on them! The conversations you have with these humble folks are memorable! These are people who have respect for the Bible and who are yearning to hear the truth. It is a joy and a blessing from Jehovah to expend ourselves in this way."

Would you like to experience the joy that comes from sharing comfort from the Scriptures with those who do not receive a witness on a regular basis? If so, we would like to invite you to apply for and to accept a preaching assignment in territory seldom worked. In this regard, the following questions and answers will be of interest to you.

Q: What is territory seldom worked?

A: Territory seldom worked includes more than 300 counties or parts of counties that are not assigned to any English-speaking congregation. Almost two million people live in unassigned territory, and many of those areas were not completely worked last year. Territory seldom worked also includes the territory held by the more than 1,000 English-speaking and non-English-speaking congregations that are not able to work all their territory regularly.

Q: Who can apply for an assignment?

A: Any group composed of publishers in good standing can apply. The group must consist of at least 2 persons and no more than 20, including minor children.

Q: How does a group apply for an assignment?

A: The Congregation Service Committee will select from the group a qualified brother to serve as team captain. If the group consists solely of sisters, a qualified sister will be selected.

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The team captain will then be given the following forms and information sheets: *Application for Territory Seldom Worked* (S-270), *Counties With Unassigned Territory* (S-271), *Frequently Asked Questions About Territory Seldom Worked* (S-272), and *Areas of Need* (S-279). The application may be provided via e-mail.

Q: What are the responsibilities of the team captain?

A: The team captain is responsible for coordinating group travel, for obtaining literature supplies for the group's use, for caring for related paperwork, and for communicating with any parties involved.

Q: Can publishers from other congregations join the team captain's group?

A: Yes. These publishers should ask their elders for the *Application for Territory Seldom Worked* (S-270).

Q: Where will the group be assigned?

A: The group makes a selection from *Counties With Unassigned Territory* (S-271) or *Areas of Need* (S-279). Consideration will be given to the group's preferred selection if at all possible. If the group wishes to assist a congregation, this should be indicated by selecting the states to which they would be willing to travel. However, a list of congregations needing assistance will not be provided.

Q: How are the dates for an assignment determined?

A: The dates for which the group is available for an assignment should be agreed upon by all in the group. An assignment as short as one day or as long as two consecutive months may be requested.

In Pennsylvania, a mother of three very active young children invited her visitors in and insisted that they sit down. The woman had been praying to God and felt that her visitors were the answer to her prayers. She was tired of preachers voicing their own opinions, and she wanted to understand the Bible better. Arrangements were made to start a Bible study. In Alabama, after discussing suffering in chapter 11 of the *Bible Teach* book, Ryan said: "God must have sent you." Ryan had just asked God in prayer to help him understand why there was so much suffering. He requested that publishers return to continue the study. In North Carolina, Adrian told his visitors that he had always wanted to know what the Lord's Prayer really meant. After being given an explanation from the Bible, he accepted a *Bible Teach* book. The next evening, Adrian was waiting with his family for a discussion of what Jehovah's Witnesses believe. Adrian expressed that in the couple of years he had lived in this remote location, only Jehovah's Witnesses had called on him. This impressed him and his family. He wanted someone to return and study the Bible with him.

We want to thank all of you who have preached in territory seldom worked. If you would like to accept this invitation for an assignment this year, take the matter to Jehovah in prayer. He will not "forget your work and the love you showed for his name."—Heb. 6:10.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Traveling overseers

PS to body of elders:

At the next Service Meeting, please arrange for the following announcement to be made to the congregation: “A letter regarding territory seldom worked has been posted on the information board. Please note that this year groups from all congregations in the United States branch territory, including non-English-speaking congregations, are being invited to participate. In addition to a list of counties with unassigned English-language territory, the elders have been provided with a list of areas of need in languages other than English.”

Pages 1 and 2 of this letter should be posted on the information board for one month. **However, this postscript (other than the announcement noted above) should not be read to the congregation. Neither should the postscript be posted on the information board.**

The new *Areas of Need* (S-279) form replaces the *Foreign-Language Areas of Need* list that was provided with the November 27, 2013, letter to all congregations regarding moving to where there is a need for publishers in another language. The *Foreign-Language Areas of Need* list should be removed from the information board, if it is still posted, and be discarded. The instructions provided in the November 27, 2013, letter will apply to the new *Areas of Need* form, with the exception that Spanish-speaking areas of need are now included. The new *Areas of Need* form will thus serve two purposes—indicating areas of need wherein publishers may consider moving permanently or wherein groups of publishers may wish to preach temporarily as a part of the territory-seldom-worked program.

As noted above, when a group of publishers informs the Congregation Service Committee of their desire to preach in territory seldom worked, the service committee should select from the group a qualified brother to serve as the team captain. If the group consists solely of single sisters (including married sisters whose mates will not be part of the group), a qualified sister should be selected to serve as the team captain. The team captain should then be given one copy of the *Application for Territory Seldom Worked* (S-270), *Counties With Unassigned Territory* (S-271), *Frequently Asked Questions About Territory Seldom Worked* (S-272), and *Areas of Need* (S-279). The application may be provided via e-mail. Since the S-271 and S-279 forms may be updated periodically throughout the year, please ensure that the latest versions are printed from jw.org. For those who wish to join a team captain’s group in a different congregation, provide them with one copy of the application only.

Publishers who preach in territory seldom worked perform an excellent service and are to be commended for their efforts. When processing applications, we encourage service committees to continue recommending spiritually qualified individuals and to assist these brothers and sisters in any way possible in order to make their assignment a success.

Approving Applications

- Groups should be made up of at least 2 publishers and limited to 20, including minor children of publishers. Assignments will not be given to a publisher to work alone. Two or more groups should not request the same assignment at the same time in order to work closely together.
- Do not submit an application for a group consisting solely of single brothers and single sisters. In this regard, a publisher traveling without his mate is considered single.

- Do not submit applications for persons not in good standing or who are currently experiencing difficulties in their lives. Especially where these difficulties involve problems in the family, you will want to exercise discretion when approving a publisher who will not be accompanied by his mate.
- Review with the applicants the need to consider carefully their financial situation in order to be sure that they will be able to care adequately for their own food, lodging, and transportation when they receive an assignment. This should be emphasized even if the publishers have received offers of assistance from either individuals or congregations.
- If for any reason an applicant does not qualify for the work, you should kindly inform the publisher of the reasons why he is not being approved.
- **Applications submitted by a team captain:** After the Congregation Service Committee approves the application, an elder with the jw.org “Manage Domain Inbox” role should send it to the Service Department using the jw.org Inbox feature. The words “Territory Desk” should be included in the subject line of the message. (If the team captain did not provide the form electronically, the elder should enter the information on the application into the editable PDF version.) The original application should be retained in the congregation file, and a copy should be given to the team captain. An assignment for the team captain will be sent to the congregation’s jw.org inbox. This assignment and any attachments should promptly be given to the team captain. This may be done via e-mail.
- **Applications submitted by a publisher who wishes to join a team captain’s group in a different congregation:** After the Congregation Service Committee approves the application, a copy of the approved application should be given to the team captain so that he has assurance that everyone in his group is approved by their respective service committees. This may be done via e-mail. The original application should be retained in the congregation file. Do not forward this application to the branch office.

After a Group Receives an Assignment

- A member of the Congregation Service Committee should meet with the team captain to determine what further assistance can be given. If the team captain’s group is given an assignment to assist a congregation, help him to communicate immediately with that congregation’s coordinator of the body of elders.
- The team captain should see to it that his group will have sufficient literature and magazines for the assignment.—See *Literature and Magazine Request Guidelines* (S-56), chapter 15, paragraph 7.
- A qualified brother would take the lead in conducting meetings for field service.

After a Group Completes an Assignment

- Remind the team captain to fill out the *Report on Territory Seldom Worked* (S-273), using the editable PDF version, if possible. An elder with the jw.org “Manage Domain Inbox” role should send it to the Service Department using the jw.org Inbox feature. The words “Territory Desk” should be included in the subject line of the message. Any interesting experiences should be sent in a separate document. (If the team captain did not provide the form electronically, the elder should enter the information on the report into the editable PDF version.)

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As a reminder, unassigned territory is cared for by the branch office and should not be worked without our permission. However, if your congregation borders unassigned territory, some of your publishers may wish to accompany the team captain's group. They should make inquiry of the team captain assigned to the territory so that he can inform them whether additional assistance would be appropriate. Otherwise, the team captain is expected to fulfill his assignment as best he can with the publishers in his group.

If your congregation has many territories that have not been worked for over a year and you would like to accept the assistance of a group to help you work the territory, please make this known to your circuit overseer the next time he serves your congregation.

The publishers in your congregation will appreciate your warm interest in their endeavors to expand their ministry to declare the good news. We thank you for your cooperation and due consideration of these matters.