

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

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



May 12, 2014

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

Re: Adjusted process to accelerate Kingdom Hall construction

Dear Brothers:

We are writing as a follow-up to the letter dated May 2, 2014, to all bodies of elders in the United States branch territory, which advised that further direction would be forthcoming regarding the adjustments that will accelerate construction of Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls worldwide and how the program will be funded. It is a pleasure to be able to work with you in implementing the program within our branch territory, and it is hoped that the following guidelines will be of assistance in finalizing both the monthly amount and one-time amount that will be proposed to the congregation by way of a resolution for financially supporting Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall construction worldwide.

Funding: As stated in the postscript of the letter dated March 29, 2014, congregations will continue to pay for monthly operating expenses, minor maintenance, and minor repairs from the local congregation account *or* the Kingdom Hall Operating Committee account in cases where multiple congregations share a building. Therefore, as described in *Instructions for Congregation Accounting (S-27)*, the body(ies) of elders determines a reserve amount of funds that would generally be needed to cover two to three months of operating expenses. Included in these expenses are costs for utilities, supplies, and services (for example, snow removal or servicing of building or irrigation systems). If the body(ies) of elders believes there is a need, an additional reserve of funds, up to \$5,000 per auditorium, may also be held in this account. If these amounts have not already been established, the body(ies) of elders should meet as soon as possible to do so.

Each body of elders will also need to ensure that sufficient funds are retained in their individual congregation account to cover all resolutions, such as for the Kingdom Hall Assistance Arrangement, the Traveling Overseer Assistance Arrangement, and the newly established worldwide Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall construction program.

If a congregation has promissory notes payable to individuals, the Congregation Service Committee should contact these individuals to arrange to have the funds returned to them. If the individual offers to donate the funds outright, that would be their decision and it must be made without any prompting. The repayment of any outstanding promissory notes should be factored in when determining a one-time donation of surplus funds to the branch office.

If minor maintenance or a minor repair is needed and the cost is more than can be paid for with funds on hand, the body(ies) of elders will be able to contact their Local Design/Construction Department (LDC) representatives. You will be advised when these representatives have been identified and how to contact them. In the meantime, please seek assistance from your Regional Building Committee (RBC).

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Decisions and approvals: Instructions have been provided to the RBCs regarding the process for submitting projects to the LDC for review. In the past, each body(ies) of elders, in cooperation with the RBC, played a significant role in determining both when a new Kingdom Hall construction or renovation project was needed, as well as the scope and cost of the project. The Governing Body has now directed that much of this responsibility be transferred to the branch office. These decisions will be based on a careful examination of the circumstances of each congregation and a branch-wide plan that is being developed to assess and prioritize the need for Kingdom Halls.

With a clear understanding of the overall needs, the branch office will be able to implement greater standardization. Additionally, the challenging and time-consuming work of researching available options to meet the needs of the congregations will gradually be assigned to representatives of the LDC. Therefore, branch office approval will be needed for (1) any new property purchase or sale, (2) any new construction project, (3) the addition of any new element or feature to the existing Kingdom Hall, or (4) maintenance work that will cost more than \$5,000 per auditorium.

We are delighted to be working shoulder to shoulder with you in carrying out the Governing Body's direction. (Zeph. 3:9) Be assured that while we see the benefits of the new program whereby the research and decision-making related to Kingdom Hall construction will be transferred to the branch office, when the LDC turns attention to your specific needs, your comments and recommendations will be considered as decisions are made. Along with you, we continue to pray for Jehovah's blessing upon these arrangements and future organizational adjustments. Please accept our warm Christian love and greetings as well as our appreciation for all of your fine work.

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

c: Regional Building Committees
Traveling overseers

PS to secretary:

This letter should be retained in the congregation permanent file of policy letters. You may wish to update the congregation copy of *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22) at this time as well.