

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



Hse. No. J348/4 - Tema Beach Road - Nungua, Accra
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June 24, 2016

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS

Re: Patronizing food vendors at assemblies and conventions

Dear Brothers:

Large theocratic gatherings are occasions of joy for God's people. We appreciate the spiritual gifts imparted to us by Jehovah God, our Grand Instructor, through his faithful slave. How we also enjoy our Christian associations with our fellow brothers and sisters as well as our invited guests at such gatherings! No doubt, we always look forward to such spiritually refreshing events.

However, at this time, it has become necessary to share just one reminder with you. As all of us seek to conscientiously apply this reminder while attending large theocratic gatherings, we will contribute to even more beneficial programs.

Many years ago, the cafeteria arrangement at assemblies and conventions was discontinued. The faithful slave encouraged all delegates to bring along a light lunch rather than leave the assembly or convention site to obtain a meal during the noon breaks. Commendably, majority of us have closely adhered to this direction over the years. However, it has been noted in recent times that there is much room for improvement in this area.

Since the cafeteria arrangement was discontinued, certain food vendors seek to take undue advantage of our assemblies and conventions by doing businesses in close proximity to the venues. Some even try to sell at the gates! Reports received in recent times indicate that increasing number of delegates continue to encourage the vendors by buying from them.

Commenting on commercialism at theocratic gatherings, the *Watchtower*, March 15, 1997, page 18, paragraph 5, encourages all true Christians to remember that the Christian congregation is "a pillar and support of the truth." (1 Timothy 3:15) Like a building's columns, the congregation upholds God's truth, not anyone's business. Congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses have not been established as locations to promote commercial interests, goods, or services. It also adds that assemblies and conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses are places for Christian association and *spiritual* discussion. The above-referenced *Watchtower* states in paragraph 6: "We can discern the underlying principle if we remember that Jesus "drove all those with the sheep and cattle out of the temple, and he poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. And he said to those selling the doves: 'Take these things away from here! Stop making the house of my Father a house of merchandise!'—John 2:15, 16."

Jesus showed high regard for Jehovah's worship. We too can imitate him by not promoting businesses at our theocratic events. If none of us patronizes food sold by outside vendors at our large gatherings, they will be discouraged and no longer turn up. As mentioned earlier, we want to bring along our own noon meal. This will give us the opportunity to remain in the premises and to fellowship with our brothers and sisters for longer periods during the intermissions. The psalmist expressed at Psalm 119:60: "I hurry and do not delay to keep [God's] commandments." We are confident that you will follow through on the above direction to receive Jehovah's blessings.

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Please accept an expression of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: All circuit overseers

All Assembly Hall overseers and assistants

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PS to the coordinator of the body of elders:

This letter should be read to the congregation at the next midweek meeting during the announcements section. Afterward, page 1 of the letter should be posted on the information board. In view of the length of the letter, kindly remind all who have parts on the program to make efforts to save enough time. Additionally, the week before your convention and assembly week, remind the congregation of the main points in this letter.