

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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May 14, 2017

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Public Reading of Study Material at Congregation Meetings

Dear Brothers:

This letter replaces the April 22, 2012, letter to all bodies of elders regarding reading scriptures at the *Watchtower* Study and has been added to the list of policy letters that will be cited in *Index to Letters for Bodies of Elders* (S-22). Additional direction is being provided regarding the reading of material in footnotes, endnotes, parentheses, and brackets.

Scripture Texts Marked “Read”: The conductor may decide whether to have scripture texts marked “read” read by the assigned paragraph reader or by someone from the audience who reads well. The paragraph reading should not be interrupted by the reading of such texts. When a “read” text is cited at the very beginning of a paragraph, the text should be read *before* the paragraph is read. When a “read” text is cited in the middle or at the end of a paragraph, the conductor may determine when to have the text read after the reading of the paragraph has concluded. He may decide to have the text read before the question is asked, particularly if the answer to the question is found in the scripture. At other times, he may decide to have the text read during the general discussion of the material.

Material in Footnotes, Endnotes, Parentheses, and Brackets: Footnotes and endnotes should not be read by the assigned paragraph reader. The conductor should decide to what extent the thought in a footnote or an endnote should be included in the discussion. After the paragraph has been read, the conductor might choose to have someone in the audience read the footnote or endnote or he might choose to ask for a comment on it. In some cases, he may choose not to refer to it at all. Material in parentheses and brackets within a paragraph is ordinarily read aloud. A reference that simply identifies source material, such as a scripture citation, should not be read aloud.

Please share the above information with all assigned paragraph readers. It will be advantageous for elders who conduct question-and-answer discussions to review periodically applicable direction in the *Shepherding* textbook, chapter 2, paragraph 25. In view of the foregoing, each elder should adjust the notation next to the fifth bullet in that paragraph to read as follows: “See May 14, 2017, letter to all bodies of elders regarding the public reading of study material at congregation meetings.”

We send our warm Christian love.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Circuit overseers

5/14/17-E