

# THE KINGDOM HALL TRUST

IBSA HOUSE, THE RIDGEWAY, LONDON NW7 1RN

*Telephone 020 8906 2211*

TAA:TAD November 8, 2019

TO SELECTED CONGREGATIONS

Re: Proposal to Merge the Congregation Charity into The Kingdom Hall Trust

Dear Brothers:

It is an exciting time to be part of Jehovah's Organization. Recently, we have seen many changes. For example, we have benefitted spiritually from the improved quality of teaching at our weekly meetings and annual conventions. Many organizational procedures are also being simplified to keep our focus on the preaching and disciple-making work.

Currently, your congregation is a separate entity, and in most cases a registered charity. Caring for a charity brings with it a level of administrative responsibility: including submitting Annual Returns, claiming Gift Aid as well as holding regular business meetings. In most cases, our congregation secretaries have taken on all of this responsibility and we appreciate their diligent work over the years.

Charities are regulated by an independent organization called the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission "*...encourages charities and trustees to look regularly and imaginatively at what more they can achieve for their charity's beneficiaries by working with others*". It states that "*...some charities may decide that merging with other charities is the best way of meeting their current and future beneficiaries' needs.*" Moreover, the Charity Commission's website highlights the advantages of merging charities, since the merged charities would share one charity number, only one set of statutory accounts, and only a single trustees' annual report would be required. This is in harmony with our desire to simplify how congregations in our branch territory are structured legally.

We are now proposing that congregations throughout our branch territory be dissolved as charities and merge with a legal entity called The Kingdom Hall Trust, hereafter referred to as 'KHT'. KHT is an incorporated charity that has been used for many years to hold title to Kingdom Halls. This proposal has been reviewed by an independent legal expert in the field of charity law and has the approval of the Charity Commission.

With this proposal, congregations will continue to hold meetings and arrange field ministry as normal. The local elders will continue to oversee all the spiritual activity of the congregation as they have always done. However, legally your congregation would no longer be an independent charity. Instead, it would become a branch of KHT. This means that elders would no longer serve as charity trustees although they would look after certain congregation financial matters delegated to them by KHT, such as maintaining accounting records and requesting payments.

The principal benefit of this new arrangement is simplicity. Merging congregations with KHT means that thousands of elders will have reduced administrative responsibilities. This would enable elders to give more attention to taking the lead in the evangelizing work and to shepherding.

Because KHT is a legal entity with the same charitable aims and objectives as your local congregation, funds collected for the Worldwide Work, Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall Construction or local expenses

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would continue to be used for these purposes. However, because elders would no longer serve as trustees, your local donations would be administered by KHT as part of its general funds. This could mean that the Trustees decide to use your donations to support the Kingdom work elsewhere in our branch territory and throughout the world to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters. This is in harmony with the equalizing explained at 2 Corinthians 8:14 “... *that by means of an equalizing, your surplus at the present time might offset their need, so that their surplus might also offset your deficiency, that there may be an equalizing*”.

Donations for local expenses may be made by means of the contribution box and donate.jw.org. These will be allocated to the congregation's account held centrally by KHT. KHT will claim Gift Aid where appropriate. As regards payments, congregation elders will request that KHT make payments from the congregation's account. These will be processed on a weekly basis. KHT will provide a monthly report of your congregation's receipts and payments.

The new arrangement also means that your congregation would no longer own its Kingdom Hall. Each congregation that agrees to the proposal would donate its funds and any property it owns, to KHT. KHT would then have an obligation to ensure that Kingdom Halls continue to be available for your worship. Of course, each congregation would continue to be responsible for cleaning, maintenance and general upkeep which we are all happy to carry out in appreciation for our place of worship.

Your charity is now being invited to take part in this process and merge with The Kingdom Hall Trust. Next week a resolution will be put to all baptized members of your congregation so that you can decide whether or not to go along with this proposal.

Please consider prayerfully this proposal. If you have additional questions please feel free to ask one of your elders.

Your brothers,

*The Kingdom Hall Trust*