

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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October 2, 2001

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Dear Brothers:

“This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) How thrilling it is to see the fulfillment of Jesus’ words right before our eyes! Young and old alike are ‘exerting themselves vigorously’ as they share in this all-important work that is never to be repeated. (Luke 13:24) There are now more than six million Kingdom proclaimers worldwide. Many of these are able to have an increased share in the ministry by serving as regular or auxiliary pioneers. The more than 800,000 regular pioneers are to be commended for the fine work that they are doing. Many of these have expressed appreciation for the reduction in the hour requirement. At the same time, though, some pioneers have not been meeting the regular pioneer hour requirement on a consistent basis. How can such ones be assisted?

Do not allow an extended period of time to pass before giving attention to a pioneer who is not meeting the hour requirement. Be prompt in talking to the pioneer so that you clearly understand why he has not been able to meet the hour requirement. Is it because of health problems, increased family responsibilities, or secular work? Or has he been self-sparing and somewhat disorganized? Are other activities consuming his time and energy? Once you have identified the problem, you will be able to provide assistance as directed in the July 1998 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert.

Paragraph 17 of the insert instructs pioneers: “If you are temporarily ill for a few months or for some other urgent reason beyond your control you cannot meet the required hours, you can approach a member of the Congregation Service Committee and explain the problem. If these elders think that it would be advisable to allow you to continue in the pioneer service without worrying about making up the lost time, they can make that decision. The secretary will mark the Congregation’s Publisher Record card to show that you are not required to make up the lost time. This is not a leave of absence but, rather, special consideration for your circumstances. —See August 1986 *Our Kingdom Ministry* insert, paragraph 18.”

Paragraph 19 of the July 1998 insert states: “There are times when a pioneer experiences an unavoidable change in his circumstances. He may find that he cannot meet the hour requirement over a long period of time because of an ongoing health problem, increased family responsibility, and so forth. In this case, the course of wisdom would be to return to the publisher ranks and share whenever possible in the auxiliary pioneer service. There is no regular provision to allow someone to stay on the pioneer list if his circumstances no longer allow him to meet the hour requirement.”

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After reviewing what is stated in *Our Kingdom Ministry*, determine whether the problem is temporary (lasting one, two, or three months) or ongoing, one that will not be solved in a short period of time. Of course, additional factors should be taken into consideration before a decision is made. How long has the individual been serving as a full-time minister? What is the age of the pioneer? Can special consideration be extended to the individual? In other words, are there legitimate reasons for the *temporary* problem that the pioneer has experienced, so that he can be allowed to continue pioneering without making up the lost time? Or might it be better for him to discontinue regular pioneer service until his circumstances change? Discontinuing pioneer service for a time may relieve him of the stress of trying to meet the hour requirement while coping with difficult or adverse circumstances. Be balanced and use good judgment when making such decisions. Consider what course of action will be in the best interests of the individual and, at the same time, will uphold the high standards of regular pioneer service.

Once the decision has been made, you should follow through without delay. If you delay in handling matters, further problems may develop. A pioneer may begin to minimize the need to meet the hour requirement. Or he may feel stress, wondering when the elders will recommend his removal. A pioneer may try unrealistically to increase the hours he spends in field service in an attempt to reach the hour requirement, thinking that is the only course to be taken. These situations may cause the pioneer to develop a poor attitude or even health problems. Therefore, the long-term interests of the pioneer are best served when elders promptly handle matters.

Pioneers are expected to meet the hour requirement on a consistent basis. Be alert to provide them with assistance when needed. This will help them 'fully accomplish their ministry.' (2 Timothy 4:5) May Jehovah continue to bless your efforts to render loving assistance to pioneers and the efforts of the pioneers as they share with us in preaching the good news to "the most distant part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation of
Jehovah's Witnesses*

Note to the Congregation Service Committee: Accompanying this letter is an outline for the December meeting with the regular pioneers. Please arrange right away for two elders to conduct this meeting. The elders should be well prepared so that the meeting is truly encouraging to the pioneers. Other elders may attend.
