

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses Congrégation chrétienne des Témoins de Jéhovah



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April 15, 1997

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS IN CANADA

Re: Kingdom Hall operating committees

Dear Brothers:

1. All of us very much appreciate the assistance rendered by brothers serving on Kingdom Hall operating committees as they help in a fine way in caring for our Kingdom Halls which are buildings dedicated to Jehovah. We are writing to share clarification regarding the responsibilities of the bodies of elders and of the operating committee. This letter will supplement the November 2, 1995, letter already in your file.

2. **Areas of responsibility:** The bodies of elders bear the responsibility to supervise the upkeep and maintenance of the Kingdom Hall. When two or more congregations use the same hall, the bodies of elders appoint an operating committee composed of knowledgeable elders or ministerial servants to assist the elders by organizing this work. (*om* 61-2) This committee works entirely under the direction of the bodies of elders. It does not function independently of the bodies of elders. Its responsibility is to oversee the day-to-day operation of the Kingdom Hall, making sure it is kept clean, tidy, and in good repair, basically doing the same work that would be done by just one elder or ministerial servant when only one congregation meets in the hall.

3. The elders—not the operating committee—determine how the Kingdom Hall is to be used, when meetings are to be held, whether the building is to be used for weddings or funerals, and so forth. The elders also bear the responsibility of seeing that congregation funds are spent properly, not simply delegating the expenditure of maintenance or construction funds to the operating committee or a local building committee.

4. The brothers selected to serve on the operating committee must be (1) spiritual men and (2) available. (Acts 6:3, 4; *w*92 10/15 p. 23, par. 5) They should take the lead in caring for the Kingdom Hall, see to it that there are sufficient supplies on hand, and make sure no hazardous conditions exist in the hall or on the grounds. Annually they inspect the Kingdom Hall thoroughly and advise the elders if major repairs are needed. A written agreement is developed jointly by the elders, and a copy is placed in each congregation's file. We are asking the circuit overseer to review the written agreement and local arrangements for the operating committee in connection with his next visit to each congregation.

5. It is best where possible that a separate bank account be established, and a member of the operating committee should keep this account. Two signatures of members of the operating committee should be required on all checks. Out-of-the-ordinary expenditures would be made only when approved by all the congregations using the Kingdom Hall. No congregation funds should be used to make money gifts to individuals. The bodies of elders should see that the account is audited every three months on the same schedule that the congregation accounts are

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audited. The bodies of elders appoint a new chairman of the operating committee when a replacement is necessary.

6. **Legal concerns:** It is best that the work on maintaining the Kingdom Hall and the grounds be performed, where possible, by unpaid volunteers from the local congregation(s). (Ps. 110:3; Mal. 1:10; w89 7/1 p. 30; w87 12/1 p. 19, pars. 13-14; compare seventh and eighth paragraphs on page 4 of August 1995 *Our Kingdom Ministry* and first paragraph on page 4 of the June 1, 1980, issue of *The Watchtower*.) If any work is contracted to others, obtain written estimates and signed written agreements. The details of the bids should not be shared with others wishing to bid on the work. If someone charges for his services, he then becomes legally liable. This would apply to those associated with congregations as well as to non-Witnesses. It should be determined that the contractor has the required insurance and other legal protection needed. (See February 15, 1996, letter addressed TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS, page 3, paragraph 1.) The congregation should be named as an additional insured on the contractor's insurance policy.

7. **Cooperation:** There is a need for unity and close cooperation in caring for our Kingdom Halls. Good communication is vital. While the operating committee is assigned to assist the elders, the elders must have confidence in the operating committee's ability to fulfill its duties conscientiously. So, a spirit of unity and cooperation must exist in order for this arrangement to work successfully. Where it does, blessings will result with a Kingdom Hall that is well maintained, and this will be to the honor and praise of our Father, Jehovah. We send our warm Christian love as we all continue to be 'taught to do Jehovah's will.'—Ps. 143:10.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

cc: Regional Building Committees
Traveling Overseers