

CHAPTER 1

GOVERNING BODY AND GOVERNING BODY COMMITTEES

1. Governing Body: The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses is made up of brothers who are anointed servants of Jehovah God. They have the responsibility for giving direction and impetus to the Kingdom work. (Matt. 24:14, 45-47; Rev. 12:17) Like its first-century counterpart, the Governing Body today looks to Jehovah, the Universal Sovereign, and to Jesus Christ, the Head of the congregation, for direction in all matters. (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23) The Governing Body is organized to take the lead as Jehovah directs it by holy spirit. The members of the Governing Body do not regard themselves as the leaders of Jehovah’s people. Rather, like all anointed Christians on earth, they “keep following the Lamb [Jesus Christ] no matter where he goes.” —Rev. 14:4.

2. The Bible says: “Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.” (1 Cor. 14:40) The Governing Body obeys this direction by putting in place various helpful procedures and guidelines that ensure the smooth and orderly operation of the branch offices and the congregations. Responsible Christian men do their part by setting an example of obedience as they put such arrangements into effect. All Christians, especially overseers, should look to Jehovah for guidance and should pray regularly for his direction and blessing. All should show themselves “reasonable, ready to obey” those placed in oversight. (Jas. 3:17) Thus, each group, congregation, circuit, and branch is blessed with a united, orderly body of believers who reflect well on the happy God.—1 Cor. 14:33; 1 Tim. 1:11.

3. While the Governing Body delegates certain details or responsibilities to committees made up of its own members, to committees made up of other dedicated servants of God, or to instruments such as corporations and legal agencies, the Governing Body always takes the lead in promoting the smooth functioning of the organization and the unity of all of God’s people.—Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5; Heb. 13:17; *w01* 1/15 pp. 28-31.

4. The Governing Body gives final approval for new publications as well as new audio and video programs.

5. The Governing Body cares for the appointment and deletion of Branch and Country committee members and designates the brother who will serve as the coordinator of the committee. It also appoints circuit overseers and country representatives. In most cases, such appointments are made based on recommendations received from the Branch Committee. The Governing Body also appoints helpers to Governing Body committees as well as headquarters representatives qualified to make branch visits.

6. The Governing Body may arrange for qualified men to care for theocratic assignments in any locality at any time. It is not bound by recommendations received from other elders. Such recommendations serve merely as a guide and may even be rejected for reasons known to the Governing Body. The Governing Body has the prerogative to use its discretion and look into any matters it deems necessary to examine with regard to the Kingdom work.

7. To oversee various aspects of the Kingdom work, six administrative Governing Body committees have been established. [See Chart 1.1.] Their responsibilities are as follows.

8. Coordinators' Committee: This committee oversees auditing, legal matters, and the use of the media when necessary to convey an accurate picture of our beliefs. It responds to disasters, outbreaks of persecution, and other emergencies affecting Jehovah's Witnesses anywhere in the world. In general, all computer-related issues are also cared for by this committee. However, the Writing Committee oversees matters having to do with the development and maintenance of computer programs and tools used to process and translate publications and to publish them in electronic format, including MEPS, the Watchtower Translation System (WTS), *Watchtower Library*, and *jw.org*.

9. Personnel Committee: This committee oversees the arrangements for the physical and spiritual welfare of Bethel family members earth wide. (Eph. 4:3; Phil. 2:1-5; Jas. 5:14-16) It oversees the selecting and inviting of new members of Bethel families, temporary volunteers, part-time and full-time commuters, remote servants and volunteers, construction servants and volunteers, full-time and part-time construction commuters, and Assembly Hall and Bible school facility servants and handles questions regarding their service. It also appoints expatriate Bethel family members, including Bethelites in foreign service.

10. Publishing Committee: This committee supervises the printing and shipping of Bible literature worldwide. It has oversight of printeries and properties owned and operated by the various corporations used by Jehovah's Witnesses. Funding for branches is approved and arranged for under the direction of the Publishing Committee. It has oversight of issues involving accounting, allowances, insurance, taxes, and other financial matters for branch facili-

ties throughout the world, such as the purchase or sale of real estate, equipment, and vehicles. All *Branch Requests*, *Nonliterature Branch Requests*, and other budget approvals are processed and approved under the direction of this committee. It oversees arrangements for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of all the organization's facilities, including branches, remote translation offices, missionary homes, schools, Kingdom Halls, and Assembly Halls.

11. Expenditures of up to USD 2,000,000 will be approved by the Publishing Committee. The Governing Body, however, is responsible for approving major real estate transactions and significant construction projects involving the expenditure of more than USD 2,000,000. In most cases, Branch Committees will present the details of such projects to the Publishing Committee, and thereafter, the matter will be presented to the Governing Body.

12. Service Committee: This committee supervises all areas of the evangelizing work comprising the activity of publishers, pioneers, and missionaries, as well as congregation organization and the shepherding activities of elders and circuit overseers. It appoints field missionaries and assigns them to areas of need. The Service Committee also provides guidance to branch offices as to the responsibilities of the Service Department. Hospital Information Services at world headquarters as well as the activity of Hospital Information Desks, Hospital Liaison Committees, and Patient Visitation Groups is supervised by the Service Committee. Instructions on field service reporting are given by the Service Committee. It also assigns geographic locations to a particular branch office and outlines the program for periodic branch visits by headquarters representatives and branch shepherding visits by Governing Body members.

13. Difficult service-related questions having to do with the formation of judicial, appeal, and special committees as

well as problems involving congregation members, elders, and circuit overseers that cannot be handled by a Branch Committee are referred to the Service Committee. Specific cases in which the standing of those in the congregations might be affected are to be referred to this committee.

14. While the Teaching Committee oversees the preparation of the *curriculum* for theocratic schools, the Service Committee provides direction to the branches on the *operation and scheduling* of the schools that are conducted within their branch territories. The Service Committee determines who may be invited to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and the School for Branch Committee Members and Their Wives.

15. Teaching Committee: This committee supervises the production of spiritual food that is delivered orally for the benefit of the worldwide brotherhood and supervises the format that is to be followed at congregation meetings. For example, it is directly involved in preparing the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*, talk outlines, convention dramas, dramatic Bible readings, and convention chairman's introductions, as well as audio and video publications posted on jw.org or broadcast through other means. These materials are used for dispensing instruction at Bethel spiritual programs, congregation meetings, circuit assemblies, and regional conventions. The Teaching Committee also oversees the organization of international, special, national, and regional conventions around the world as directed by the Governing Body. In addition, this committee supervises the Scriptural curriculum for eight theocratic schools, namely:

Watchtower Bible School of Gilead
 School for Branch Committee
 Members and Their Wives
 School for Circuit Overseers and
 Their Wives

School for Kingdom Evangelizers
 School for Congregation Elders
 Kingdom Ministry School
 Bethel Entrants' School
 Pioneer Service School

16. The Theocratic Schools Department works under the supervision of the Teaching Committee and assists in instructing students of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead and the School for Branch Committee Members and Their Wives.

17. Besides reviewing and approving all new recommendations of Morning Worship chairmen and instructors of the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, the Teaching Committee also handles inquiries from branches regarding the above matters, including queries about alternate source material for the Congregation Bible Study in languages into which the main study publication has not yet been translated. The Teaching Committee reviews and approves programs for the dedication of new Assembly Halls and branch facilities, providing helpful guidelines for these events. Guiding principles are also given to the branches on how to conduct morning worship and the Bethel family *Watchtower Study*. In addition, outlines for Monday night lectures presented to the worldwide Bethel family each service year are reviewed and approved by this committee.

18. Assisted by Audio/Video Services, the Teaching Committee looks after the audio/video needs of all branches grouped under various Regional Audio/Video Centers. The Teaching Committee also oversees the Theocratic Schools Department, the WHQ Broadcasting Department, and the WHQ Travel Department. More specific information about each department is located in Chapter 7.

19. Writing Committee: This committee supervises the production of spiritual food in written and electronic form

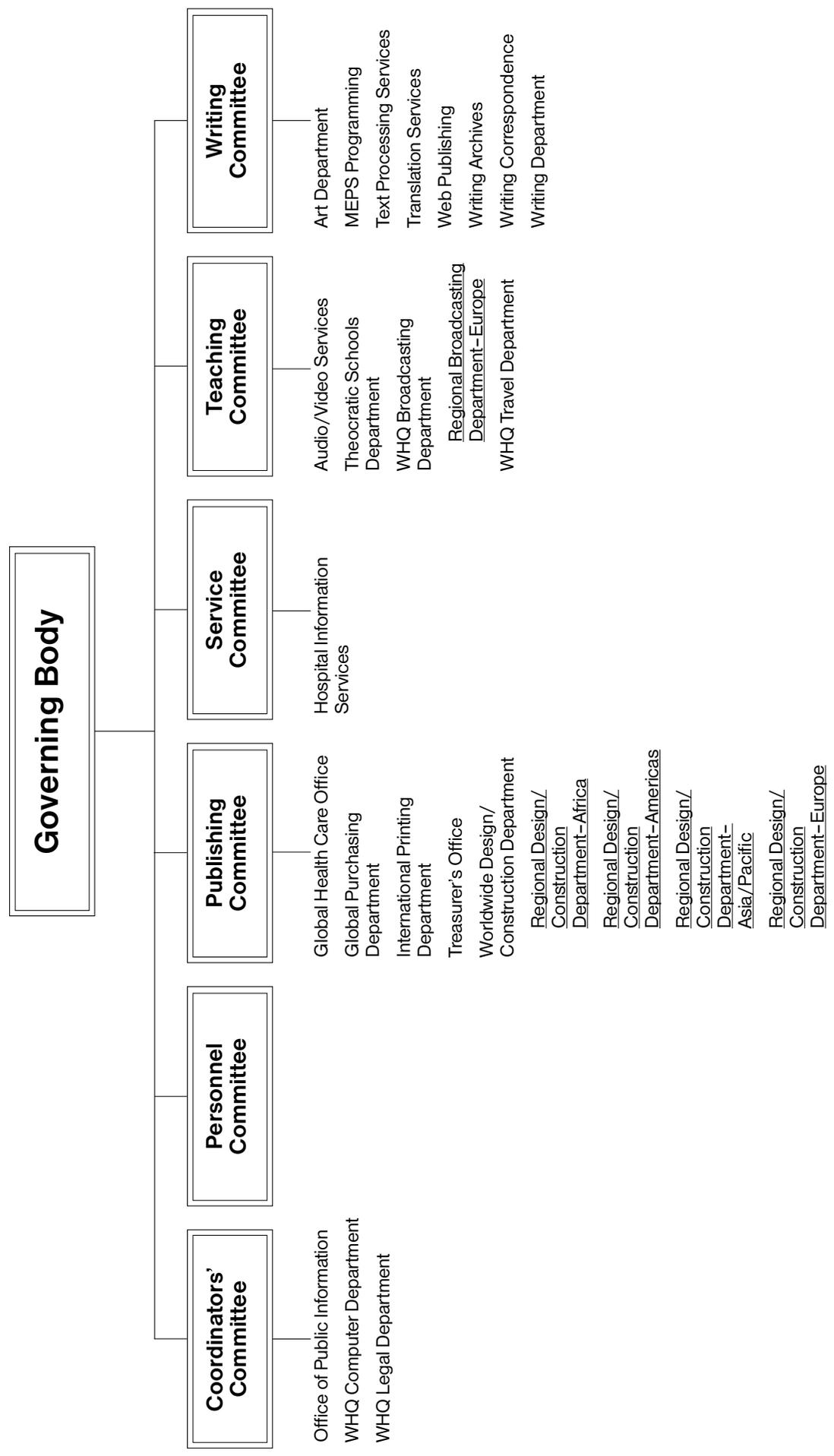
for our brothers and for the public in general. It also develops and maintains the organization's websites and oversees the translation work done throughout the earth. This includes giving approval for the translation of audio and video programs from English into additional languages.

20. The publications that the Writing Committee supervises include Bibles, the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, all bound books, booklets, brochures, tracts, invitations, final copy for the *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*, and any

revisions of these. It also supervises the production of public witnessing posters and unique branch materials, such as dedication and tour brochures and public relations materials. This committee also approves talk outlines and scripts for dramas. Additionally, the Writing Committee responds to questions about the meaning of certain scriptures and points presented in the publications, including general questions about doctrines or morals that do not deal with specific cases in which the standing of those in the congregations might be affected.

CHART 1.1

World Headquarters



CHAPTER 2

RESPONSIBILITY OF BRANCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. The Governing Body appoints well-qualified elders to serve as members of a Branch Committee. Each Branch Committee oversees the preaching work in the field and the work in the branch office within its assigned territory. As the representatives of the Governing Body in their assigned territory, Branch Committee members must faithfully implement and follow the direction coming from God's Word and "the faithful and discreet slave."—Matt. 24:45-47.

2. Each Branch Committee member must feel a deep sense of responsibility to Jehovah. Thus, he must work diligently to fortify and maintain his good relationship with God. He must be a diligent student of the Bible and be governed by its laws and principles in his personal and public life. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2) He must be zealous for the ministry. (2 Tim. 4:2) He must be a fine example in following Bethel rules, never feeling that he is above them. (Heb. 13:17) His deep love and respect for Jehovah fuels his desire to be faithful in little and in much. (Luke 16:10; 1 John 5:3) He recognizes that his appointment by holy spirit is a privilege and that it will be taken away if he neglects his spirituality. (1 Tim. 4:14-16) His humble mental attitude moves him to seek out and listen to the opinions of others, to take the lead in showing honor, and to be a peacemaker. (1 Ki. 22:19-23; Matt. 5:9; Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:5-8; Jas. 3:17, 18) Like Christ Jesus, he finds joy in unselfishly serving the interests of his brothers. (Mark 6:31-34; John 13:14, 15; Phil. 2:4) Such dedicated spiritual men are truly gifts from Jehovah to shepherd his precious sheep.—Eph. 4:8, 11, 12; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

3. Each Branch Committee member should be able to give as well as to follow direction. He must keep up-to-date with the policies and direction from the Governing Body and help others in oversight at the branch office to do likewise. While he will set a fine example in being willing to work along with his brothers at any task, he will not try to do all the work himself. He will delegate work in a responsible way, helping other spiritual men to be trained and to gain experience so that they too can shoulder weighty responsibilities.

4. Branch Committees also have the responsibility to keep the organization clean. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) They must be courageous in seeing to it that all unrepentant ones are removed from the congregation. Such courageous action builds up respect for the branch office and the Branch Committee. Our brothers should always feel welcome to come to the branch office with any concerns or problems that they may have and be confident that they will receive a hearing ear.—Prov. 21:13.

5. Dealing With People: Each member of the Branch Committee should always treat his fellow servants with love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Eph. 4:32; 1 Pet. 4:17) He must manifest a warm and friendly disposition, being careful never to be harsh or unkind. (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8) If, on account of imperfection, he errs in word or deed, he will be quick to admit his fault and apologize. (Matt. 5:23-25) Following in the steps of Christ Jesus, he provides an example in honoring others and pursuing peace.—Rom. 14:19; 1 Pet. 2:21.

6. Branch Committee members do not view themselves as superior to their brothers and thus do not desire to be served or feel entitled to special treatment. (Matt. 20:25-28; 23:6-12; 2 Cor. 1:24) As they seek to imitate Christ Jesus, their lowliness of mind makes them refreshing and upbuilding to those working under their oversight.—Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 2:3.

7. Members of the Branch Committee should be willing to handle problems, taking time to hear both sides and being cautious never to leave even the impression of partiality or favoritism. (Deut. 13:14; Jas. 2:9) They must keep confidential those matters told them in confidence and not talk to their wives or others about individuals' problems or confidential matters of the organization.—Prov. 25:9.

8. Counsel should not be given hastily. (Prov. 18:13) If unsure of the counsel of God's Word, it is best to consult with others and do research before answering. (Prov. 15:22, 28) If a Branch Committee member has a tendency to speak hastily and later to change his mind as to the course he first advised, the brothers will soon lose confidence in his soundness of judgment. If we read directly from the Scriptures when offering counsel, we make clear that God's Word is the authority for making decisions and that we are not simply giving a personal viewpoint.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

9. If a Branch Committee member is a foreigner in the country where he serves, he should recognize that the local people have a measure of pride in their land, their culture, and their way of doing things. Whether a foreigner in the country or not, a Branch Committee member should never take the position that the people he serves are beneath him, speaking to them as inferiors. Instead, as their humble fellow servant, he must work hard to develop appreciation for the local people and their culture, being willing to adapt himself so as

to win their love and respect.—1 Cor. 9:20-23.

10. Nothing contributes more to the happiness of our brothers than the conviction that they are loved and appreciated. (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:4-8) Continue to reflect Jehovah's great love for his sheep. To that end, **committee members should make regular personal visits to each department, speaking briefly with each worker, sharing words of appreciation and encouragement.**

11. Makeup of a Branch Committee: In small branches, it may be sufficient to have three members form the Branch Committee. However, in large branches with printing operations, extensive territories, or a variety of languages, five or more members may be needed. It is desirable that one or more members of the Branch Committee be citizens of the country where the branch is located. Nevertheless, in all cases, spiritual qualifications should be viewed as of greatest importance.

12. The appointment as a member of the Branch Committee or to a position of oversight in the branch organization is not for any specified period of time. Having in mind the advancement of the Kingdom work, the Branch Committee may at any time recommend to the Governing Body a new appointment, a removal, or the reassignment of individuals.

13. Oversight Responsibilities: The Branch Committee prayerfully determines the distribution of oversight responsibilities for the individual members of the committee. These assignments should take into consideration each brother's age, strengths, experience, and personal circumstances. (Rom. 12:3-8; Rev. 1:20) A Branch Committee member would usually serve as the day-to-day overseer or assistant overseer of a key department. The members of the committee may also serve as Branch Committee contacts for additional Bethel departments. A committee

member should serve as the overseer of the Service Department. (See 6:36) Usually another Branch Committee member would serve as the Translation Department overseer. A committee member would usually serve as the Bethel overseer in a larger branch office, since his role involves the general oversight of all Bethel Home operations. In printing branches, the printery overseer is usually a member of the Branch Committee. The Branch Committee should consider these matters carefully so that there is a balanced distribution of oversight responsibilities. Adjustments should be made as needed in order to promote good order, the peace of the Bethel family, and the advancement of the Kingdom work.—1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

14. When adjustments in oversight are made, the brothers and sisters working in each Bethel department should be clearly informed as to the brother serving as the department overseer, the assistant overseer(s) and, if applicable, the Branch Committee member designated as the contact for the department. Each Branch Committee member should take an active interest in those working in the departments that he is overseeing. He should endeavor to meet weekly with the department overseers under his oversight.

15. Because of age or infirmity, some members may become unable to accept all assignments in connection with the Branch Committee. If so, the committee may wish to recommend an additional member to help with the workload. Nevertheless, the older and experienced members may be retained on the committee to share their wisdom and insight. (Prov. 16:31) In line with the above, it is not necessary for every member to take the chairmanship in rotation. Brothers 80 years of age or older are not to serve as coordinators of Branch or Country committees or as overseers of departments, nor are they to serve as contacts for departments. However, dignified assignments should be found for these older brothers. (1 Tim. 5:1, 17)

For example, they may serve as assistant overseers if their circumstances permit. Older brothers should be keenly interested in passing on their wisdom and experience to those with whom they work. (2 Tim. 2:2) In larger departments, two brothers could serve as assistant overseers if needed. A department overseer or Branch Committee coordinator who is not yet 80 years of age might modestly decide that it would be best to have a younger brother take on that role. (Mic. 6:8) If so, it would be good for the Branch Committee to take the request into consideration to ensure a smooth transition.—See 6:36.

16. Branch Committee Coordinator: Each Branch Committee has a coordinator appointed by the Governing Body. He is responsible for coordinating the work of the committee and for any departments that the Branch Committee places under his oversight. He is responsible for sending reports and correspondence to the Governing Body and also for keeping the Branch Committee informed of all communications received from the Governing Body. Branch Committee coordinators and those overseeing various departments will find it helpful to keep a calendar of activities. This will assist them in making sure that important matters will be handled on schedule and not be overlooked. The Branch Committee coordinator is responsible for seeing that the minutes of each Branch Committee meeting are kept, showing the date of the meeting, those present, the points considered, and the decisions reached. To provide further training to a brother with potential to serve on the Branch Committee, a larger branch may seek approval from the Governing Body to use him to take the weekly minutes of the committee meetings.

17. Branch Committee Chairman: There is a chairman at each Branch Committee meeting. The chairmanship rotates annually on January 1. The rotation is usually handled alphabetically.

The chairman arranges for the agenda to be prepared and distributed to each member of the Branch Committee. The members should receive the agenda well in advance of the meeting so that they have sufficient time to prepare thoroughly and to give meaningful input. The chairman should notify all members as to the time of the meeting. He will also indicate on the agenda who is assigned to open and close the meeting with prayer. He ensures that there is good order and, along with the Branch Committee coordinator, sees that committee decisions are carried out in a timely manner.

18. Branch Committee Meetings:

The Branch Committee decides when to hold its regular meetings. The committee should not postpone giving attention to its responsibilities or delay in providing direction needed to expedite the work. In nearly all cases, the Branch Committee will meet weekly, but special meetings may be held when needed. In small branches, meetings can be held less frequently according to what may be practical and also depending on the location of the members of the Branch Committee. For obvious reasons, it is good if all members of the Branch Committee can live close enough to the branch to be generally available for such meetings. Minutes should be kept of all Branch Committee meetings. If a member is indisposed or absent, the committee can still function if a majority is present.—See 2:38.

19. The Branch Committee may invite other individuals to come to its meetings for consultation or to present information that will help the committee in reaching decisions.

20. Branch Committee decisions should be unanimous. In any significant case in which a decision is not unanimous, the Branch Committee should write to the appropriate Governing Body committee for direction. Pertinent details should be provided, including an explanation as to why some members

of the Branch Committee are for a matter and why some members are against it. Providing the names of those who are for and those who are against a certain decision is helpful. The committee should prepare one letter and send it to the appropriate Governing Body committee. If individual members wish to submit additional comments, these should be sent along with the letter from the Branch Committee. If needed, the Governing Body committee will seek direction from the entire Governing Body. If, in rare cases, the urgency of a situation does not allow sufficient time for the Branch Committee to send a letter to the Governing Body explaining the details and differing points of view, the majority decision of the Branch Committee should stand until further direction is received.

21. If the Branch Committee determines that a particular decision is of major importance, it should not decide the matter but should send it to the appropriate Governing Body committee with its observations and recommendations. (Ps. 19:13; Prov. 11:2) This procedure is to be followed even when the committee is unanimous as to how the matter should be handled. When the Branch Committee writes about a weighty matter, the coordinator should make it clear in the letter that the Branch Committee members who were present have read the letter and that they are in agreement with its content. The names of any Branch Committee members who were absent should be indicated as well.—See 2:39; 3:3; 6:41.

22. Unity on Branch Committees:

From time to time, Branch Committee members may experience personal differences with one another. This often occurs when a brother imposes his personal opinion or preference on others. Of course, responsible brothers may occasionally have a difference of opinion. Despite such differences in thinking, they must continue to work together in love and with mutual respect.—Col. 3:13, 14.

23. Branch Committee coordinators should especially be conscious not to impose their opinion or preference on others in decisions that should be made by the entire Branch Committee. If a member of the Branch Committee lives outside of Bethel, he should be part of the decision-making process to the extent possible and not simply be informed after the fact about decisions that were made.

24. If the peace and unity of the committee are threatened, each member must examine himself carefully to determine what adjustments he must personally make in order to display “the wisdom from above.” (Jas. 3:17, 18) While it is easy to see the faults of others, it takes a mature Christian man to look carefully into the mirror of God’s Word and see his own faults clearly and then work to change. (Jas. 1:23-25) While one or more members of the committee may feel that they are not part of the problem, all must be part of the solution. Therefore, each one should supplicate Jehovah for His divine help to resolve the problem, never allowing place for the Devil.—Eph. 4:26, 27.

25. Continue to work together unitedly as a committee in peace and unity, cooperating closely as a body of mature brothers. (Ps. 133:1; Phil. 2:1-4) “Take the lead” in honoring one another. (Rom. 12:10) Much is expected of those who have been put in charge of much. (Luke 12:48b) The Bethel family notices the way you deal with one another and imitates your example, whether positive or negative.

26. Recommendations to the Governing Body: If the Branch Committee wishes to recommend the appointment or deletion of a circuit overseer or a country representative, the form *Recommendations to Governing Body* should be completed and sent to the Governing Body. While the Branch Committee should give careful and prayerful consideration to the qualifications of each

brother being recommended (and, if married, the brother’s wife), extensive additional comments in a separate letter are not needed unless there is something significant to report about the brother (or his wife) that the Governing Body should know when considering the recommendation. The wives of such brothers should not be listed on the recommendation form.—See 2:49; 6:129.

27. All members of the Branch Committee who are in agreement should have their names listed at the bottom of the recommendation form. If a member of the Branch Committee was not present when the recommendations were considered, then the word “absent” should be shown next to that brother’s name at the bottom of the recommendation form. A copy of the form will be returned to the branch office if the appointments and/or deletions are approved by the Governing Body.—See 2:30.

28. Appointments and Deletions of Branch and Country Committee Members: It is preferred that brothers being considered for appointment to the Branch or Country committee attend Gilead School before the recommendation is made. In the case of Bethel brothers with such potential who are not able to read, write, and speak English fluently, such brothers and their wives, if married, could be invited to attend a future class of the School for Kingdom Evangelizers so that their potential can be further evaluated and their spirituality deepened. If a branch visit is planned in the coming months, it is usually best to discuss recommendations about prospective committee members with the headquarters representative before submitting a recommendation form to the Governing Body. In addition to the recommendation form, the Branch Committee should supply the Governing Body with a covering letter explaining the reasons for the recommendation and, if available, the headquarters representative’s comments. Once the Governing Body confirms the appointment

or deletion of a Branch or Country committee member, the appropriate role type, the brother's appointment start or stop date, and geographical (geo) location should be updated in his Admin Persons record. The record in Admin should reflect the history of any previous appointments. This applies even if a previous Branch or Country committee he served on was dissolved.

29. A newly appointed Branch or Country committee member who is fluent in English and, if married, whose wife is also fluent in English will be scheduled by the Service Committee to attend a future class of the School for Branch Committee Members and Their Wives.

30. Appointments and Deletions of Circuit Overseers: See 6:127, 129, 138-141; 9:94-95 with regard to the qualifications and training of prospective circuit overseers. In cases of death, judicial action, pregnancy, or resignation for health reasons, the Branch Committee is authorized to process the deletion. Thereafter, the Governing Body should be informed of the deletion on the next recommendation form that is submitted. For all other reasons, the Branch Committee should submit to the Governing Body the usual form with a covering letter explaining the recommendation to delete a circuit overseer. The Branch Committee must await approval from the Governing Body before informing him about his appointment or deletion.—See 2:26-27; 9:6-9, 107.

31. Know the Organization: Branch Committee members, whether in a large or a small branch, should seek to become acquainted with all the operations carried on at the branch. They should research how the work can be done in the most effective and beneficial way and do all they reasonably can to help it to be done in that way. A Branch Committee should know if the brothers are accomplishing the best work they can and, if they are not, the committee

may be able to show them how to do better. The members of the Bethel family should love their work and want to see it improve and increase.

32. Branch Committee members should also be interested in all facets of the Kingdom work in the field and should seek to expand the preaching work and carry it out in the most effective way.

33. Communication During Difficult Times: If a country should become isolated by war or other adverse conditions and it is impossible, at least for a time, to have any communication with the Governing Body, the Branch Committee will carry on in looking after Jehovah's sheep. Especially in a time of trouble, it is important for the sheep to have spiritual food and guidance. Encouragement should be given them to have regular meetings and continue worshipping Jehovah. If conditions allow, publications will be provided. If new publications are not available, direction can be given to review past publications and to study the Bible itself, not forsaking assembling together, even though it may be in small groups.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

34. If conditions develop to the point that any members of the Branch Committee are taken away, those who remain should consider the qualifications of other elders who have proved themselves and have years of experience in the work and, if there is a possibility of communication, make the recommendation of these to serve as replacement Branch Committee members. If communication with the Governing Body is not possible, the replacement elders can be asked to serve temporarily, and they can be made familiar with the functions of the branch organization and share in the shepherding of the flock. Every effort should be made to have committee meetings from time to time, depending on the conditions. If any individual member of the Branch Committee should find himself under surveil-

lance and it is not advisable for him to try to meet with other members of the committee, he may be able to send word to them concerning his situation. In that event, another elder may be asked to step in temporarily to share in the activities of the committee. If conditions develop to the point that it is impossible to hold meetings because the committee has been scattered, then each individual should continue to do what he can to shepherd the flock, having in mind what Jesus said as recorded at John 10:11-15 and remembering to seek the guidance of Jehovah through prayer.

35. Every effort should be made to communicate with the Governing Body if conditions will allow and if it will not jeopardize the interests of the work. The Branch Committee in each land will know what the circumstances are and will seek the guidance of Jehovah in making a decision as to what is the best course of action at the moment. The Governing Body desires to receive the reports and news concerning Christians scattered throughout the world, but because difficult conditions may develop, these provisions are set forth in connection with the functioning of the Branch Committee.

36. It will be practical if communications sent to the Governing Body are in English. Circumstances in some lands may prevent this. If one who knows English is taken away, the Governing Body will be pleased to receive communications in any language.

37. Country Committees: The Governing Body may determine that a Country Committee should be established in certain lands to work under the oversight of a Branch Committee. A Country Committee is composed of mature Christian elders appointed by the Governing Body. Usually the recommendations for Country Committee members are made by the Branch Committee. The brothers on the Country Committee are responsible for the administration of the office, Bethel

Home, remote translation offices, and literature depots in the country where they serve, as well as for handling correspondence, finances, and reports. Even if there is no office in a particular country because of legal restrictions, the Governing Body may appoint a Country Committee to assist a Branch Committee to care for the Kingdom work in that land.

38. The Governing Body designates one brother to serve as the Country Committee coordinator. That brother is responsible for coordinating the daily routine of work. A chairman will serve in a rotational arrangement for a period of a year, following the same pattern as that for a Branch Committee. Generally, a Country Committee will meet each week, or perhaps every second week, depending on matters needing attention.—See 2:16-18.

39. While a Country Committee should be guided by the same Scriptural procedures and policies established for Branch Committees, it must remember that it does not have the same authority as a Branch Committee. Therefore, the Country Committee members should be modest and work cooperatively with the overseeing Branch Committee for the advancement of the Kingdom work in the country where they serve. (Prov. 11:2; 15:22) Any major problems or questions that the Country Committee cannot resolve in line with *Branch Organization* or other policy materials should be referred to the Branch Committee. The Country Committee will contact the Branch Committee if there is a disagreement about how a matter should be handled, even as a Branch Committee inquires of various Governing Body committees when the brothers on the Branch Committee have differing viewpoints on how something should be done. (See 2:20-21.) The overseeing Branch Committee should feel free to provide the Governing Body and its committees with supplemental comments or observations it wishes to make

with regard to recommendations being made by a Country Committee.

40. A Country Committee is authorized to answer questions that local elders and circuit overseers may submit in writing to the office regarding judicial and other congregation or circuit matters. However, if there is any uncertainty as to how a complicated or delicate matter should be handled, the Country Committee should communicate with the overseeing Branch Committee.

41. Country Committees may arrange for locations and times for circuit assemblies and regional conventions. The Country Committee may care for the selection of convention and assembly speakers as is done by Branch Committees.—See Chapter 7.

42. With regard to appointing or deleting special pioneers, the Country Committee is to make its recommendations to the overseeing Branch Committee and await its approval. Whether the Country Committee will tabulate the field service reports or send them directly to the Branch Committee for handling will be determined by the overseeing Branch Committee. Literature distribution to the congregations should be handled as directed by the Branch Committee.

43. The overseeing Branch Committee will forward to the Governing Body any recommendations submitted by the Country Committee for the appointment or deletion of circuit overseers.

44. The general oversight of missionaries and missionary homes is under the direction of the Country Committee. However, such problems as illness and leave of absence and any difficulties that require attention by a Governing Body committee should be reported to the Branch Committee with the recommendations of the Country Committee. The Branch Committee, in turn, will write to the appropriate Governing Body committee, providing full details.

45. The handling of legal matters and the registration of legal entities will be under the direction of the Branch Committee. However, the Country Committee will be consulted as needed.

46. All correspondence from the Country Committee intended for other branch or country offices is to be sent to the overseeing Branch Committee for forwarding. When necessary, the Country Committee may write a letter to the Governing Body or to one of its committees. However, the letter should first be sent to the Branch Committee so that, if necessary, the Branch Committee may add its comments before forwarding the letter to world headquarters.

47. In a rare situation in which communication with the Branch Committee is not possible, it may be necessary for the Country Committee to send information directly to world headquarters or to other branch offices. In cases where communication with the Branch Committee or with headquarters is not possible, the Country Committee will give the needed supervision to the Kingdom work until conditions return to normal and contact with the Branch Committee or headquarters can resume. If there are any relief measures to be taken in behalf of the brothers, the Country Committee will give the needed oversight, bearing in mind the direction that is provided herein related to such aid.—See 3:17.

48. Country Representatives: In countries where there are a significant number of publishers but where there is no Branch Committee or Country Committee, three qualified elders are appointed by the Governing Body to serve as country representatives. As a group, the country representatives serve as advisers, helping the Branch Committee to stay in close touch with the local situation in the lands that the branch office oversees. The brothers serving as country representatives are not considered a Country Committee and do not function in any supervisory capacity. Coun-

try representatives do not qualify to attend the School for Branch Committee Members and Their Wives. Nevertheless, the Branch Committee should **view them as a helpful resource and periodically inquire of them**, perhaps sending a list of questions for them to consider. (Prov. 15:22) The country representatives should be discerning men who can provide meaningful input on the Kingdom work and local needs in the country where they live. (Prov. 27:23; Acts 6:3) Their input will be especially helpful when they notice conditions or trends that endanger the brothers or that threaten the Kingdom work in the country. Those recommended could include special pioneers or circuit overseers. Elders who formerly served on a Branch Committee or a Country Committee in that land may be particularly qualified. It is preferred that at least one of the country representatives be native to the country. In a country with a remote translation office, one of the three country representatives might include the language overseer, the maintenance overseer, or the home overseer.

49. Recommendations and deletions of country representatives are submitted to the Governing Body using the form *Recommendations to Governing Body*. (See 2:26.) One of the three brothers should be recommended to serve as the chairman of the group. Once the Governing Body confirms the appointment or deletion of a country representative, the appropriate role type, the brother's appointment

start or stop date, and geographical (geo) location should be updated in his Admin Persons record. The branch office should provide newly appointed country representatives with a letter that explains their appointment and the basic operation of the group as well as the names and contact information of the other two country representatives.

50. The country representatives may meet at a convenient time and place whenever there is a need or as directed by the Branch Committee. The group is not given permanent office space or computer equipment. Their periodic meetings should be arranged at any convenient location that is available, such as a Kingdom Hall, Assembly Hall, or the home of one of the brothers as long as confidentiality can be maintained. Such meetings should not interfere with normally scheduled meetings or assemblies. Upon request, the branch office may reimburse reasonable travel expenses for country representatives to participate in their periodic meetings. The group should open and close their meetings with prayer. A typed report, usually no more than one to two pages in length and addressed to the Branch Committee, should be sufficient to convey their key observations. The chairman of the group should keep a confidential file of these reports for two years. Reports older than two years should be destroyed, since the branch office will have its copies on file.

