

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

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ECH:ECN September 20, 2005

BRANT JONES
5555 OAK GROVE RD
KANSAS CITY KS 66106

Dear Brother Jones:

We are pleased to reply to your letter of August 14, written subsequent to your letter of June 13, 2005, wherein you express your concerns about the Watch Tower Society's registration for a few years with the United Nation's Department of Public Information (DPI) as a "nongovernmental organization" (NGO).

As you know, information was shared with the body of elders of your congregation, in response to a request from your circuit overseer, to be used in clarifying matters pertaining to this registration, since it had come up for discussion during his visit. We now have your letter and frankly, Brother Jones, we are quite disappointed to observe the very critical tone of your letter, especially for one who has been associated with Jehovah's organization for so many years and who has had opportunity to see how Jehovah has so richly blessed his people. It saddens us to see you begin to draw away from the Christian congregation because you have allowed unfounded doubts to build up in your mind so strongly that you begin to accuse your brothers here at headquarters with unfaithfulness and dishonesty.

Your desire that Jehovah's organization not become involved in the political affairs of this world is certainly commendable. God's Word recognizes that the whole world lies in the power of Satan. (1 John 5:19) Governments of men have failed terribly, being appropriately pictured as unruly beasts in the Bible, particularly in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Christians cannot become a part of the old world around them, but Jesus recognized that they would still be living in the midst of this world and would have to deal with it in various ways as it exists and until Jehovah takes it away. (John 17:15, 16) Jehovah has allowed human governments to exist to provide a measure of stability in the world. This has permitted Christians to carry on their activities without the burden of complete lawlessness. In his Word, Jehovah gives us wise and discreet advice on how we can live in the world while at the same time not become a part of it. Jesus reflected the proper balance in directing that we pay "Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God." (Matthew 22:21) The apostle Paul referred to human governments as the "superior authorities" at Romans 13:1-7, even stating that "the existing authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God." He further describes them as "the arrangement of God" and "God's minister to you for your good." Paul even tells Christians to pray "concerning kings and all those who are in high station; in order that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with full godly devotion and seriousness. This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God."—1 Timothy 2:1-3.

Since the United Nations is a major political "authority" in the world today, and "there is no authority except by God," then we must view this organization as God views it—as a "wild beast" in prophecy, yet as a government like all the others that "stand placed in their relative positions" by Him. All these human governments, including the United Nations, provide human services for which taxes are paid, directly or indirectly, including such things as disease control, agricultural assistance, disaster and famine relief, and many others. Our brothers, especially in economically im-

poverished lands, benefit from many of these services. Some of our brothers are government employees, even of the United Nations, who provide such human benefits to others without violating their Christian neutrality. Thus, it is not improper or inappropriate to recognize that the United Nations does some commendable things in behalf of the people and to improve conditions on earth, as do other existing governments who are at the same time portrayed in the Bible as 'beasts' and part of Satan's world.

So, Brother Jones, our zeal for protecting Jehovah's good name and organization must be kept in balance with what the Scriptures teach Christians as to the attitude they should have toward the governments of this world that Jehovah allows to exist for a time. We cooperate with and benefit from such arrangements. That brings us to your concern. When looked at objectively, we were merely making use of the library maintained by the United Nations as a source of information, particularly as to its activities in the world, as articles were written for our publications. While acknowledging its accomplishments, we also recognize what governments of men, including the United Nations, are unable to do, things that only God's Kingdom will be able to do for mankind. An example of this balanced Scriptural approach is reflected in the series of articles on human rights that appeared in the November 22, 1998, issue of *Awake!*

Some factual information as to what actually occurred may be helpful to you. Since NGOs that associate with the United Nations' Department of Public Information (DPI) are clearly informed on the UN's Web site that "association of NGOs with DPI does not constitute their incorporation into the United Nations system," we did not join nor became part of the United Nations any more than those who use a city, state, or federal library become part of that branch of government because they register with the library to use their facilities. For example, the Library of Congress is a federal institution of the United States government. Jehovah's people make use of this facility, going through proper procedure to do so. Of course, as you may understand, "NGO" is merely an acronym referring to any organization that is *not* part of a government, whether it is associated with the United Nations or not. In this case, therefore, the question really relates to contacts with the UN's Department of Public Information as an NGO, without presuming that the term "NGO" automatically means becoming part of the UN. Other NGOs associate with various UN agencies and become, as the material you sent states, "partners in 'the process of deliberation and policy formation' as well as in 'the execution of policies.'" That has never been the case with the Watch Tower Society or Jehovah's Witnesses.

Personnel of our writing staff had been using the United Nations' library facilities for many years prior to 1991 to access their internationally respected research material available on health, ecological, and social problems for use in our publications. But in 1991, a different person controlling admission refused entry of our researcher to a section of the department where information was dispensed to the media and to which he previously had access. Another employee told him that full access could be gained by registering with the DPI. Although we do not dispute the UN's current statement that registering as an NGO with the DPI was not required to gain general admission, what actually happened, nevertheless, would understandably need to be taken into consideration.

We certainly would have preferred to use the DPI facilities as in the past without the additional paperwork. The application submitted to the DPI that we have on file contains no statements that conflict with our Christian beliefs. And we continued doing the same as we had been doing for years—using their library system and quoting the United Nations or its agencies as a source in our publications. Of course, as we have explained to others who have inquired about this matter, the criteria for association with the DPI, published apart from the application itself, contains some language that we cannot subscribe to, and when we realized this, we withdrew our registration in 2001. We are grateful that this was called to our attention.

The following was stated in a letter of October 18, 2001, to Mr. Paul Hoeffel, Chief of the NGO Section of the DPI, in asking that registration of the Watch Tower Society be withdrawn:

"Our involvement as an NGO has been limited to obtaining information from your libraries. However, we have decided to withdraw our registration so as to remove any implication that our being recognized by the United Nations as an NGO goes beyond our original purpose or that Jehovah's Witnesses are involved in activities that are inconsistent with their own teachings." In that same letter, it was also stated: "Even as we recognize the genuine efforts of the United Nations to resolve the major issues confronting mankind, as a religious tenet Jehovah's Witnesses have always taught that the final and permanent answer to the formidable problems will come only through the establishment of God's Kingdom. This does not mean that Jehovah's Witnesses in any way work to undermine the efforts of the United Nations. Our view was clearly set forth on page seven of the October 1, 1995, issue of *The Watchtower*, a copy of which is enclosed."

Any reader of our publications can tell that there has been no change in our view of the UN or what we have published about its role in Bible prophecy over the years since 1991 merely by checking the references cited in current *Watch Tower Publications Indexes* under the subject "United Nations" and headings and (subheadings) such as "Destruction of Religion," "Failure" ("Inadequacy of UN"), "Religious Support," and "Symbolic Representation" ("Disgusting Thing"; "Scarlet-Colored Wild Beast"). Of course, some articles are especially designed for the public on global issues, such as world peace and the rights of children around the world, and cannot be treated properly without considering the role of the UN. Careful readers can see that these articles always tactfully show how, despite all good intentions, the UN is almost helpless to deal with such issues in a meaningful way—thus showing that God's Kingdom is the real answer to mankind's problems. Or, to pique curiosity and further discussion, an article may indicate that the UN will soon play a powerful role in the fulfillment of God's purpose.—Revelation 17:16, 17.

We are glad to share with you what actually occurred, as well as Bible principles that provide a balanced understanding of the Christian view of the world's governments, including the United Nations. Clearly there is no basis for concluding from what transpired that the Watch Tower Society (or Jehovah's Witnesses) has ever joined the United Nations or any other government. No one at headquarters has acted disloyally or deceitfully in handling matters. With hindsight, we recognize that some things could have been done with greater scrutiny. If one is looking for evidence that all of Jehovah's people, including those at headquarters, are imperfect and may not always consider all matters as carefully as they should before acting, despite their best intentions, then we quickly acknowledge that such evidence is not hard to find.

We trust the above comments will be helpful to you. Certainly, there is no basis for the strong assertions you have made in your letters. It is just such issues based on distorted information that the Adversary, Satan the Devil, is attempting to use in undermining the faith of Jehovah's people and to cause them to lose confidence in the organization He is using to carry forward true worship in the earth today. (See in this regard the article "Guard Against Deception," in the February 15, 2004, issue of *The Watchtower*.) We urge you, Brother Jones, not to fall victim to Satan's subtle "machinations." (Ephesians 6:10-12) Do not let him rob you of the spiritual heritage Jehovah has for those who prove loyal and faithful to him and who continue to love the brotherhood. You have served Jehovah for many years, done much good work in the congregations, and have helped many to come to know Jehovah, including members of your family. What you do now will affect not only your future service to Jehovah but could also have an influence on others, especially on members of your family. So, rather than remain stumbled and disgruntled, perhaps by continuing to dwell on these distorted claims of opposers that only serve to give you a false premise for not returning to happy association with Jehovah's people, we encourage you to pray earnestly and humbly to Jehovah to help you put matters again in proper perspective. Our prayers are that Jehovah will bless your sincere desire to serve and please him, and to continue walking with his people on the narrow road that leads to everlasting life in his new system.—Matthew 7:13, 14.

We are sending a copy of this letter to the body of elders so they will know what we have written to you on this matter. We are confident that these brothers, many of whom you know well,

love you and want the very best for you. Respond to their loving counsel in the spirit of Galatians 6:1.

We take this occasion to send an expression of our warm Christian love and greetings to you and your family.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Body of Elders
Shawnee, KS