

TESTIGOS CRISTIANOS DE JEHOVÁ

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May 30, 2017

TO THE BODY OF ELDERS

Re: Bethel speaking assignments

Dear Brothers:

We are pleased to inform you of the arrangements for requesting Bethel speakers to visit congregations within a certain distance from the branch office.

All congregations within three to four hours travel time from Bethel (some 300 kilometers by highway, or at a greater distance but with public transport that facilitate making the trip within that time) will be able to request a visit by a Bethel speaker. The enclosed *Request for Bethel Speaker* (S-47) form may be used for this purpose, indicating therein the time period or periods that are favorable for a visit. The form should be sent to the Service Department no later than **July 1, 2017**.

During the early part of August, the Service Department will make the assignments of Bethel speakers to serve the congregations. Notices will be sent to the Bethel speakers so that they can contact the coordinators of the body of elders and work together with you to select the specific dates, talk titles, and so forth. We are asking Bethel speakers to make all of these contacts before September 1, 2017. Of course, some of these arrangements may be tentative, as future circuit overseer visits, assemblies, and other unknown events may require that the Bethel speaking assignment be rescheduled. We trust that the coordinators of the body of elders and Bethel speakers will do everything possible to find a suitable alternative date, so that the congregation does not miss out on this opportunity for spiritual encouragement. It may not be possible to fill all the requests made by the congregations. If coordinators of the body of elders who **receive confirmation that a Bethel speaker will visit their congregation** are not contacted by their assigned Bethel speakers before September 1, they should telephone the Service Department for assistance.

Please note that we cannot handle requests by name for a specific Bethel speaker to be assigned, for a specific talk title to be delivered, for a Memorial discourse, or for a talk to be given on a specific date. If the elders wish to make personal arrangements with a certain Bethel speaker they know, we have no objection to this. However, such personal arrangements will not involve the Service Department.

The arrangement is for speakers to give a service talk on Saturday afternoon or evening, to give a public talk on Sunday, and to share with the congregation in the ministry as possible. If the elders wish to request a Bethel speaker to give the Sunday public talk only, the elders will need to make their own arrangements directly with a Bethel speaker. The Service Department cannot make assignments for “Sunday only” public talks. As a reminder, Public Meeting schedules should not be changed for visits from Bethel speakers (the only exception would be if the Public Meeting is usually held on Saturday, in which case it can be switched to Sunday) nor should the *Watchtower* Study be abbreviated or shortened. Of course, congregations using the same Kingdom Hall may all meet together at the Kingdom Hall for a Saturday service talk by the visiting speaker, if the seating capacity permits this.

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The branch office does not cover the travel expenses of Bethel speakers who are invited to give talks in the congregations. Hence, please keep in mind that it is the privilege and responsibility of the congregation that invites the Bethel speaker to care for his actual travel expenses and those of his wife, if married. Such expenses would be the cost of public transportation, or if the Bethel speakers travel to their assignments by car, they will include the cost of fuel plus the cost of highway tolls for the round trip. The elders will be informed of the amount when they ask about expenses, although they will not reimburse the speaker directly. The branch office will pay that amount to the speaker upon his return and charge it to the congregation's account, in harmony with the instructions found in the letter dated June 5, 2009. Such expenses should be considered as recurring operating expenses, so a congregation resolution is not needed. Of course, coordinators of the body of elders will want to make suitable arrangements for food, accommodations, and so forth for the Bethel speaker and his wife. If the elders have any comments about the visit of their Bethel speaker, the brothers in the Service Department will appreciate receiving them.

We pray that Jehovah's rich blessing will continue on the arrangement for Bethel speakers to encourage the congregations, "or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other's faith," both yours and that of the Bethel speakers who serve you. (Romans 1:12) We take this opportunity to send you our warm love and Christian greetings.

Your brothers,

Testigos Cristianos de Jehová

Attachment

Copy: Bethel Speakers