

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



The Ridgeway, London, NW7 1RN Telephone: 020 8906 2211

COA:COB September 9, 2017

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: 2018 Special Conventions—Instructions for Congregation Secretaries

Dear Brothers:

While most congregations have not been invited this year and thus will not need to be familiar with the application process, *it is possible that a member of your congregation may be specifically invited if he is asked by someone from an invited congregation to join their travel group.* In this case, the following information will be helpful.

Therefore, whether your congregation has been specifically invited or not, this letter, the *2018 Special Convention Application* and *Applicant Instructions* should be retained in your file and available for prompt follow-through. In particular, it will be crucial for the congregation secretary (or another elder assigned to assist) to become very familiar with all aspects of this arrangement. In this way, elders should patiently assist applicants and selected delegates in communicating with the host branch in a timely manner.

Applicant Requirements: Applicants should be exemplary publishers who meet the requirements set out in the *Applicant Instructions*. For the health and safety of potential applicants, we ask that the elders be very open with those who are not in good health, have impaired mobility, or are dependent on another person to function. If such ones do apply, please kindly explain to them the reasons why their applications will not be forwarded to the branch office.

The elders should make certain that applicants are fully prepared to care for all expenses including travel arrangements, accommodations, food for the entire trip, and reimbursing the host branch for the cost of planned activities while in the convention city. Delegates should not expect local Witnesses to sponsor their visit. Before departing from their home country, elders should make sure that the traveller will not make unreasonable demands on the brothers in other countries.

If a publisher speaks a language other than English or the primary language of the host branch, he should be informed that the programme and activities for the delegates may not be translated into a language he understands. Therefore, if he chooses to still apply, at least one person in his group should be fluent enough to serve as a translator in English or the primary language of the host branch.

The secretary should provide a copy of the application and a copy of the *Applicant Instructions* to publishers that qualify. An application must be submitted for each person, even if he will be travelling in the same group. These should be completed and submitted to the Congregation Service Committee as soon as possible, but **no later than October 16, 2017.**

Electronic Application Entry: Once the Congregation Service Committee has approved an applicant, the secretary will enter the information into an electronic form that is available under the “Convention” tab on jw.org. After an application has been electronically entered on the website, a printout of the information can be obtained. **Please use this printout to confirm with the applicant that his information is correct.** If any changes are necessary, please enter them imme-

diately. **The secretary should enter all applications as soon as they are received and no later than October 23, 2017.** Difficulties arise when secretaries wait until the last minute to enter applications. Thereafter, the signed printout of the applications should be kept in the congregation file.

Use of jw.org: If the secretary (or other elder assigned to assist) does not have the “Convention” role, one of the local domain administrators for your congregation should add this role for him. This section will be the primary tool for the electronic entry of applications and for the branch office to post selection results. The secretary should plan to check the website on a weekly basis as additional announcements may be posted.

Travel Groups: To be linked together in the same travel group, each applicant (including a marriage mate and other family members in the same household) must use the same travel group identification (group ID). The group contact should request a unique group ID from his secretary. The secretary must obtain a unique group ID from jw.org and provide it to the group contact to include on his application. The group contact is then responsible to provide this unique group ID to all others in his group so that they, too, can enter the group ID on their applications.

Delegate Selection: Once submitted electronically via jw.org, the applications will be reviewed by the branch office. Please do not contact the branch office to determine if a person has been selected or not. If the “Status Summary” information on jw.org indicates “Applied,” the individual has not yet been selected. By means of the “Convention” tab, the secretary will be notified if individuals in your congregation have been selected to attend one of the conventions. The secretary should then notify the selected delegate and provide him with the “Convention Selection Summary” sheet that will be printable from the website.

Selected delegates will receive further information when they log in to the jw2018.org website. The username will be the same as the email account they provided on their application. The website will provide the selected delegate with the exact dates of the special convention, instructions about the list of approved hotels, how to reserve hotel accommodations, what is expected of the delegate, and other relevant information.

“Confirmed” Delegates: A selected delegate will not be considered to be a “Confirmed” delegate until he has reserved a hotel room, purchased air tickets, or paid a deposit with a travel agent. Thus, the secretary should maintain regular communication with all delegates and should immediately update jw.org to “Confirmed” when one of the above requirements has been met. Thereafter, the host branch office will begin making plans for the delegate’s trip.

Change of Status: If an applicant or selected delegate is no longer participating at any time, please immediately indicate this on jw.org. If a delegate no longer qualifies, he should be informed of the reason for your decision. Such a person would be fully responsible for any financial loss associated with his disqualification as a delegate, even up to the time of departure.

If an applicant or selected delegate changes congregations, please indicate this on the jw2018.org website and forward a copy of the publisher’s application to the appropriate congregation. This will keep the records up to date.

Special Rooming: The host branch office will survey local brothers to determine if limited rooming will be available in private homes. If a long-time, faithful servant, perhaps with many years of full-time service, desires to attend as a delegate but does not feel he can financially support the entire package, he could inform the elders that staying with local brothers would make the dif-

ference. The elders should emphasize that there is no guarantee that housing will be available. If the elders agree, the secretary can indicate on the electronic jw.org application that this delegate qualifies for the special rooming provision. If the applicant is selected as a delegate, he will be informed whether or not private home accommodations have been made available to him (and his mate, if married). Other members of his travel group must qualify on their own merit to receive special rooming. If a delegate declines private home accommodations and decides to use one of the approved hotels in the convention city, he should inform the branch office immediately using the *Convention & Assembly Desk* inbox via jw.org so that the special rooming provision can be made available to others.

It is hoped that the above information will be helpful as you render assistance to publishers interested in attending one of the 2018 special conventions. We pray for Jehovah's rich blessings upon all these arrangements. Please accept an expression of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,
*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*

c: Circuit overseers

Attachments (2)