

# TESTIGOS CRISTIANOS DE JEHOVÁ

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July 31, 2018

TO ALL CONGREGATION SERVICE COMMITTEES

Re: 2019 International Conventions

Dear Brothers:

We are pleased to inform you that the Governing Body has given approval for international conventions to be held in 18 countries during the 2019 convention season.

Along with this letter, we have provided an announcement letter that should be read to the congregation during the next midweek meeting and after the next *Watchtower* Study.

In addition to applicants from your congregation, it is possible that one or more members of your congregation may be specifically invited to apply with a travel group from another congregation. Therefore, this letter as well as the *Instructions for Applying to Attend Special and International Conventions* (CO-151) and the *Application to Serve as a Special or an International Convention Delegate* (CO-152) should be retained in your file and available for prompt follow-through. These documents will also be available on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

We request that all Congregation Service Committees become familiar with the direction provided in this letter and the applicant instructions. In particular, it will be crucial for the congregation secretary (or another elder assigned to assist) to understand all aspects of this arrangement. In this way, elders may patiently assist applicants and selected delegates in order for them to communicate 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 or have impaired mobility or are dependent on another person in order to function. If such ones do apply, please kindly explain 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 the expenses they will incur, 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 a delegate departs from his or her home country, elders should make sure that the traveler is the sort of person that will not make unreasonable demands on the brothers in other countries. The applicant instructions say that “non-Witnesses should not be invited to travel with or otherwise accompany a delegate to a special convention or an international convention. If an applicant feels his situation merits an exception, he should discuss this with the local elders.” If an applicant informs the elders that he or she wants to be accompanied by a non-Witness, please contact the branch for direction before approving the application.

If a publisher speaks a language other than English or the primary language of the host branch, he should be informed that the convention program and activities for the delegates may not be presented in a language he understands. Therefore, if he still chooses to apply, at least one person in his group should be fluent enough to serve as an interpreter 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 who qualify. An application must be submitted for each person, even if he will be traveling as part of a group. Applications should be completed and submitted to the Congregation Service Committee as soon as possible but **no later than September 24, 2018**.

**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](http://jw.org). (See the attached document, *Instructions for Entering Applications and Groups for Special and International Conventions* [CO-153].) After an application has been electronically entered on the website, a printout of the information can be obtained. **Use this printout to confirm with the applicant that the information is correct.** If any changes are necessary, enter them immediately. **The secretary should enter all applications as soon as they are received and no later than October 5, 2018.** Difficulties arise when secretaries wait until the last minute to enter applications. A signed printout of the applications should be kept in the congregation file.

**Use of [jw.org](http://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 use in posting selection results. Since announcements will be posted periodically, the secretary should plan to check the website on a weekly basis.

**Travel Groups:** To be linked together in the same travel group, every 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 group ID from his secretary. The secretary can obtain a unique group ID from [jw.org](http://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 can enter the group ID on their applications.

**Delegate Selection:** Once submitted electronically via [jw.org](http://jw.org), applications will be reviewed by the branch office. Please do not contact the branch office to inquire if a person has been selected. If the “Status Summary” information on [jw.org](http://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 each selected delegate and provide him or her 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 [jw2019.org](http://jw2019.org) website. The username will be that of the individual e-mail account provided on the application. The website will provide the selected delegate with the exact dates of the international 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 “Confirmed” 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 immediately update [jw.org](http://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 at any time an applicant or selected delegate is no longer able to participate, immediately indicate this on [jw.org](http://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 his or her congregation, indicate this on [jw.org](http://jw.org) 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 longtime, 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 difference. 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](http://jw.org) application that this delegate qualifies for the special rooming provision. If the applicant is selected as a delegate, he will be informed as to whether private-home accommodations have been made available to him (and his mate). 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 [asambleasinternacionales.es@jw.org](mailto:asambleasinternacionales.es@jw.org) so that the special rooming provision can be made available to others.

**Questions:** As questions arise in the months leading up to the international conventions, a *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)* document will be provided on [jw.org](http://jw.org) and updated regularly. In addition, the secretary may submit questions not answered in the *FAQ* to the following e-mail address: [asambleasinternacionales.es@jw.org](mailto:asambleasinternacionales.es@jw.org). Such inquiries will be answered in a timely manner. If an urgent matter arises, the following telephone number may be used: **918 879 725**.

It is hoped that the above information will be helpful to you as you render assistance to publishers interested in attending one of the 2019 international 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,

*Testigos Cristianos de Jehová*

c: Circuit overseers