

OUR KINGDOM SERVICE

JANUARY 1977

Vol. 20, No. 1

FOR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Kingdom Publishers:

"Exciting!" was the word we kept hearing from members of the Brooklyn Bethel family. And truly it is hard to describe the thrill and pleasure we all had over what occurred at headquarters during the three weeks of October 18 through November 6.

The Governing Body had arranged for special meetings with the branch coordinators and other representatives of the branches around the earth. In all, 128 brothers attended, and 107 wives accompanied them to work at Bethel during the period.

The meetings were not a school, but more of a gathering of elders to consider Kingdom interests and the worldwide preaching work. It was an excellent opportunity for an interchange of information and encouragement. (Rom. 1:12) In addition to sharing information with these visiting elders, the Governing Body obtained much valuable information from them, such as on the spiritual condition and needs of the brothers in their lands and comments about assemblies, meetings, field service, and so forth.

And how the Bethel family benefited! Many of the visitors had attended Gilead School or spent time at Brooklyn Bethel in years past. So there were many old friends to meet. You can imagine how you would enjoy seeing acquaintances from distant lands each day, being able to converse with them and share experiences at mealtimes and in free evenings.

At each breakfast and lunchtime we were delighted to hear their reports, which were carried to all the six dining rooms and to Watchtower Farms. And following the family *Watchtower* study each Monday we heard more experiences and firsthand reports from our visitors. Yes, it was thoroughly upbuilding and stimulating.

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Endure in Work That Is Good

¹ Those worshipping Jehovah exclusively have always needed endurance. This wicked system under Satan's control has been relentless in its opposition. If not suffering outright persecution, we have needed endurance just to persevere in right works while waiting. The year's text has meaning for each of us: "You have need of endurance, in order that . . . you may receive the fulfillment of the promise." (Heb. 10:36) Volumes could be written about the uncompromising endurance of true Christians.

² In modern times, the *Watchtower* magazine has played an important role as an aid to Christian endurance. It has faithfully provided strengthening Bible instruction. (Prov. 4:18) Hundreds of thousands of sincere people the world over have expressed appreciation for its help. Because of Jehovah's backing and the determination of his people, it has maintained unbroken publication since 1879.

USING "THE WATCHTOWER" TO HELP OTHERS

³ January will mark the beginning of the thirty-ninth annual *Watchtower* campaign. This year arrangements have been made to feature the subscription offer during the months of January, April and July instead of from January through April. The subscription

offer on a contribution of \$1.50 will include the three new booklets released last year. We will emphasize starting studies wherever possible. It will be quite appropriate to offer subscriptions for both magazines for \$3.00 where there is interest. Also, magazine work presents many opportunities to offer the subscriptions, especially to individuals who accept the magazines regularly.

⁴ Keep in mind that the real purpose behind our work is to stimulate interest in the Bible. It is God's Word that people must come to respect and understand. *The Watchtower* will help them to do that. To assist you to focus attention on the Bible, the opening article in each January issue will feature a discussion on a Bible text that you may find helpful in starting conversations.

⁵ You might want to use a presentation like this: "Wouldn't you like to see more people live by the Bible? We are interested in cultivating greater faith in it as God's Word. The uncertainty so many feel about the future is enough to convince us that there is a need for that. Wisdom from God, written long ago in the Bible, provides reliable guidance to lead us to a happy future." (Read Proverbs 3:5, 6; refer to opening article, January 1 *Watchtower*.) If there

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Benefiting Even More

¹ Have you thought about the recent adjustments in the congregational book study and *Watchtower* study? These meetings have been slightly modified, putting us all in position to benefit even more.

² Since December, in our book study we have been following a schedule set out in *Our Kingdom Service*. The schedule for January is in this issue. It is hoped that this has helped you. How? In the past we did not know exactly how far to study ahead in preparing for the book study. As a result there could have been a bit of laxness in preparation as a person got toward the final pages of the material that might be covered in the meeting. Did you ever observe that? But now we know precisely what pages to study, so we can give our full attention to all the material; we can be thoroughly prepared.

³ Furthermore, each designated lesson is a logical section. Thus there is more unity and coherence as a complete section of related

material is considered during a study. We will not find that we have to stop at some awkward point, and the next week begin in the middle of a line of reasoning.

USE YOUR BIBLE

⁴ To some extent the number of Bible texts in a portion of material has had a bearing on the length of the assignment for the week. Do you appreciate what this means? As we prepare we can look up the citations, planning to work some of the texts into our comments. And the conductor will be able to include cited verses in the discussion. Consequently we will be using the Bible more.

⁵ As to the *Watchtower* study, have you noted that in the past few months the lessons have often been shorter than in years gone by, actually about 20 percent shorter? This is intentional. Now, while still completing the study in an hour, we will have more time to

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YOUR SERVICE MEETINGS

WEEK STARTING JANUARY 2

15 min: Song 39. Local announcements. Short talk reviewing the importance of handling subscriptions accurately and promptly. January marks the beginning of another *Watchtower* campaign. To ensure proper handling of subscriptions, all are asked: (1) Submit subscription slips in duplicate, doing so at the first meeting after they are obtained. (2) Congregation should send in all subscriptions each week. Always send the remittance form with the subscription slips. (3) When doing so, mark the envelope MAGAZINES. Addresses must be accurate and complete. For every magazine mailed out that is undeliverable, the Post Office charges the Society 25 cents. At the rate such magazines have been returned in the past, this expense could exceed \$45,000 a year. Your cooperation will be much appreciated. Also discuss article "Replying to Critics."

15 min: Discuss article "Endure in Work That Is Good." Highlight year-text. Build up enthusiasm for subscription campaign, including one or two brief demonstrations of presentations.

15 min: Using Booklets to Start Studies. The three booklets *Is There a God Who Cares?*, *A Secure Future—How You Can Find It* and *There Is Much More to Life!* will be used again in conjunction with the *Watchtower* subscription offer, with emphasis on starting studies. We have received suggestions from experienced brothers that you may find helpful: Success in starting studies begins with building up your own desire to help other people. Preparing what you are going to say is also an important factor. An informal approach designed to initiate a friendly conversation usually gets good results. Familiarize yourself with the contents of the booklets, selecting interesting points in the one you want to feature. Here are some ways that have been used to start studies using *Is There a God Who Cares?*: A sister built her presentation around this introduction: "I have been a Bible reader for many years and have been delighted with the way this booklet has dealt with a question that many people have asked about: 'Why has God permitted wickedness?'" (Refer to page 18, paragraph 23.) Another asks the question posed in the title, then refers to the Scriptural answer in 1 Peter 5:6, 7 at the end of page 31. Another used just the illustration on pages 6 and 7, showing that man, not God, is responsible for human suffering. All favored use of the Bible with texts marked for handy reference. As time permits, include one or two brief presentations. If local response favors using a different booklet, discuss that instead, offering suggestions for presentation.

15 min: Scriptural Discussion: Generosity (ad 642; 12/8/76 *Awake!* pp. 27, 28). A talk showing how generosity is connected with the fruitage of Jehovah's spirit and how in practical terms we can display it. Show how the generous giving of ourselves in the activity for January is a fine display of our Christian generosity. Song 108.

WEEK STARTING JANUARY 9

12 min: Song 72. Review highlights of Branch Letter, Theocratic News and Announcements. Include local announcements.

18 min: Getting to Know Our Youths.

Elder (preferably a father) has variety of youths come to platform one at a time; warmly draws each one out on some of these questions, which they have been given beforehand: What do you like most about the meetings? Why? Have you found the *Youth* book helpful? In what way? What was the biggest problem you have faced? How did you handle it? Would you enjoy adults talking more with you? About what? What do you think adults in the congregation could do to help you? Is there something that you have especially enjoyed reading in theocratic literature? What do you do when a youth at school wants you to join in something bad? Help young ones see we are interested in them and their feelings.

15 min: Uppbuilding talk on article "Social Events Need Christian Moderation" from *Watchtower* of May 1, 1969. (Also, 7/74 *Kingdom Ministry*) Develop in kindly way, not criticizing or making rules. Help all to appreciate that moderation in any social event makes things more pleasant by avoiding distressing excesses or causes for stumbling. (Rom. 14:21; Titus 2:12) Mention where the article is published so it can be referred to when social events are being planned.

15 min: "Is Your Home Available?" Discuss article, reviewing any need of this type locally. Mention main points discussed in Question Box. Encourage all to bring "Make Sure" and 1977 *Yearbook* next week. Song 55.

WEEK STARTING JANUARY 16

20 min: Song 10. Announcements. Discussion with some questions on 1977 *Yearbook*, pages 1-32. Tie in comments about need for Kingdom-preaching work. Direct attention to interesting points in this section of *Yearbook*, drawing out audience response. Encourage all to read *Yearbook*.

15 min: "Presenting the Good News—To Those Who Have Lost Faith in Religion." Question-and-answer coverage. As time permits, let audience explain what they have used, or refer to good points that could be used from *Is There a God Who Cares?*

18 min: Using "Make Sure" with benefit. Describe its features: List of subjects, subheadings that outline a subject and extensive index. Using a subject that many have encountered in field, briefly run through outline in "Make Sure," stressing how useful it can be. One or two brief demonstrations on topics that arise locally (perhaps Sabbath, Immortality or Holidays). These should be kept simple, perhaps drawing one or two key texts from "Make Sure." If we have "Make Sure" with us and use it in service it may aid us to carry out 1 Peter 3:15 more effectively.

7 min: Comment on any good report about the progress of the *Watchtower* campaign or relate a good experience in starting studies. Song 66.

WEEK STARTING JANUARY 23

Meetings That Incite to Love and Fine Works.—Heb. 10:23-25.

12 min: Song 5. Local announcements. Explain how meetings play vital role in our worship. Each one of us has been personally instructed, trained by them. A primary means to keep us strong, alert, active in the work. All share responsibility in making them

lively, instructive, beneficial. Include item from 1977 *Yearbook* showing benefit of meetings. (Page 43, pars. 2, 3)

17 min: "Benefiting Even More." Discuss with audience.

15 min: "Getting More from Public Talks." Questions and answers. Have publisher, prepared in advance, demonstrate how something learned in a recent public talk was used beneficially.

16 min: What All of Us Can Do. Get comments from the audience on the following: (1) Why is it important that we fulfill our assignments? (2) How does rehearsal add to the effectiveness of parts involving more than one? (3) What benefits come from having different ones, including children, participate? (4) What can we do individually to encourage and assist others to share? (5) What are some common distractions during meetings and what can we do about them? (6) What will help us pay closer attention? (7) Why should we comment in our own words? Song 36.

Replying to Critics

Newspaper articles, TV programs and radio programs sometimes have information that is critical of Jehovah's Witnesses. Before deciding to answer in behalf of Jehovah's Witnesses, it is wise to remember that usually the best policy is to ignore the critics, following the example of Jesus, who did not go searching out those critical of him and his message in order to debate or argue with them. Moreover, harm can be done if one is not thoroughly prepared to answer or is not experienced in handling controversial questions.

If a situation is such that the elders believe that the position of Jehovah's Witnesses should be defended in a community, they might first take it up with the Society, giving all the facts and showing why and how they feel the defense should be made. The Society will then offer some counsel as guidance. But experience has shown that it is usually best to do as Jesus counseled regarding the critical Pharisees: "Let them be." (Matt. 15:14) Like Jesus, let us keep busy preaching the good news of the Kingdom and gathering the sheeplike ones, not letting the carping of the critics disturb us.

OCTOBER SERVICE REPORT

	Pubs.	Av. Hrs.	Av. R.V.	Av. Bt.St.	Av. Mags.
Sp'l Pios.	652	136.5	53.0	5.0	127.6
Pios.	15,231	87.8	34.0	3.0	86.7
Aux. Pios.	21,344	59.1	19.3	1.2	62.6
Pubs.	496,543	8.6	3.9	4	11.2
TOTAL	533,770				

Newly Dedicated Ones Baptized: 1,890

UNITED STATES GOAL FOR 1977

599,108 Publishers

Getting More from Public Talks

¹ Back in January 1945 public talks in person became a regular part of our weekly meetings. They have since contributed significantly toward our expanding program of Bible education. The outlines provided have covered a wide range of topics, including doctrinal subjects. More recent outlines deal with everyday problems, exploring the proper application of Bible principles. More than one hundred outlines are available. Additionally, congregations may arrange other talks periodically to fill local needs.

² If we "pay more than the usual attention," there is much we can learn that will aid us. (Heb. 2:1) It is helpful for listeners to follow the reading of texts in the Bible. Taking brief notes can provide a handy reference for review later. Also, to grasp new points we can compare our knowledge of the subject with what we are learning from the speaker. It is good to think about specific situations where Bible counsel or principles can be applied in our life.

USING WHAT WE LEARN

³ We recently had public talks that reviewed material in the *Good News* and *Holy Spirit* books. Were you alert to note specific points mentioned by the speaker? And have you since been able to put these to good use? Here are some examples:

⁴ *Doctrinal subjects:* One of the talks drew attention to pages 148, 149 of the *Good News* book, which highlights the fulfillment of the "sign" Jesus gave. (Matt. 24:3-25:46; Luke 21:7-36) It also considered page 145, which outlines 38 prophecies proving Jesus to be the Messiah. Another covered the material on page 83 that you might use to convince a skeptical person that the Flood actually occurred. If you were listening closely to the discussion of pages 12-15 of the *Holy Spirit* book, you probably gained additional proof on why there is no basis to believe that the holy spirit is part of a triune God.

⁵ *Shepherding:* Some of the talks presented Scriptural thoughts that the elders can use in their shepherding work. The discussion on chapter 15 in the *Good News* book

might provide basis for some encouragement that could help one avoid a variety of pitfalls. Or, a brother depressed with a personal problem might be refreshed to hear you relate details you remembered from the talk describing the paradise discussed in chapter 16. The material in the talk based on pages 132-137 of the *Holy Spirit* book can be used to explain how God's spirit acts as an "intercessor," which might be just what is needed to help a person who feels his prayers are hindered.

⁶ *Answering questions:* Public talks provide you with answers to questions that come up in Bible discussions. Do you recall how the speaker, when reviewing pages 127-132 of the *Holy Spirit* book, explained how an individual knows he has been spirit begotten? Have persons asked how Moses obtained details about the record of creation and events transpiring in Eden? Very likely that was answered by the speaker in his comments on page 16 of the *Good News* book.

⁷ These are just a few examples to show how public talks can help us tap a storehouse of information. If you cultivate an interest and pay close attention, you can acquire a wealth of Bible knowledge that you can use for the benefit of yourself and others. Each time you attend the public talk in your congregation, remember the proverb: "A wise person will listen and take in more instruction."—Prov. 1:5.

Announcements

● Literature offer for January: *Watchtower* subscription, with three booklets, for \$1.50, or subscriptions for both *Watchtower* and *Awake!*, with six booklets, for \$3.00. If the subscription is not accepted, we can offer a pocket-size book (25c) along with two magazines for 35c. February: *Holy Spirit* book for 25c. March: Any 50c book currently in stock, with two booklets given free. When stock is depleted, 25c books can be offered.

● Starting in February, circuit overseers will give a public talk that includes a fine selection of colored slides on the theme "Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?"

● New Publications Available:
Holy Spirit—The Force Behind the Coming New Order! —German
Man's Salvation out of World Distress at Hand! —Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish
Is There a God Who Cares? —Danish, Dutch
There Is Much More to Life! —Danish, Dutch, Hebrew

● Available Again in U.S.A.:
Bible Price: \$3.90 —Vietnamese
● Out of Stock in U.S.A.:
Blood, Medicine and the Law of God —English

Is Your Home Available?

¹ Most congregations have found it advantageous to have several book studies conveniently located in different parts of the territory. It has enabled more people to attend regularly, provided a convenient location to meet for service and given us opportunity to get to know and assist one another personally.

² The elders may feel that it would be advisable to add additional studies or to adjust book study locations. This could be needed if some of the groups have become large or if circumstances change in some homes where studies are being conducted. So, the elders may be interested in knowing about additional homes that are available.

³ It could be that you have never thought about volunteering your home, assuming that there was no particular need. If your home is suitable in every way for accommodating a book study group and your family is agreeable, why not make that known to the elders? There may be an existing need right now or the elders could be planning something for the future. So, your offer might be a real help toward taking definite steps in that direction.

⁴ All of us should show appreciation for the thoughtfulness of families who volunteer their homes. Christian principles, not to mention good manners, prompt those attending to be lovingly considerate by not going uninvited into other rooms, soiling the carpet or furniture or allowing children to run about unattended inside or outside the home.—Matt. 7:12.

⁵ Your family may be rewarded in many ways by having a study in your home. Hospitality is a Christian virtue. (Rom. 12:13) Lydia's strong desire to be hospitable brought her a blessing. (Acts 16:15) Philemon was commended for his kindness, which included having a congregation meet in his home. (Philem. 2, 21) We can make a fine contribution toward the expansion of Jehovah's organization by showing that we are "ready to share" with others what we have.—1 Tim. 6:17-19.

● When ordering the new "Not Home" slips, please be sure to use the regular Literature Order Blank.

● The one handling subscriptions should review the Society's letter dated April 15, 1976, in regard to proper handling of subscriptions. It would be helpful to have that posted on the information board. All remittances for subscriptions should be accompanied by a filled-out remittance form.

Branch Letter

(Cont'd)

All too soon the meetings were over. But we are sure that all of God's people will be benefiting from the results of the meetings.

Your brothers,
BROOKLYN BRANCH OFFICE

—To Those Who Have Lost Faith in Religion

¹ In recent years, more and more people have expressed a lack of confidence in religion. Questions have been raised about the existence of God and the value of any form of religious worship. What could we say in a tactful way that might help these people to listen to our message?

² In many cases, the individual has simply been disillusioned when he found himself surrounded by hypocrisy and falsehood. Having little Bible knowledge, he was unable to defend his faith. He may be surprised to know it if you were formerly part of a religion like that but lost your faith in it. Mentioning this might give you an opportunity to tell him about what you have found as an alternative.

³ You may be able to explain that the failure of organized religion to give him a satisfying hope should not be a cause for him to abandon worship of God. The Bible shows there is true religion and there is false religion; Jesus said that he would tell many professing Christians to "get away from me." Only those on the "cramped road . . . doing the will of my Father" would have his favor. (Matt. 7:14, 21-23) It is wise to abandon false religion, in fact, we are commanded to do so. —Rev. 18:4.

⁴ Simple logic indicates that there must be a powerful Being responsible for the marvelous universe. We are part of what exists, so it is only reasonable that we try to understand the role we play and

what we must do to live in harmony with everything else. That, very simply, is what the true religion will teach us. An attempt to ignore that will simply leave us confused and without any reliable hope.

⁵ His faith in the Bible may have been undermined, making him reluctant to accept it. Yet, he may be able to see that there are certain laws, rules of ethics and inclinations of conscience that have been proved sound, harmonizing with the makeup of man and the laws of nature. These are invariably in full accord with principles found in the Bible. Most lawmakers admit that Bible instruction surpasses human wisdom. Its pages reveal the only satisfactory explanation as to the origin of man, his purpose on this earth and the remedy for the problems that distress him.

⁶ There is a genuine religion that can be easily identified by the good that it produces. It teaches people to love one another. (John 13:35) Personalities are changed, people stripping off what is bad and unclean. (Col. 3:5-10) Those formerly violent are taught how to live in peace. (Isa. 2:2-4) Families are drawn together in a warm, enduring relationship. (Eph. 5:22-33) There are more than two million people earth wide who are enjoying these benefits.

⁷ You may encounter irreligious persons who hold views bordering on atheism, which they readily expound to others at great length. Do not waste time in useless talk where there is no appreciation for what is good. (Matt. 7:6) On the other hand, if someone shows he is open-minded and desires to learn, do what you can to help him to appreciate the pure worship that has moved you to call at his home.—Rom. 10:13-15.

Benefiting Even More (Cont'd)

savor fine points in the lesson and to make comments of application. There will be less of a feeling of rushing as we consider choice Scriptural material. And, as with the book study, we will be able to look up cited verses and incorporate them in our answers. Hence the meetings will be much more a study of God's Word, which is so beneficial.—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

⁸ Certainly those who have the joy of conducting these meetings can take advantage of the adjustments to help their brothers to know and use the Bible more. And all of us can look upon these changes as a means to make the meetings more interesting and worth while for all in attendance.

Endure in Work (Cont'd)

is opportunity to start a study, continue the discussion, referring to page 3 of the booklet "A Secure Future—How You Can Find It."

⁹ Without endurance no one can survive the coming tribulation. An understanding of the Bible and a determination to be guided by it are critical needs. Jehovah will reward those who maintain "endurance in work that is good." (Rom. 2:7) Keeping ourselves busy in the work of teaching and helping others will aid all toward endurance.—Jas. 1:4.

◆ Our records show that, as of the start of 1977, approximately 44,000 elders have attended the Kingdom Ministry School in the United States. They are currently receiving the benefit of practical training from 12 experienced instructors whose varying backgrounds include circuit, district, missionary and Bethel service. On the average, these have been baptized for 35 years and have 28 years of full-time service. The same course is being provided in many other lands under direction of the branches. The elders, as well as the congregations, have surely been strengthened by this fine training.

Question Box

● May the Kingdom Hall be used for a "second wedding" ceremony?

In some lands a couple must get married by a representative of the state, such as a judge, at city hall or the courthouse. That applies to Christians, too. But a Christian couple might want to share the happy occasion with their brothers as well as hear a Bible talk on marriage. So they might ask permission to use the Kingdom Hall in order to follow the civil ceremony with a Bible talk. If such does take place at the Kingdom Hall, it is not really the marriage ceremony, for the marriage actually occurred earlier.

But this two-part arrangement is not followed by Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States. In this country authorized brothers can perform marriages in the Kingdom Hall. So a couple's good standing with the congregation can request permission to get married at the Kingdom Hall if that is what they want. Or they may decide to marry elsewhere, at a home, or a rented facility, or to have a civil ceremony at city hall. If they choose to have their marriage at a home or a rented facility or to have a civil ceremony elsewhere, there is no reason to have something additional at the Kingdom Hall later.

In some churches of Christendom the idea prevails that a couple must have a "religious wedding" in order for their marriage to be acceptable to God. But that is not the case. (Gen. 24:67) So, if two persons who are free to marry get married by a judge or any other authorized marrying agent, then the marriage is valid before God and the Christian congregation. To go through a "religious wedding" months or years later would suggest otherwise. And because once a couple are legally married in the United States their vows are binding, it would not be fitting to use the Kingdom Hall for a "second wedding" to "renew" those vows. In accord with Jesus' counsel, a married couple can let their "Yes" mean "Yes," viewing their vows as still in force before God and men.—Matt. 5:37.

Schedule for book studies in Peace and Security book:

January 2: Pages 37 to 45
January 9: Pages 46 to 52*
January 16: Pages 52 to 57
January 23: Pages 58 to 65*
January 30: Pages 65 to 71

* To subheading.