

We sincerely hope that your visit to Bethel has been a rewarding one. No doubt it has helped you to become better acquainted with the work that Jehovah's Witnesses are doing to aid people who are searching for a better future through God's Kingdom. May your visit with us be an encouragement to you in your efforts to learn more about our loving Creator and to live by his righteous standards.

Welcome to the Bulgaria Branch Office of Jehovah's Witnesses

Welcome!



It is a pleasure to welcome you to the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bulgaria. We hope your visit will be a pleasant one. Our branch is called Bethel, meaning "House of God." This Biblical name is fitting, for the men and women who live and serve here are Christian ministers who have dedicated themselves to Jehovah God and who devote themselves full-time to supporting the worldwide work of Kingdom preaching. In over 235 lands, there are now some 8,000,000 Witnesses of Jehovah, who are carrying out the commission Jesus gave his followers—to preach the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

To organize this work, there are about 90 branch offices worldwide—all serving under the direction of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York, U.S.A. The office in Sofia supports the activities of the more than 2,100 Witnesses throughout Bulgaria. All aspects of this work are made possible by voluntary donations. The office facility, totaling 4,147 square meters in area, is set in attractive surroundings. Built in just under three years, the office was dedicated to Jehovah on October 9, 2004.

Visiting Hours: Visitors are welcome to take a guided tour of our facilities.

Tours are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We request that large groups inform us in advance of their plans to visit.

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Spiritual Programs

The finest assets to Bethel are the spiritual men and women who serve here. Each workday morning, the Bethel family comes together to consider a Bible text using the booklet *Examining the Scriptures Daily*. After a prayer, a chairman presides over this 15-minute discussion, and assigned members of the family comment on the text.



Bethel family members also have a personal share in the Kingdom-preaching work. They attend various nearby congregations, where many of them serve as elders or ministerial servants.



On Monday evenings, the entire Bethel family gathers to study the Bible with the help of *The Watchtower*. At times, there are special programs after the *Watchtower* Study. These Bible discussions each workday morning and on Monday evenings are an important part of Bethel life.



Each member of the Bethel family also makes time for personal Bible study. Family members have access to a library containing the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses as well as other reference works.

History



The first report of Kingdom-preaching activity in Bulgaria was in 1888. In 1903, translation of Watch Tower publications began. Among the items produced was the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, which was printed in 1920.



The Bulgaria branch office was established in 1995. At first it occupied rented facilities in Dragalevtsi, on the outskirts of Sofia. However, these facilities soon proved to be inadequate for the needs of the Bethel family. So property was purchased, and in 2001 construction began on our new branch.



On May 6, 1938, Jehovah's Witnesses received legal recognition in Bulgaria. Less than a decade later, however, this recognition was revoked. In the decades that followed, numerous arrests, searches, and confiscations occurred. There were only a few of Jehovah's Witnesses in Bulgaria during those years.



Bethel Family

All Bethel family members are furnished with room and board and a small monthly allowance to assist with their personal expenses. They can truly be called a family because of their unity in serving their heavenly Father, Jehovah God. As a family, they work together, enjoy meals together, and study the Bible together.



Housekeeping



Laundry



Dining Room



Cleaning

Those serving at Bethel are happy to use their time, energy, and abilities to support the worldwide work of Kingdom preaching. Family members assigned to care for cleaning, housekeeping, and laundry help to maintain the family's high standard of cleanliness—a distinguishing mark of Bethel homes around the world.



Kitchen

Some members of the family maintain branch equipment, while others serve in the kitchen or do landscaping. Still others help to distribute literature and magazines to congregations throughout Bulgaria. Regardless of their assignment, Bethel family members gain satisfaction from using their lives fully in Jehovah's service.



Vehicle Maintenance



Building Maintenance



Gardening; Shipping



Offices

The *Service Department* supervises the preaching activity of some 50 congregations throughout Bulgaria. It handles correspondence from traveling overseers, congregation elders, pioneers, and publishers. In addition, it keeps records of congregation territories and compiles reports of field service activity. The Service Department schedules regional conventions and circuit assemblies. It also makes arrangements for various schools, including the Pioneer Service School and the Kingdom Ministry School. These schools help overseers and others to accomplish their ministry more fully.

The *Legal Department* provides assistance when it becomes necessary to establish or defend the rights of Jehovah's Witnesses. This includes addressing questions regarding the registration of our organization and the freedom to carry out our worship. The Legal Department also furnishes the authorities and the public with accurate information about Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs and ministry.

The *Hospital Information Desk* provides Hospital Liaison Committees throughout the country with the latest information on bloodless medical procedures. In turn, the congregation elders serving on these committees make this information available to doctors who are willing to treat their Witness patients without the use of blood.



The *Local Design/Construction Department* is responsible for locating and purchasing properties for Kingdom Halls. It prepares drawings and cares for obtaining any necessary permits. This department also supervises construction groups, which are made up of well-trained volunteers who build Kingdom Halls and other facilities throughout the country.

Much of the activity carried out at Bethel requires the use of computers. The *Computer Department* maintains the computer and telephone networks, audio and video systems, and the security system that are used at Bethel.

The *Translation Department* is responsible for translating the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses into Bulgarian, Romany, and Turkish Cyrillic. English text is received electronically from our headquarters in New York, U.S.A. After it is translated, the text is carefully proofread and compared with the English original. Once this process is completed, the text is composed and forwarded electronically to Germany for printing. Our Translation Department also prepares videos in Bulgarian Sign Language.



The *Audio/Video Department* makes high-quality recordings. These recordings include videos, audio publications, material for conventions, and Bible dramas.

