Since Mr. Armstrong began to advertise literature on the radio program many years ago, there has always been a mail processing department. It had a modest beginning with only Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong and a helper or two comprising its staff. Because the mailing list was small, the literature could be sent out promptly and efficiently.

However, through the years as the list of subscribers grew, and more and more booklets were written, it became increasingly difficult for a small staff to handle the voluminous number of mail requests.

New equipment had to be purchased, more floor space was needed, and more people had to be hired to process the mail. With a continuing upsurge in mail receipts, the Mail Processing Center had to look for new and bigger quarters. In due process of time, the department became fragmented with various sections being scattered over the campus.

Obviously these geographical moves began to pose some serious problems. In transporting mail to scattered work areas, bottlenecks occurred in mail flow and efficiency was impaired.

In 1971, it became apparent to those in top levels of management within the organization that vital changes needed to be made. There really was no direct flow of the mail from the time it was picked up at the post office until the literature or written response were posted. Neither were the different office department managers under the same division heads. What was needed, but heretofore impossible to implement, was a one-stop POST OFFICE to POST OFFICE mail flow for greater speed and efficiency. Thus, the concept of the present Mail Processing Center was conceived, developed and put into operation in January 1972. With the final merger and reorganization of all necessary departments involved, the entire processing of mail was at last self-contained in a single department -- the new Mail Processing Center. It has since been renamed Subscriber Services.

PURPOSE

Subscriber Services is responsible for receiving, opening, reading, processing and answering all mail responses generated by the media and the publishing division of Ambassador College and the Worldwide Church of God.

OBJECTIVE

To completely process the mail from POST OFFICE to POST OFFICE as accurately and rapidly as possible in one continuous work-flow operation.

SCOPE OF OPERATION

The Mail Processing Center is responsible for handling every letter sent to Ambassador College, the Worldwide Church of God, and Messrs. Herbert W. and Garner Ted Armstrong. It has been delegated the task of picking up the mail from the post office, sorting and distributing it to the various departments and named individuals throughout the campus. Letters containing money are channelled to the Donation Mail Area. All the mail is read and processed by the Terminal Section with regard to literature requests, file maintenance, etc. Letters containing questions or needing personal attention are referred to the Personal Correspondence Department, which channels them to the ministers in the field. Only a minimum of questions of an urgent nature are personally answered. The Co-Worker Section handles any donation complaints and gives personal attention and encouragement to our co-workers when needed. These sections in turn are supported by a Typing Pool. Finished letters, computer invoices and labels, contribution receipts and, in fact, all outgoing mail produced by every department are turned over to the Postal Service Section for mailing, thus completing the POST OFFICE to POST OFFICE concept.

Circulation, which is another facet of MPC, carries out the function of bringing along our subscribers to more and more involvement with the Work. It does this through sending promotional and renewal letters to our PT mailing list.

In addition, the Circulation Department supervises the telephone response group (WATS Line).

PRESENT CONFIGURATION

A.   We employ 200 workers.

B.   All departments are located on the same floor. (Postal Center across the street.)

C.   The floor plan is so layed out that we have a clean and simple mail flow from one end of the building to the next.

D. We have five departments altogether, each with its individual
    sections:

    1. Mail Receiving

    2. Terminals

    3. Personal Correspondence & Typing

    4. Circulation

        (a.) Direct Mailing
        (b.) Co-Worker
        (c.) WATS Line

    5. Postal

ADVANTAGES OF THE NEW MAIL PROCESSING SYSTEM

1. We have one division head, one director, and five department heads
    all working together in a friendly team effort.

2. Policies and procedures are now totally uniform throughout the
    department.

3. By drastically reducing the transportation of mail between scattered
    work areas we have all but eliminated log jams and bottlehecks in
    mail flow.

4. We now are able to process each letter within a given time frame.

5. A peaceful working relationship has been built among all employees,
    each understanding the needs and problems of the other.

6. We have developed a vigorous training program along with training
    manuals in order to help all employees produce at peak efficiency.

7. We are working at cross-training all workers in key areas so that
    we can handle sudden and unexpected upsurges in mail.

8. A communications network has been instituted through the use of
    written communiques to keep every employee immediately informed of
    any changes in policy or procedure.

9. Because of cross-training, we are able to provide job enrichment and
    opportunities for employees, and to promote from within.

10. Our general rate of error in processing has dropped to 1.5% which is in line with the large mail order houses.

11. A recent survey showed that efficiency in production has increased 37.5% for each hour worked -- over a 12 month period.

12. The same survey revealed there was a 50% increase in efficiency for each dollar spent.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS
ON WHAT MPC WOULD BE LIKE
WITHOUT THE COMPUTER

Since we began using the IBM Data Processing Computer Terminal System in 1967, the efficiency and cost effectiveness of Mail Processing has increased immensely. Without the computer the cost of both manpower and material would skyrocket. Here is a list of problems we would encounter if we returned to a manual method of processing the mail.

1. Labeling PT's would require 1,650 typists ($5,000 per hour) plus all their desks, typewriters, equipment, office space, etc.

2. 140,000 manual hours, costing an additional $400,000 a year, would be required to maintain the files.

3. Another $400,000 a year would be needed to record donation mail, maintain co-worker records, and process lit requests.

4. Because of the zip code mailing requirements, two-$2\frac{1}{2}$ million name and address files would have to be maintained. One in alphabetical order for inquiry, the other in zip code order for mailing. This could more than double the costs mentioned in 2 and 3 above (an additional $800,000).

5. Without maintaining the second file in zip code order, we would be unable to bundle our outgoing mail according to zip code. Therefore we would have to give up our second-class privilege at an additional postage cost of $2,500,000 a year.

6. It would take over 200 file cabinets to house the master files, which would require ten large rooms (900 square feet each), one for each zip code area, and one ten thousand square foot room for the alphabetical file.

7. Maintaining CC files would present a separate problem, because they are sent out by lesson in zip code order. This would mean one file for each of 12 lessons, plus an alphabetical file.

8. Changes of address made in the PT files would also have to be made separately in the co-worker file, the CC file, and all other files a single person can be in.

9. Sending regular donation receipts would be next to impossible because of the enormous work load placed on our Typing Section. Annual receipts reaching people by the April 15 deadline would be an insurmountable problem.

10. A conversion away from the computer to a manual method would require a year or more. This would necessitate hiring an additional large staff of employees just to do this job alone. In the meantime, we would need to maintain our present staff to handle the existing work load. This action would multiply our expenses 4 or 5 fold the first year.

11. The processing of mail would become routine clerical work. This not only would increase processing errors, but also would reduce morale, bringing about an increased turnover in personnel.

12. There would be no simple way to balance daily income with daily bank deposits, or to keep our accounting records accurate and current.

13. The savings from non-computer costs would be absorbed in new equipment and larger facilities alone, if we reverted to manual methods. Also, since labor now represents 87% of our total expenses, we would have to double this every year or two, if we changed to a non-computer system of processing the mail.

14. The computer only costs us $83,000 per month, the combined average monthly salaries of 83 employees. Yet the computer does the job of several hundred such employees. Reverting to manual methods would cause us to lose this enormous capacity.

15. The present salaries for the Mail Processing Center amount to $1.3 million annually. If we were to discontinue the use of the computer-terminal system and return to an outmoded manual method the additional cost for equipment and salaries would be $2.7 million annually. The total cost for a manual operation for salaries and equipment would then be $4 million annually.

16. Our present staff of employees in the Mail Processing Center totals 200. Using a completely manual system, we would require 700 full time employees. If we used a combination of full time and part time employees, it would require a work force of some 1720 persons.

MAIL RECEIVING DEPARTMENT

The Mail Receiving Department is the first link in a chain of departments in our POST OFFICE to POST OFFICE mail processing program.

The department consists of two sections, the Receiving/Sorting Section and the Donation Mail Reading Section. A total of 40 employees (20 full time and 20 part time) are involved in processing the mail as it is received. A brief description of each section and its function follows.

RECEIVING/SORTING SECTION

The Receiving/Sorting Section is responsible for the daily mail pick-ups from the post office and the initial sorting of the incoming mail.

Over 11,000 pieces of new mail is received every day which should accumulate to over 4,000,000 pieces of mail for the year 1974. The mail received on any one day is sorted into an average of over 50 categories. These categories are later subdivided into more than 200 distinct types of mail in order to facilitate and expedite handling.

Opening, counting and forwarding each type of mail to the proper destination is a daily responsibility for this section. In conjunction with this operation, a daily inventory of all mail on hand is maintained to show our exact work load on a day-to-day basis.

DONATION MAIL READING

The Donation Mail Reading Section is the other major area of Mail Receiving. All mail containing donations from U.S. residents are read and processed in this section.

A staff of 17 trained readers process an average of 4,800 pieces of mail per day. In addition some 210,000 Holy Day offerings are processed each year, for a total amount of nearly 1½ million pieces of mail.

The major responsibility of the Donation Reading Section is to code all money on the envelope for banking and receipting purposes and to read all enclosed letters. Requested literature must be marked on the envelope and all questions or inquiries forwarded to the proper department for further handling. Some file updates or corrections are also made at this time.

All donation letters are forwarded to the Accounting Department for balancing and banking of the money. Once the money is balanced and removed from the envelope, the envelopes are forwarded to the Terminal Section for updating each donation record so that receipts may be sent. Literature requests are also entered on the terminals during the same operation.

Letters requiring additional handling are forwarded to the proper department and there taken care of.

TERMINAL DEPARTMENT

The Terminal Department has four main sections with 65 employees. Our goal is to finish our part of processing each letter received within 12 hours.

MASTER FILE

One of the main jobs of the terminal area is to maintain the PT master file. The master file is the nerve center of our operation. It has to do with maintaining the correct name and address with other pertinent information on all those on our mailing list. We carefully guard and update the master file at all times.

OPERATOR NUMBERS

In order to control and monitor what an operator can and cannot do on the terminals, a code number is issued to each operator. A series of printouts and double checks programmed into the computer also help to insure optimum file security.

JOB OF OPERATOR

Our terminal operators are also trained mail readers. At the time they read the letters to determine what action should be taken, they also tell the computer by depressing the keys on the terminal what literature to send. Certain jobs require a terminal operator to depress more than

30,000 keys per day. An average employee can completely read and process 36 letters per hour, sending an average of 85 pieces of lit at the same time.

QUALITY CONTROL

To help improve the quality of workmanship among our employees, our Quality Control Section spot-checks each operator's work periodically. In addition, QC fulfills the necessary function of tracking down all lit complaints.

THE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Another important facet of the terminal area is the Correspondence Course. We now have 120,000 active students in the new 12 lesson course. 90,000 students have completed the 58 lesson course, while already 190,000 have finished the new 12 lesson course.

PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT

WORK LOAD

In the first four months of this year, we processed a total of 37,000 letters -- letters involving personal problems, general Bible questions, literature problems, visit and baptism requests, personal mail for Messrs. Herbert W. and Garner Ted Armstrong, condolences, prayer requests, etc.

There were 3600 visit and counseling requests sent to the ministers plus an additional 1600 letters involving visit scheduling or from persons having previous contact. Another 1700 letters were handled by offering a visit, and 4000 were answered by forms or memos. The remaining letters were omitted by sending literature or forwarding to another department.

CRITICAL MAIL

We answer an average of 10 or 12 letters per week inquiring about various "persecution" articles or booklets that are circulated by the worldly churches against us.

Since the recent publicity, we have had an influx of about 600 inquiries. Mr. Ted Armstrong was provided with the questions and quotes from these letters and wrote a letter which we printed and sent in response to these inquiries. Two issues of The Worldwide News were also sent. Several people have written back thanking us for the information and expressing continued interest.

We have also been writing some short memos answering specific short questions like, "did the Symphony really cost $500,000?" and we have had to assure quite a number of people that the minister in their area is reliable.

On the other hand, literally thousands of members have written us during the recent crisis expressing their loyalty and support for the Work and the Armstrongs.

FAST-SPEED PM LIT REQUEST FORMS

In the three months since we provided ministers with special forms for PM's to request first class literature, we have processed 220 request cards averaging about 7 requests per letter for a total of 1500 pieces of literature sent to PM's.

EXPLANATION OF CODE MARKINGS

Many of you are acquainted with our envelope markings as you read mail when you were in College. But for those who aren't, and because some things have changed, we would like to review a few key markings:

QNA--the person is told we are unable to answer his letter, however, he may contact one of our ministers.

LSM--we don't answer the person's questions. But we do tell him that we have forwarded the letter to our local minister who, we hope, will be in contact soon.

MPB--the person is told that because of the nature of his problem or question, we are forwarding his letter to our local minister who will be contacting him.

CVL--the person is told that questions about Church location and attendance are handled by our local minister who will get in touch with him. Again, we answer nothing.

LTM--the letter is being forwarded to the minister without the knowledge of the person writing. If the letter was answered, you should receive a copy of the answer.

MAILING QUANTITIES

1973

Plain Truth	21,249,841
La Pura Verdad	1,517,883
La Pure Verite	393,912
Good News	713,415
Correspondence Course	1,410,989
Co-Worker Letters	1,009,180
Member Letters	136,147
Renewal Letters	2,307,423
Receipts	691,184
*All Other	8,485,906
Total Pieces Mailed	39,915,880
Total Postage	$985,743.39

*Includes booklets, reprints, business mail, etc.

WHY PEOPLE COMPLAIN ABOUT OUR MAIL SERVICE

Many have heard of complaints from people or have wondered themselves about the delays in mail service from headquarters. Some time ago, the Quality Control Section made an indepth study to discover the causes of these complaints. Here is a brief outline of the causes at that time, in descending order:

1. Literature was not available at time of request due to needed literature revision, low stocks, or discontinued publication.

2. Delay in mail due to bulk postage mailings (2nd and 3rd class).

3. Postal misroutings, thefts, and other irregularities.

4. Negligence on the part of the requestor (i.e., no name or address, wrong address, etc.).

5. Mail Processing errors: this represents only 1.5% of the total errors causing mail complaints.

WHY USE THIRD CLASS MAIL FOR LITERATURE?

1. Even though it is slower, we use third class mailing to keep our expenses down because such bulk postage is very low. Here's how it works: we accumulate requests for literature for one week. When there are 200 or more requests for the same item, we are able to send them at a special rate which we are privileged to use because we are a non-profit organization. This not only enables us to take advantage of the lowest postage rates possible, but also to machine handle the mailing instead of having to do it by hand. Machine work costs about one-fifth as much as manual work.

2. Here is an example on the postage costs. Let's suppose we send 100,000 copies of THE "WORK" AFTER 40 YEARS. To mail this first class would cost the work $30,000 for postage. In contrast, third class single piece rate (the rate used if we didn't accumulate and mail in bulk quantities) would cost $16,000. The non-profit bulk rate--the rate which we use--cost us a mere $1,700.

3. By accumulating the mail we are also able to do much of the sorting for the post office and bypass certain of their operations. We can make sacks of mail going directly to certain states and even cities. These go faster because they bypass all local operations.

CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT

WATS

The WATS line has two full time employees and 15 student employees. We have 10 lines: 4 full time and 6 measured.

Number of calls per month:

November	7,000
December	12,000
January	10,500
February	9,000
March	10,500
April	21,700

About 100 visit requests (CVL's) are received per week.

Tests indicate that phones increase the number of responses to the telecast by as much as 60%.

CO-WORKER

The Co-Worker Section has five full time employees serving our entire list of 133,000 Donors, 34,000 Co-Workers, and 33,000 Members. Co-Worker averages between 8,000 and 10,000 letters handled each month. March 1974 was an average month during which we handled 8,235 pieces of mail. 296 were personalized letters and memos, 360 were MCST form letters, 612 were inquiries answered by computer letters, 371 check problem letters, 82 receipt problems, 260 multiple copy requests, 126 were "make new Co-Worker" letters welcoming them to our family of Co-Workers, 451 were special "thank you" letters for larger donations, and the rest were routine lit omits and regular omits.

DIRECT MAIL

Direct Mail has four full time employees.

For 1973 we mailed: 4,343,956 letters and received 933,792 responses. The average response rate is 22.5%.

New Donors created by Direct Mail numbered 36,200.

CONCLUSION

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. We do not send out baptism or member certificates.

2. We don't have a "new member literature package" but we are presently working on one.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Please fill out baptism cards completely and send in as soon as possible. It determines whether the person will receive member letters from Mr. Armstrong and any member lit -- HDO envelopes and Feast applications.

2. Please send in Disfellowship cards promptly so we can stop lit as necessary.

3. Please send Reinstatement cards immediately so those members can again receive the member lit, HDO envelopes, and Feast applications, etc.

4. If a slip-up occurs and you receive a clarification memo, please respond as soon as you obtain the information so the members get what they need.