

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

February 17, 1970

OFFICE OF
GARNER TED ARMSTRONG
Vice President

TO ALL MINISTERS IN THE UNITED STATES:

GREETINGS, in Jesus' name! This special letter concerns a very serious problem with mail theft experienced by God's Work over the past years -- as will be explained in a member letter (and perhaps, later, in an article for The GOOD NEWS) being prepared by Mr. Herbert Armstrong.

Some few of you may have known we have experienced significant dollar loss through stolen mail -- perhaps you had heard of instances in the past involving apprehension of mail thieves in the Pasadena or Los Angeles area.

However, I doubt that you have known of the truly prodigious amounts of money we suspect are involved. ~~For your private information, I will~~ ~~enclose copies of Mr. Wilson's memo to me, so you are completely in-~~ ~~formed.~~

Shocking, appalling -- there are no adequate words to describe such a tremendous loss to God's Work! IF WE CAN STOP all this rotten thieving, it will be like INCREASING THE INCOME AUTOMATICALLY by upwards of ONE-HALF MILLION OR MORE DOLLARS! No one need be told how much this would mean to the Work!

In reviewing the entire problem, Mr. Armstrong decided to totally change our policies concerning tithe-paying by members. His letter will explain it thoroughly -- but it will involve requiring members to bring their tithes in sealed envelopes (our own, self-addressed ones) to the Church services. The local Pastor will then package the envelopes in one or perhaps two bundles or more (depending on their bulk, of course), and mail them to various addresses and to various names in the Los Angeles area. We will send a schedule for mailing procedure to each pastorate. The policy will be for us to rent various post office boxes in different surrounding communities -- using all of them from time to time -- so the number of colored, self-addressed envelopes coming directly into the Los Angeles Airport, into Terminal Annex, and into the Pasadena Post Office, are drastically reduced!

Through the entire procedure, we shall have to be DOUBLY SECURITY CONSCIOUS! When it was first discussed, I immediately wondered what would be the effect of local members seemingly paying their tithes to the local Pastor, and whether this would cause a loss of their LOOKING TOWARD HEADQUARTERS, and whether it would put temptation in the way

of anyone who had allowed himself to become carnally motivated to attempt to lead off his own congregation in order to get their tithes for himself! I know such a thing would seem abhorrent to all of us -- but my father's early experiences certainly prove such situations are possible.

But, ALL of this can be circumvented by simply following the directions of the new procedure.

All members should be encouraged to send in their tithes by PERSONAL CHECK, which is made out directly to either Herbert W. Armstrong, or to Worldwide Church of God, or to Ambassador College, or one of the INSTITUTIONAL NAMES! Under no circumstances should a member place any other name on the check.

All members should be encouraged and required to place those personal checks OR MONEY ORDERS, (hopefully, NEVER sending cash unless for some special reason, or in some emergency) into our own personal, self-addressed envelopes which are supplied to them via the Co-worker letters and member letters from Headquarters.

Further, we can supply each local Pastor with a supply of such envelopes so the tithes can be collected in almost the same manner as during the annual holy days.

The minister will then re-package the envelopes, and send them by REGISTERED, INSURED, (RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED) MAIL to one of the names supplied him by the Mail Receiving Department.

Now -- ~~to your own responsibilities toward your local people in your charge.~~

Obviously, it is a shameful, utterly ridiculous thing to have to impose on the members, and on our ministers, to be so elaborately cautious in handling our mail -- and in ensuring that God's own money safely reaches the very Headquarters of His Work! Mr. Wilson's memos prove most of our members are VERY CARELESS in balancing their personal checking accounts -- and that they are UNAWARE that the Work has, in some cases, not received the money they sent.

~~You should preach at least one POWERFUL SERMON on this subject, and perhaps a series of two or more~~ -- using your own personal knowledge of the problems of crime -- and all you have in your possession in the Crime booklet, other articles from us, and from past programs or telecasts on the subject! You should THINK of the many Biblical examples -- even Judas, and his lust for money to BETRAY his very Saviour.

You should somehow INSPIRE our brethren to know they are going to DIRECTLY GO TO WORK TO THWART SOME DIRTY, FILTHY, EVIL, LURKING CRIMINALS WHO ARE WAITING TO SNATCH GOD'S OWN MONEY RIGHT OUT OF THE HANDS OF HIS OWN PEOPLE!

Make them realize they are being asked to go to such precautions as a direct part of a CRUSADE to STOP THIS MAIL THIEVERY! Let them know they are helping to OUTWIT the dirty crooks lurking in the postal system -- and that they are going to be helping the Work of God SAVE UP TO, OR OVER, ONE-HALF MILLION DOLLARS!

You can let them know this very likely represents FAR MORE THAN THE TOTAL TITHES OF THEIR OWN CONGREGATION FOR PERHAPS SEVERAL YEARS! Think of various analogies, or examples which would be relevant; think of various scriptures from the Book of the Law on stealing -- and what GOD says about it. The scriptures on the Love of Money, on Lust, on Covetousness -- on GREED and the like should be expounded!

You can show their tithing responsibility is NOT ended with placing some bills into an envelope and placing the envelope into their rural mailbox -- but that it IS THEIR DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE IT GETS INTO THE HANDS OF GOD'S HEADQUARTERS MINISTRY!

Let them know how OUTRAGED they might feel if, every single time for the past year they had carefully prepared an offering for God, and a dirty crook had shown up with a GUN, and ROBBED them of it -- right out of their own hands! GET STIRRED UP ABOUT THIS SITUATION YOURSELVES -- PRAY FOR GOD TO GIVE YOU THAT RIGHT MIXTURE OF RIGHTEOUS ANGER AND INDIGNATION without, of course, HATING anyone -- and really let a POWERFUL sermon come on the subject of stealing, and handling money.

Mr. Portune is preparing recommendations on what sort of collection box should be utilized by the local Pastors for the convenience of the members -- and here, again, is where you must emphasize the need for each member to make out a check, or a money order! ~~CASH IS TOO TEMPTING~~ -- even to potential thieves among the teen-agers, or perhaps even a Deacon (there have been some, in the past, who have stolen -- and let's not forget the shocking discovery of several of the "leading ones" who were found to be STEALING GOD'S TITHES BY WITHHOLDING THEM!) here and there in a local congregation!

THIS IS TOO IMPORTANT FOR THE PASTOR IN CHARGE TO EVER, EVER TURN OVER TO A TRUSTED FRIEND, OR A DEACON! This must be handled by YOU, personally!

You shall have NO FEAR of being robbed, or running any security risk whatever, if the members will cooperate by making out a CHECK or MONEY ORDER, in place of using cash!

All Ministers in the United States
February 17, 1970

Page 4

Obviously, that is the real CRUX of the whole thing! The thieves out here could not have possibly gotten any gain from checks and money orders made out to Herbert W. Armstrong -- we're just too well-known for that -- so, obviously, those checks and money orders were just destroyed. The members probably didn't even know the money stayed right in their own accounts -- or that the Post Office ended up with it if it had been a money order.

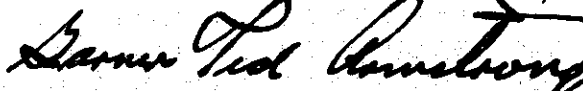
Well, that's about it. My father's letter will no doubt explain more -- and Mr. Meredith will be sending any additional instructions or answers to questions which might come up. Mr. Wilson has been very helpful in his suggestions, and has been working for a long time to come up with some method of thwarting these thieves. As you may know, we have had the same type of situation even in Australia.

Of course, the devastating thing in it is the LOSS OF CONFIDENCE that would occur, if all our CO-WORKERS and REGULARS became AFRAID to send in any offerings to the Work! That would be DISASTROUS!

So handle this as a TOP-SECRET CAMPAIGN AMONG OURSELVES -- OUR OWN BRETHREN -- TO THWART THESE FILTHY CROOKS LYING IN WAIT TO STEAL! But DO NOT advertize the fact -- and please instruct the Brethren NOT TO TALK ABOUT THE SITUATION TO OTHERS!

You'll be hearing more, very soon.

In Jesus Christ's service,



Garner Ted Armstrong

INTER-OFFICE

To: Mr. Ted Armstrong

Date: February 4, 1970

Department:

Subject: Mail Theft

From: John Wilson

Mail theft is a growing problem and presents an increasing threat to the income of the Work. Large sums of money are being lost to postal thieves each year.

① ✓ In December 1968 a postal employee was apprehended at Worldway Air Terminal in Los Angeles who was taking approximately 50 letters per night. It was later determined that this man had been operating in that manner throughout all the year 1968. In 1969 two individuals were apprehended on separate accounts for stealing mail here in the Pasadena Post Office. In each case our mail was the principle target. At this writing the postal inspectors are trying to apprehend an individual in the local area who is known to be taking letters from our mail. With the growing tendency to crime in the United States, this type of thing is bound to continue.

We have compiled information regarding losses reported to us, plus information showing that only a fraction of the losses are actually reported. This indicates we are losing anywhere from 600,000 to 1,000,000 dollars or more a year from thievery.

Since 70% of the income for God's Work comes from members, we should be able to exercise control over this situation. We need to instruct members about the importance of following through after they send a contribution to make sure it has reached our office. Members need to be more diligent in balancing their personal bank accounts to determine when a check has been lost and not negotiated. Most members do not send cash, but those who do should be encouraged to use checks or money orders if at all possible.

The members could be advised of this problem through an article in The GOOD NEWS. Definite instructions could be given them on how to send their tithe and how to follow through and make sure we did receive it. To a lesser degree, all members and co-workers could be advised of the problem through a Co-Worker Letter.

It may come to the point we will want to resort to having the members turn in their tithes to the local minister and have him forward it on to Headquarters by registered mail. Registered mail is still relatively safe. We have no record of ever losing a package of money sent to us in this manner by the local minister on Holy Days.

This would completely change the pattern of our daily income, but should insure all the money reaching us without having to cope with mail thieves. It

would also mean that our regular mail income through the postal service would be less tempting to thieves because very little money would actually be coming in the letters we would receive.

One other possibility would be to vary the address to which tithes could be sent. Other names could be used, such as Gene Michel, Bob Seelig, etc. We could use Box 1030, Bin 7, etc.

MONEY LOST IN MAIL

It is common knowledge in the postal system that mail addressed to Mr. H. W. Armstrong contains money--a lot of it. Because of this, we have evidence that the Work may have lost from 600,000 to 1,000,000 dollars to mail thieves last year.

Our actual reported loss was \$67,418. However, this is probably only the tip of the iceberg.

Mail Department records indicate that few people ever bother to follow through to see if their contributions reach us safely even after they do not receive a receipt. The figure could be from 1 out of 10 to 1 out of 20.

✓ Example 1:

Last July a group of our letters was sent accidentally by the post office to the Allstate Insurance Company in Pasadena. It was two months before the letters found their way back to us. Twenty-three of these letters contained money. Only ONE person out of these 23 asked if we received his tithes.

Our records show that nearly all inquiries about lost money come within two months time.

2 ✓ Example 2:

In 1962 a mail thief in the Pasadena Post Office was stealing mail addressed to Mr. Armstrong. We feel he was taking hundreds of letters at a time. He had 13 bundles (about 1,300 letters) in his possession when he was apprehended. Our daily letter records indicate that we lost a minimum of 1,000 to 1,400 letters containing money to this man. The actual figure is probably higher.

Five months after this man was caught, only 65 people who had money received a receipt had asked if we had received their contributions. Again -- 1 out of 10 to 1 out of 14 inquired about lost money.

Estimate losses for 1969 if:

1 out of 10 inquired - \$674,418

1 out of 20 inquired - \$1,348,926

We have letters on record that show many people assume their contributions reach us and never notice missing checks. Apparently, many people do not balance their checkbooks. The amount of undetected lost mail indicates this, not to mention the number of rubber checks we receive (\$71,000 in 1969).

Approximately 70% of the income to God's Work comes from members. Over 95% of this comes in the form of checks and money orders. Therefore,

most money lost in the mail from members is recoverable if the person knows it is lost. Otherwise, the money stays in the bank or fattens the account of the company issuing the money order.

~~The members assume their responsibility ceases when they drop their tithe in the mailbox. But this is not the case.~~

If you owe the electric company \$20.00 and your check is lost or stolen in the mail, the electric company will notify you that you have not paid the bill. And you haven't; the money is still in your bank account. Apparently, many tithe payers do not consider their tithes in the same light. Much of the responsibility to insure that contributions reach headquarters safely is on the shoulders of the members because we do not know when and what he is going to send. We can't send him an overdue notice like the electric company.

~~WE FEEL THE MEMBERS NEED TO BE EDUCATED TO THEIR FULL RESPONSIBILITIES OF PAYING TITHES. THEIR RESPONSIBILITY DOES NOT CEASE UNTIL THEY KNOW WE HAVE RECEIVED THEIR MONEY.~~

HOW THE DONORS CAN KNOW

Our members need to be instructed to carefully watch their receipts to be certain that every donation reaches us. If he doesn't have a receipt in four weeks or less, he should immediately check with us to see if our records show receipt of his tithe. If we do not have a record of the contribution, we will instruct him to check with his bank or post office (if it was a postal money order) to see if the check or money order was negotiated. If it hasn't been, he can then issue a stop payment order and send another check or have his money order replaced.

Each tithe payer should keep his own records of what he sends and when he mails it. Receipts should be closely checked with his own records so that missing receipts are obvious. This is the tithe payer's responsibility.

Another necessary precaution is to balance the personal checking account as soon as the bank statement is received. Doing this immediately would show missing checks. Apparently, many people do not balance their statements as statistics and example letters we have on file seem to reveal.

We have actual letters on file that demonstrate negligence of members of the Church of God in paying their tithe.