

WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD
WORLD HEADQUARTERS
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG
PRESIDENT and PASTOR

March 20, 1970

Dear Brethren of God's Church:

GREETINGS in the service of the living Christ! By now, most of you have heard, through your local pastors, of the shocking loss to God's Work by mail thefts.

I do not want to give the impression that the United States mails are unsafe. I'm sure they ARE safe under all ordinary circumstances. But in our case the circumstances have been different. We at Headquarters are by far the largest customer of the Pasadena Post Office. We receive around 150,000 letters monthly -- averaging 5,000 or more per day, seven days a week. All tithe and offering funds have come in these letters. Certain employees in the postal service -- possibly in Pasadena, possibly in Los Angeles channels through which mail flows from trains and airport to Pasadena -- long ago became aware that our heavy mail contains MONEY. The very FACT of the mail being so heavy tempts a thief to believe he can take a couple hundred letters or so UNNOTICED.

There have been several cases of thefts from our mail in the past few years. And, as crime and immorality have increased, so have thefts of our mail bags. Postal authorities have done their best to stop this. They have repeatedly set traps, and have actually caught the guilty employees on two or three occasions. They are, I understand, now in the penitentiary.

But in most cases the thief has not been caught. We have ways of getting a fairly close estimate on the amount of God's money stolen. This has been tabulated and figured through our giant computer. The facts indicate the amount stolen may have reached upwards of a million dollars a year! That amount of loss would pay for getting the Gospel out to ADDITIONAL MILLIONS of people.

This is no little or small matter. WE MUST TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO STOP THIS LOSS! I know you will all cooperate completely.

BUT, there is a very real possibility of YET ADDITIONAL DAMAGE to God's Work. IF many of you have been made fearful of sending in tithes and offerings through the mails because of the announcements made by your local pastors, IF you have been simply hanging on to God's tithe and your offerings, waiting for future direction, THIS COULD HARM THE WORK GREATLY.

We cannot "WAIT" until the Work of the living GOD stops! I am putting a new plan into effect IMMEDIATELY -- as of NOW! We are beginning a Church-wide plan immediately -- AS OF NOW! -- to THWART these lurking criminals. Read carefully -- HERE IS THE PLAN:

1) As often as possible, send ONLY checks or money

orders. If unable, do not hold money back -- better

send cash than hold it back -- but where possible

without delay send check or money order.

2) Make them out, just as in the past, to Herbert W.

Armstrong, or Worldwide Church of God, or Ambassador

College.

3) Place these in one of our self-addressed envelopes,
and SEAL, just as before.

4) Instead of mailing the letter, take it to church
and hand it to your local pastor. Everything JUST AS
BEFORE, except hand it to your local pastor instead of
mailing it.

That is all YOU DO!

Your pastor then will put all these SEALED envelopes into ONE PACKAGE, and HE will then mail them. But not as they have been mailed in the past. We are selecting a number of DIFFERENT mailing addresses. For the first FEW weeks, they will be addressed to one of our top officials at Headquarters, personally, in HIS name, and at his address -- probably at another town in the Los Angeles area, where the packages will be promptly called for and brought to the Headquarters office. After a few weeks, they will go to a different name and a different address. Before any dishonest postal clerks get on to one of these, the address will be changed. All this, of course, WE at Headquarters will plan with your local pastors.

So all YOU do is, try to send the money in form of check or money order, and instead of mailing, hand it sealed -- WITHOUT a stamp -- (this saves you the postage) -- to your local pastor. He will send the package, registered and insured, to the address we give him.

Of course Co-Workers who are NOT members will continue sending their offerings just as before. OR, we may have them send to one or two other addresses -- but that will not affect what you do.

BY THIS PLAN WE BELIEVE WE CAN STOP 90 % OR MORE of the loss by theft. In time the few thieves still at large will learn there is so LITTLE money in the mail that comes to Box 111, Pasadena, that they will consider it is NOT WORTH THE RISK OF GETTING CAUGHT to steal any more from our mail.

Now ONE THING MORE!

When these thieves have stolen our mail, they take out ONLY the CASH. The money sent in checks and money orders they probably tear up or burn. It is TOO RISKY for them to try to forge my name, or that of the Church or the College. We are too well known now, and they would almost surely be caught and arrested if they tried to cash such checks or money orders.

So WHAT HAPPENS? Read this carefully!

In such a case -- IF they stole YOUR letter, and you sent a check -- YOU probably thought that when you mailed your tithe check you HAD PAID YOUR TITHE. But you have not paid your tithe really until it reaches God's Headquarters. The thief tore up or burned your check. He did not get the money. We did not receive it. YOU STILL HAVE IT, for the money is STILL in your account at your bank. And SO MANY of our members do NOT budget their money, or keep careful records, or check over their bank statements carefully, and they may never KNOW that they still have that tithe money in their bank.

OR, if you sent a money order, and the thief got it and destroyed it, then YOU lose it, WE never receive it, the thief does not get it -- but the money remains in the post office or bank where you bought the money order.

Now if you check over your cancelled vouchers returned to you monthly from your bank, you will discover this. And, if you check carefully to see whether you receive a RECEIPT from us, and when the receipt does not arrive you write us about it, then we can DISCOVER the loss and trace it down.

So LEARN TO BUDGET your own personal and family finances. CHECK these things carefully. WATCH for a receipt from us after you send tithes and offerings.

Finally -- AVOID DISCUSSING THIS WITH OUTSIDERS! It is NOT a topic for conversation or gossip with others --

especially outsiders. We do NOT want to cause anyone to distrust the United States or Canadian mails. Such thefts are a VERY small percent. Probably most people would never have a letter stolen in a lifetime. In our case, it was DIFFERENT. We receive such a HUGE VOLUME of mail, and some mail clerks have learned that there is money in many of the letters. So they have tried to steal our mail, where they never would ordinary mail.

Never, however, have we lost any money when it was registered or insured. But, with our new plan you do not need do that -- your local minister will register and insure ONE PACKAGE for ALL the letters from your local congregation.

Brethren, the Work is in great need right now. We are having to issue The PLAIN TRUTH and also TOMORROW' S WORLD only every other month for a while. We are cutting down MANY radio stations to one broadcast a week. But all major stations will continue as they have been. We are putting our airplanes, seriously NEEDED for the expansion of this Work, on the market and looking for buyers. We are reducing all evangelist-rank ministers' salaries by 20%, and pastor-rank ministers' 15%, and also many department heads. The Country HAS BEEN in a financial recession, and we are making these very stringent changes to keep this great Work alive -- and GROWING! With the planes gone, my son Garner Ted and I will NOT be able to speak at EVERY ONE of the Feast sites at this year's Feast-of-Tabernacles. Probably each of us will appear at only TWO sites. We have had to cancel out the SUMMER EDUCATIONAL program for high-school-age young people.

I think there are enough signs and assurances to warrant belief that national conditions are beginning on the upswing. But this ought to MAKE PLAIN to you THE NEED FOR THE WORK OF GOD at this hour. We whom God has put in the chief offices in His Work are making every possible sacrifice, setting you an example.

With deep LOVE, in Jesus' name,

Herbert W. Armstrong