

# News of the Work

## 3 MILLION LETTERS Here's How We Handle Each One Personally!

**M**ULTIPLE thousands of letters pour in daily to Ambassador College! In fact, response to *The World Tomorrow* program (and Ambassador's mass-circulation advertising) brought a deluge of nearly three million letters last year, just in the United States alone. That was a half-million letters more than the previous year — and mail response continues to grow!

Who reads and answers all those letters? What is involved in processing so much mail?

### To Begin With . . .

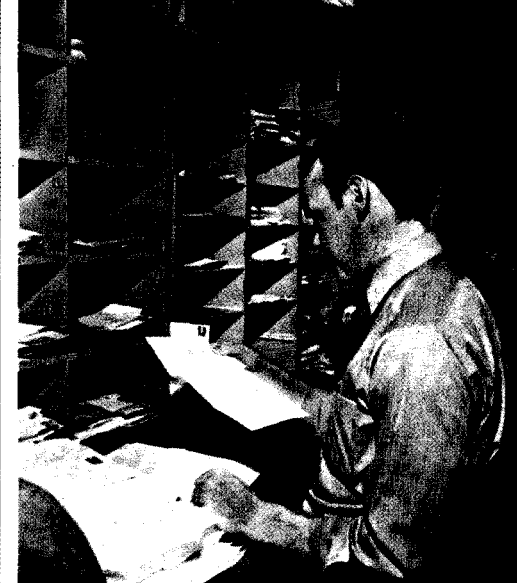
It takes many people, and much equipment, time and training. The huge influx of mail long ago grew to the point that Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong and Mr. Garner Ted Armstrong were no longer able to answer all mail addressed to them. For that reason, they set up a personal staff — directly responsible to

them — to read and answer their letters. Over 150 people are needed to do the job, about half of whom are Ambassador College students.

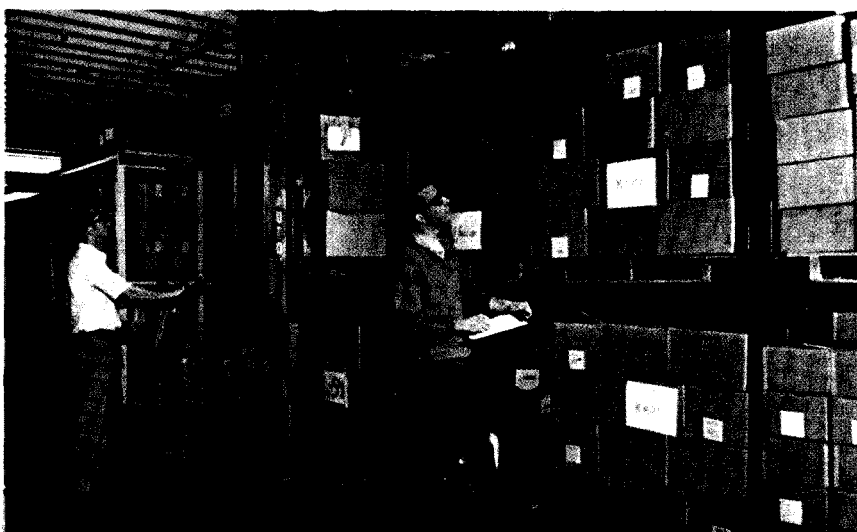
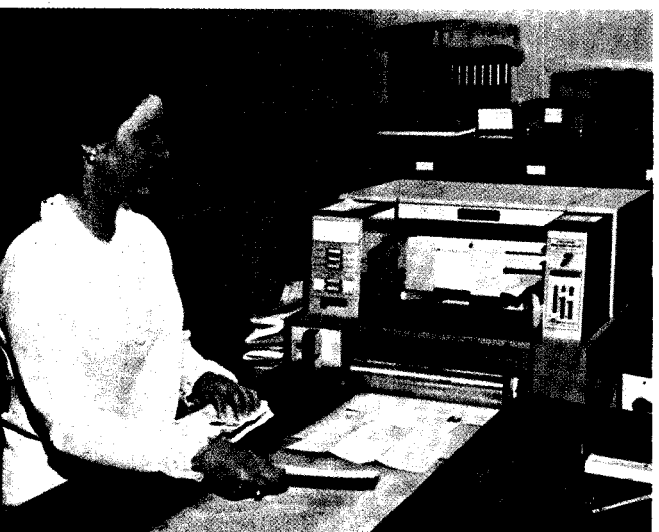
That's in the United States alone. Other smaller staffs in England, Australia, and our other offices around the world do a similar job, varying only in detail. This article will focus in on our Headquarters office in Pasadena — to give a basic, general picture of what goes on in all our offices.

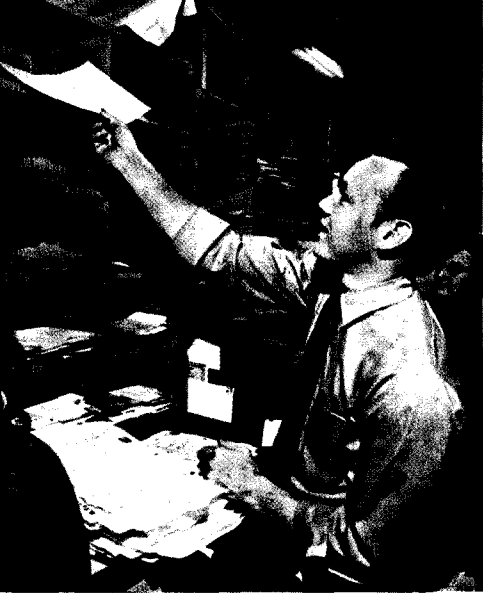
The 7-8,000 letters a day come in for many different reasons and purposes. Some write in to request a reprint article they read about in *The Plain Truth* or *Tomorrow's World*. Others want a booklet they heard announced on the broadcast. Some are moving — and need their mailing addresses changed. Still others might have questions they

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photos on pages 36 and 37)*

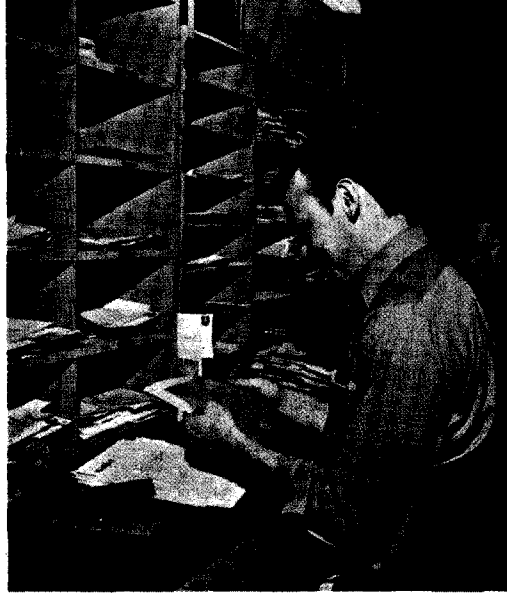


Each letter must be examined ... .. and placed in the proper category ... .. in a never-ending process .

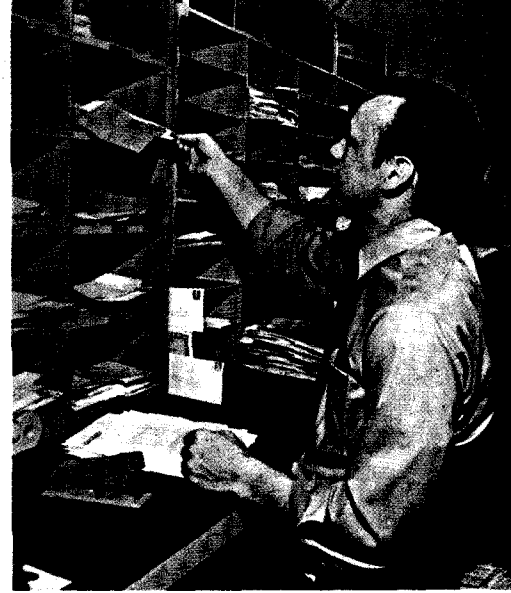




... which continues to grow ...



... at a rapid rate ...

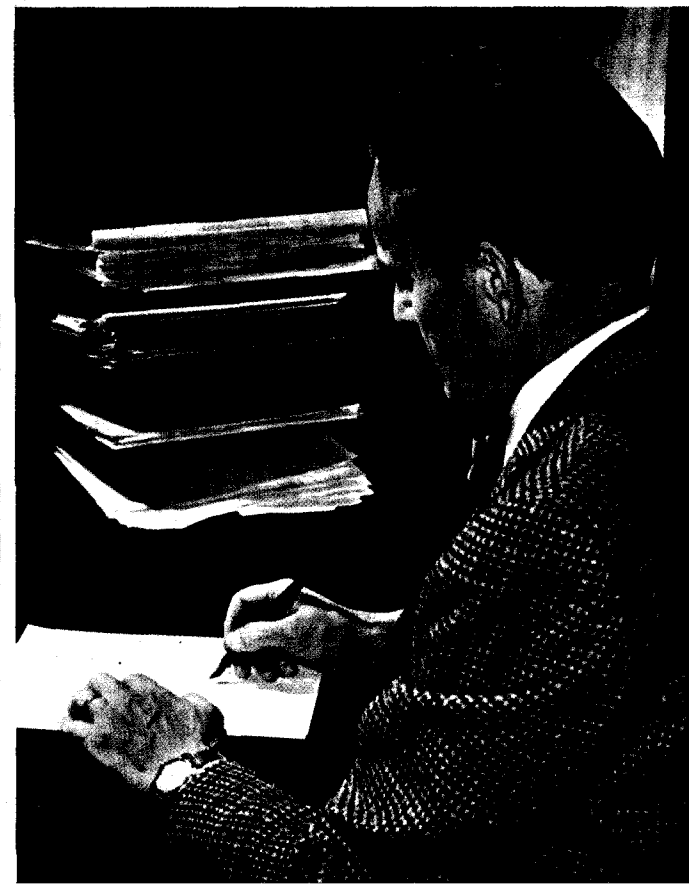
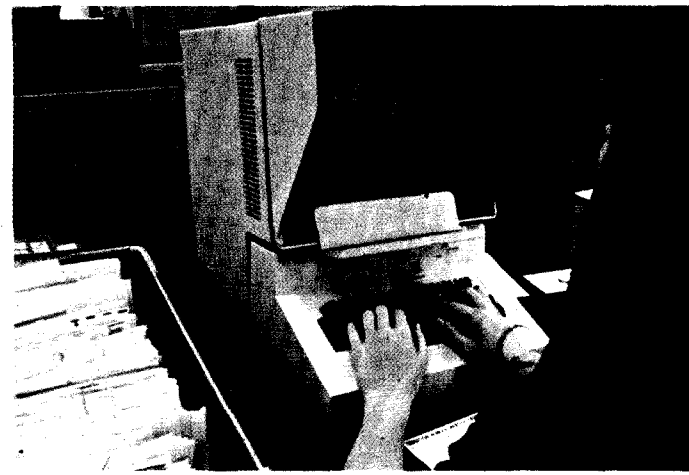


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Above left: The terminal section processes thousands of requests daily. Extreme left: Many letters we receive are placed on microfilm. Left: Mailing warehouse is filled with millions of pieces of literature. Above right: A terminal operator enters some information into the computer. Below right: Letters requiring a lengthier reply are answered by our Personal Correspondents.

need answered, or comments to make. Then there is Co-Worker mail, requests for personal counsel and many other individual requests that require immediate and personal attention.

So the first thing is to open and date the mail, and sort it into various categories. The mail must be organized, divided, and broken down — and sent to the right places, to be read and processed one letter at a time.

### Terminals

The record of names and addresses of all those who regularly subscribe to Ambassador College publications is maintained in our computer. For that reason, most of the mail will at some point be processed through terminals.

What is a terminal? "Terminal" is short for "2260 IBM Inquiry Terminal." A terminal looks essentially like a typewriter keyboard with a television screen on top of it. Terminals are used to get information from, or record information in, our computer. (All information in our computer is held *highly confidential*. Only those specifically designated to do so are allowed to operate, or obtain information from, the terminals.)

So it is through terminals that the operators keep the computer files up-to-date. Mail requests for changes of address will be made. (About 20,000 such changes are made every month!) All new subscriptions to *The PLAIN TRUTH*, *TOMORROW'S WORLD*, and *The Correspondence Course* must be added to the files, and all donations must be accurately recorded.

Also, all literature and publication requests will be entered into the computer, which then prints the mailing labels. Requests for individual booklets, reprint articles, etc., are entered into the computer bank throughout the day. Then overnight the Data Processing Center operates the computer to process these requests, and to print out the mailing labels for the envelopes.

The computer not only prints the address labels for literature requests, but also groups together all envelopes requiring the same combinations of literature. For example, in any one day there might be several dozen people who request the crime booklet and the

pollution booklet together — and no other literature. The computer will group the address labels of these people together — making the job of the persons inserting literature into the envelopes much easier, allowing us to take advantage of postal discounts, and making the entire mailing process more efficient.

### Individual Concern

Some of the mail can be handled almost entirely through terminals, especially those letters requesting just a specific booklet or reprint article. Each of these requests is given individual, personal attention and care — by a *human* being concerned with the human product — with people's lives!

Besides these letters there are many others who write in, asking questions, or wanting advice and help with their problems. These letters are *carefully* and *thoughtfully* read by our Personal Correspondents. If the question has to do with the understanding of a scripture or of Biblical doctrine, then printed literature which contains the needed information is sent to answer.

But if the letter needs a personal answer, then our Personal Correspondents write a private letter.

Letters from all over the United States contain requests for a personal, private appointment with one of our representatives. These letters are promptly dispatched to the respective men, who are stationed in various parts of the United States.

### Outgoing Mail

Others are responsible for mailing out the booklets, reprint articles, *Correspondence Course*, Co-Worker letters, semi-annual letters, donation receipts, renewal letters, and on and on. (*The PLAIN TRUTH* and *TOMORROW'S WORLD* are mailed out directly from the Ambassador College Press.)

We have in recent years acquired various automated devices to accelerate this operation. There are four automatic inserters, inserting, in the case of the high-speed Philipsburg, 10,000 letters per hour at maximum speed! Cheshire labelers are also being used, capable of affixing mailing labels on up to 27,000 envelopes per hour.

Once the literature is inserted and the

mailing labels glued on the envelopes, the mail is sorted by ZIP code and bagged before going to the post office. This facilitates its movement through the postal system and hastens its delivery.

Still others must take care of the storage and restocking of all printed items — quite a job in itself. In illustration, there might be in stock at any one time over a million booklets in over fifty titles and half-million reprints in over 130 titles. There might also be a million lessons and tests of the *Correspondence Course* — and several million envelopes of many different types!

There are people who tabulate mail response to *The WORLD TOMORROW*, which goes out over 460 different radio stations worldwide. We're very concerned with the effectiveness of each of our radio stations — to ensure that every Co-Worker dollar is spent properly. Each station is analyzed by its mail response to determine whether it effectively reaches the most people at the right time.

Others handle telephone requests for literature and pass on letters to the Editor with specific comments of interest to the Editorial staff.

And there are many other jobs too — all necessary, all vital in reaping the harvest God gives His Work (Luke 10:2). For that's how God describes the process of the Gospel message, that "as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*" (Isa. 55:10-11). God's Word goes out over *The WORLD TOMORROW* broadcast.

And last year the harvest from that Word included over three million letters. Handling that harvest could *not* be done without the many dedicated men and women in offices around this world — with Co-Worker support, Ambassador training, and the best modern machinery — who labor in this area of God's Work!