



Back in the Spring of 2004, e-watchman launched a massive mailing campaign of [an open letter to Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower Society](#); laying bare the facts regarding the Watchtower's ten-year partnership with the United Nations as an affiliated NGO. With the help of a private printing and distribution company the letter was mailed to virtually every kingdom hall in the United States and Canada, as well as some congregations in Australia and Great Britain, amounting to over 7,000 letters. (There are over 12,000 congregations in the United States but many share the same kingdom hall.)

In response to that mailing and subsequently other less widely distributed mailings since then, what has been the organization's response? As incredible as it may seem, it appears as if the leadership of Jehovah's Witnesses are quietly taking the drastic step of removing the mail boxes from hundreds of kingdom halls.

That is apparent in light of the fact that in the original mail-out in 2004, I received back approximately 50-60 letters – roughly 1% of the total sent. (A lot of the returned mail then was due to an out-of-date mailing list.) In last year's mail-out of the open letter entitled [A Conspiracy of Silence, Soon to End](#), using the [Superpages](#) listings, there were approximately 20-25% returned. However, after nearly sending 1,000 of this year's [After the Watchtower](#) open letter it appears to be on pace to exceed 25% returned.

Mind you, in most cases the letters were not marked simply 'return to sender' by the addressee, which would indicate that the kingdom hall at least acknowledged the receipt of the letter but declined to accept it. No, most of the letters have been returned marked by the post office as undeliverable due to no mail receptacle at the respective kingdom hall. And not only are there no receptacles available for the post, but there are not even any forwarding addresses on file at the local post offices! So the postal notice reads **RETURN TO SENDER, NO MAIL RECEPTACLE, UNABLE TO FORWARD.**

It seems if the congregations were merely implementing a new “arrangement” for receiving mail, for whatever reason, then they would at least leave a forwarding address with the post office to ensure that no mail would be lost. Clearly, the intent is to make the congregations inaccessible by mail.

It appears as if the elders in small towns and in rural areas where just one congregation uses the kingdom hall are more inclined to remove their mailbox. On the other hand, kingdom halls in large cities with multiple congregations seem less inclined to shut off the mail. For example, nearly all of the kingdom halls in the sparsely populated state of Arizona – except those in Phoenix – have pulled their mailboxes from the premises.

The question is – What is going on?

Evidently each congregation now has all of the Society’s correspondence, as well as local mail such as utility bills and the like, mailed directly to the home of one of the congregation’s elders, instead of directly to the kingdom hall. Or, a congregation may use a postal box. At any rate, the congregation’s mailing address is strictly kept private so that the congregation can only receive mail from those entities and individuals who happen to be privy to the secret address.

But how are persons in the community supposed to contact the congregation? In short, they’re not. Anyone who wishes to communicate with the local congregation would have to make a personal visit to the kingdom hall during meeting hours, or place a phone call to the kingdom hall on the odd chance that someone might be there to answer. This means that interested persons in the congregation’s territory can no longer even send a letter to the kingdom hall in their area requesting a minister to visit their home, or as is more common – requesting that Jehovah’s Witnesses *not* visit their home.

But why are the congregations taking the drastic step of making themselves inaccessible by mail? This growing trend seems to be a direct response to the challenge e-watchman’s open letter campaigns have presented to the congregation elders. ([Silentlamb](#)s may be also using the U.S. mail to contact congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses.)

It has come into the public's awareness that the Watchtower Society is terrified of the Internet and strongly discourages Jehovah’s Witnesses from using it, for obvious reasons. And no doubt the vast majority of Jehovah’s Witnesses are obedient to Bethel’s dictates on the matter. But the fact that the writings of e-watchman are not confined to the Internet but may occasionally show up in the kingdom hall mailbox evidently is viewed by some bodies of elders as a grave threat to their spiritual security, sufficient enough to warrant the removal of their kingdom hall’s mailbox organization-wide in response! But why not simply toss unwanted mail in the trash like millions of householders do when they receive junk mail? It seems absolutely crazy to instead remove the mailbox from the premises.

While the reason for disappearing mailboxes at Kingdom Halls has yet to come to light, it is a known fact that congregations do not decide for themselves operational policies, but rather take their direction from Bethel—usually through the circuit overseers, leaving one to conclude that the removal may be part of a gradual, persistent process that will affect Kingdom Halls throughout the entire organization in an attempt to prevent 'apostates' from contacting elders.

This way, the shift in policy is less likely to draw the attention of congregational members, interested ones, or anyone else.

At any rate, the hypocrisy on the part of the leadership of the Watchtower Society is palpable; considering that Jehovah's Witnesses not only make uninvited and often unwelcome visits to homes in their area, but when householders cannot be found at home, or perhaps if they live in gated communities or are otherwise inaccessible to personal visits, the Watchtower Society has encouraged Jehovah's Witnesses to write a personal letter or even make a phone call to the household. Yet, if the householder wished to write the local kingdom hall, there is a high probability that their letters will wind up back in their own mailbox marked as "undeliverable."

Over the years the e-watchman [mailbag](#) has received emails asking why most kingdom halls do not have windows. I have always assumed that it was in order to prevent vandalism. But, windowless kingdom halls seem to aptly typify the prevailing mentality of Jehovah's Witnesses, in that, more and more the organization appears to be intent on shuttering itself from the outside world. Sadly, instead of asking why kingdom halls have no windows, now the question Jehovah's Witnesses ought to be considering is why many kingdom halls no longer have mailboxes.