

January 2018

It was right there on the front sidewalk as I left the grocery store. A penny. A copper. One red cent. While it may have looked shiny and red when it was minted back in 1996, today it was dark and tarnished from years of use and handling by who-knows-how-many people here in Texas and beyond.

The first one-cent coin in the United States was produced in 1787. It's the very first piece of currency to be authorized by the U.S. and the initial design was created by Benjamin Franklin. Paul Revere provided some of the copper for those new coins but, over time, tin, nickel and zinc also have been used in their composition.

The Flying Eagle Cent was put into brief circulation in 1856, followed by the Indian Head Cent in 1859. A milestone was reached in 1909 with the debut of the Lincoln Penny. It was the first coin with the image of a historical figure and also the very first to bear the familiar inscription, "In God We Trust."

In 2009, the government approved new Lincoln pennies commemorating both the 200th birthday of our 16th president and the 100th anniversary of the original coin that bore his portrait. Four different images adorn the back of the coin series showing Mr. Lincoln's progression from his boyhood in Illinois to the presidency.

One of the byproducts of the new penny design was a greater awareness of the coin. As one commentary noted, the launch of a new design creates a "frenzy of excitement."

While a coin on the sidewalk, or one in the pocket, may not get your heart pounding, we get pretty excited about pennies here at Mission:Dignity. The retired pastors and widows we assist often tell stories about how they have to pinch pennies just to make it through the month. One widow wrote on a recent application for assistance,

I use every penny of my monthly Social security income and leave only a dollar in my checking account to keep it open. I cannot tell you how stressful it is for me to be in this situation financially for the first time ever in my life. But, somehow, God is faithful

to see me through...one day at a time. My faith has never faltered through these challenging past seven years. However, I would welcome the slightest relief or assistance financially. I am thankful to say that no matter my circumstances, God is my Source and He gives me strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

We also like to remind our donors that 100% of the gift you shared this month — yes, every penny — will be used for grant assistance to nearly 1,800 aged preachers, workers and their widows with not one red cent taken out for any operating costs of the program.

Thank you for being part of our Mission:Dignity family and for extending care and compassion to some well-worn, but very valuable, servants of the Lord who, much like a penny on the sidewalk, are often overlooked. Because you give, they don't have to pinch quite as many pennies each month and they have a calm assurance of the provision of a loving Father through the faithfulness of brothers and sisters in Christ like you.

And that makes perfect cents!

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ambra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "A".

John Ambra
Director of Development