

TO UPLIFT CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN



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Internet marketing expands publishing outreach

Nampa, Idaho (October 16, 2000) "I would love to shop at the Adventist Book Center, but it's 150 miles away from where I live!" says a pastor's wife from Virginia.

"My ABC is always closed when I get off duty," complains a nurse from Pennsylvania.

These statements have often been heard among Adventists, but fortunately, they no longer have to be true. The Internet has made the ABC truly local, available wherever there's a computer, open any time.

Begun in 1998, adventistbookcenter.com is a full-service, secure e-commerce website, offering books from the Review and Herald and Pacific Press, as well as a full line of Chapel Music. It's unique in that all the orders received by the site are forwarded to the nearest Adventist Book Center for fulfillment. That means orders that come from the local Union are filled by local Union ABCs, thus combining Internet convenience with the personal service you've come to expect from your local ABC.

"This website expands our ability to serve our customers with excellence," says Clyde Kinder, manager of the new state-of-the-art Potomac Adventist Book and Health Food Center in Silver Spring, MD. Now, in addition to providing the best possible shopping experience for our walk-in customers of all faiths, and filling their telephone, fax, and mail-in orders, we can reach out to many more customers, both church members and non-church members, through the internet."

Visitors to the site can do much more than order products. They can send free virtual Christian greeting cards or floral bouquets, read sample chapters of hundreds of books, listen to samples of Chapel Music, or consult a store locator for the phone number or directions to the ABC nearest them.

Here's an e-mail recently received by the website: "Having the ABC online is such a blessing! I was in great spiritual difficulty, and while discussing my problems with our pastor, he started quoting just the words of encouragement I needed from one of Ellen White's books. And while he was reading from the book, I was ordering it online from adventistbookcenter.com! God bless you and support you for bringing this wonderful service to the world!"

Cobbling together this online network of ABCs and publishers hasn't been easy. Think of thousands of individual products, more than 50 Adventist Book Centers in NAD, and hundreds of orders every day, and you begin to get a sense of the complexity. Add to that the fact that the web is global, with orders coming in from all over the world, and the problem grows. The website has formed fulfillment

partnerships with SDA publishers and book centers worldwide, including Stanborough Press in England, Signs Publishing in Australia, and Southern Publishing in South Africa. For overseas orders received from areas not covered by an overseas ABC or publishing house, NAD ABCs have volunteered to provide the service. As more overseas ABCs join the online system, adventistbookcenter.com will be able to provide more local service to its customers outside the US and Canada.

Adventist Book Centers aren't automatically participants in the website. All participating ABCs have signed a contract, agreeing to meet specific customer service standards, including a 24-hour turn-around time for all in-stock items. The publishing houses have agreed to the same short turn-around for items that have to be drop-shipped direct from their warehouses. All this is designed to provide the level of customer service Internet customers have come to expect. While the system isn't perfect yet, a recent survey showed that more than 90% of the website's customers are "very satisfied" with the service they received, and plan to use adventistbookcenter.com again.

The website is currently sponsored and maintained by Pacific Press and the Review and Herald as a service to Adventist Book Centers and their customers. Pacific Press has pioneered this web venture, and was pleased when the Review and Herald agreed to partner with them in it. Similarly, the Review and Herald has recently launched a new website called thebiblestory.com, which features books and other products customarily sold by literature evangelists. Pacific Press has agreed to partner with the Review on this project, and the site features products from both publishers. The site is designed to generate leads, which are then forwarded to LEs in the territories where the leads originated.

Churches and church-related organizations with their own websites are invited to place a hyperlink on their sites, connecting to either adventistbookcenter.com or thebiblestory.com, or both. What better way to expand your ministry than by offering the world the opportunity to learn more about the many excellent books and other products that come from our church presses.

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