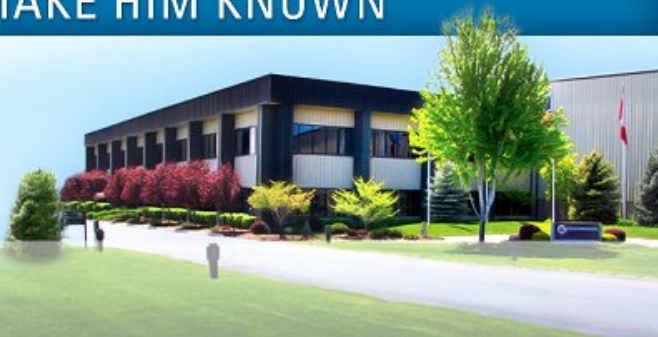


TO UPLIFT CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN



Media Release ▶ Pacificpress.com



Printer's ink and veggie burgers: Adventist memories

Nampa, Idaho (March 27, 2001) Red plastic purse in hand, I eagerly pushed open the door of the Chesapeake camp meeting Book and Bible House. Inside, the store was dim after the bright summer sunshine outdoors, and I stood for a moment while my eyes adjusted, breathing in the exciting bookstore smells—new pencils, and paper and ink, overlaid with the scent of frying veggie burger from the back of the store where the snack bar was located.

Quickly I walked past rows of wonderful things, pencils that said "Jesus Loves Me" and wrote in three colors, rulers with the Golden Rule printed on them in real gold, bookmarks with silky tassels, and tiny Bibles with words inside too small to read. Usually these things tempted me to stop and gaze at them longingly. But that day I gave them only a glance. There would be time for window-shopping later. That day, I was on a mission. Fingering the nickels, dimes and quarters inside my red purse, money I had been saving up all year, I headed right for the books.

I was nine years old that day, the first day of camp meeting, and I bought a book—the first book I'd ever bought with my very own money. The book was *His Messenger*, by Ruth Wheeler, a little red volume on the life of Ellen White, written for young people. As I hold that book in my hands today, I can remember that purchase as though it were yesterday.

For me, being Adventist has always been closely tied to a love of Adventist books. My parents, former Catholics, became Adventists when I was six because my dad read *The Great Controversy*—followed by Bible studies with the literature evangelist who sold him the book. And then he became an LE himself. Convinced of the truth by an inspired book, and nurtured in their growing faith by many more such books, my parents instilled in their children a deep love for the printed word, and Adventist books were always given honored places in our home.

When I was a kid, shopping in the camp meeting bookstore formed a big part of the excitement of camp meeting. Not that camp meeting was without other charms—we looked forward to it all year. Mom would wash and iron for weeks, packing the clothes for my brothers and sister and me into a special chest of drawers brought in from the barn and used only for camp meeting. The ice box, solid oak, lead-lined and adorned with shiny brass hardware, was also rescued from its winter hibernation and polished up for the trip. We went to camp meeting in style! But the bookstore was a high point. Living in the

country, hundreds of miles from the conference office, we kids saved up all year for books that would have to last us all the next year.

Today's Adventists have it much better than we did. True, for some our Adventist Book Center may still be many miles away. But thanks to such things as toll-free phone numbers, catalogs, advertising, bookmobiles, the internet, and a very good shipping service in every ABC, we don't have to wait a whole year to experience the best that Adventist publishing has to offer, and to purchase materials to share with our friends and neighbors.

Sometimes it is easy to take these extraordinary blessings for granted. We are all aware that our church has a rich and varied publishing history, beginning when an angel first told the young Ellen Harmon, "Write the things that are revealed to you." With her trembling right hand, weakened from a childhood accident, Ellen took up a pen and slowly began to write. God gave her strength, and soon detailed accounts of visions and letters of guidance for church leaders flowed from her pen. These handwritten messages were laboriously hand-copied over and over again by the early believers, and passed along from member to member.

Later, Ellen White was given another vision, after which she told her husband, James, "I have a message for you. You must begin to print a little paper, and send it out to the people." "From this small beginning," she said, "it was shown to me to be like streams of light that went clear round the world."

What rejoicing there must have been when the first copy of Present Truth was brought home from the printers! According to the account in His Messenger, the first thousand copies were laid on the floor, and everyone in the house gathered around to see the new paper. Then they all knelt on the floor around those copies and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving that the truth was in print at last.

Today, just as the angel said, there are Adventist publishing houses all around the world. In our own division, the products of the Pacific Press and the Review and Herald all flow from that same small beginning. For instance, a recent new product from Pacific Press, a 32-page booklet entitled The Rapture, A Second Look, is a direct descendent of James White's first issue of Present Truth. A special supplement of Signs of the Times, it is designed to bring the true message of God for the end times to people who need it. A response to the current "Left Behind" phenomenon, this little booklet has now reached nearly a million homes with the "present truth."

Our church has always considered the publishing work to be a gift and a responsibility given to us by God through Ellen White. A strong indication of our reverence for publishing is that we are one of only a very few denominations which owns and operates its own printing facilities. Almost all other religious publishers today have their printing done commercially, farming out their books and magazines to the lowest bidder. But in the Adventist heart, we hold even the presses themselves as part of a sacred trust. Is it any wonder that so many Adventists can trace their first knowledge of the truth to the printed word?

At Pacific Press, where I work, we still pray over the books and periodicals that come from our presses. At the beginning of each month we hold a dedication ceremony during our morning worship, with all the employees in attendance. We show all the books and periodicals that have been produced during the preceding month. Then we join together in prayer, praising God for the truth in print, and we offer up the labors of our hands and minds to the Lord's service, just as Ellen and James did all those years ago.

When Ellen White was shown that the printed word was to be "like streams of light that went clear round the world," she could have had no idea how literally that prophecy would be fulfilled. Today, that same phrase could be used to describe the internet. Today, Pacific Press and the Review and Herald and many Adventist Book Centers world-wide have teamed up to create adventistbookcenter.com, a website that offers thousands of items, including books, music, periodicals, and more than 280 different items that bear Ellen White's name.

Through the power and scope of the world wide web, this new outreach can go where no bookstore, no literature evangelist, no Bible worker has ever gone before. Orders and e-mails of appreciation have come from all over the world. For instance, a customer recently sent us this message: "We live 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle. adventistbookcenter.com helps us to feel that we're a part of our church community." Other messages have come from prisons, remote mission fields, and isolated places on the globe where the gospel has barely reached.

And yet this website allows your local ABC to be as near as your computer, any time of the day or night. It is set up so that all the fulfillment of orders is done by the ABCs. So, if you order from the New Jersey Conference area, for instance, the site will "recognize" your location from your zip code, and will forward the order to your own New Jersey ABC. New Jersey fills the order from their own stock, thus saving you time and money—and giving you the good feeling of supporting your own ABC. True, you don't get that unique camp meeting ABC fragrance of paper and ink combined with frying veggie burgers, but with today's modern technology, even that may be possible before too long.

When your 2001 Camp Meeting Catalog comes in the mail in a few weeks, look through it carefully, and then take a moment to reflect on the incredible legacy of Adventist publishing. Consider how vital a part Adventist books and periodicals have played in your own life and experience. And thank the Lord once again for the publishing work of the Adventist church, begun so many years ago when a young girl accepted God's call to be His prophet, and began, with trembling hand, to write down His message.

###