

# The 1988 Mystery Book

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I want to share a strange story with you that happened to me in the 1990s which actually started in the late 1980s before the centennial of 1888, the year 1988. As I share this there will be many gaps in it and if any one of you has any information that could fill these gaps in, please share it with me!

I was living in south-western Saskatchewan for a couple years, and while there I had the pleasure of making friends with a dear Adventist lady originally from Jamaica. She was a very spiritual lady and through her I was put in contact with many independent ministries that at that time were putting out some valuable material. She had some good friends that I met through her that were also very serious about their Christian walk. Among these was a pastor that worked in the Conference office that served Saskatchewan, whom I never actually met, and we'll mention him later in our story.

Now here is where the story gets exciting. First I have to tell you that when I attended the small church in that area, which had been built by the members themselves and was a very tasteful and pleasant place to worship, I soon discovered one thing that puzzled me. There on shelves known as the 'church library' were many copies of an attractive paper-back edition of the Great Controversy. There they sat like Meroz doing no good to anyone; so I being enthusiastic about sharing this book to all as Sister White had urged during her lifetime, and because, obviously, whoever had bought them had that purposed in mind, I quickly sought out the lady in charge of the books and said; "How about you give those books to me and I will see to it that they get distributed to folk in town and the surrounding area?"

How surprised I was when she vehemently replied, "Oh no, no, No! The pastors and the conference have told us that under no circumstances are we to give those books out unless and until they tell us to!"

So I said, "Why on earth not? That is our job as Adventists to carry this message to the world!"

She replied, "They said that if we gave out things like that it would interfere with their plans."

I am sure it would, I thought to myself, and don't hold your breath waiting for them to tell you to give them out! So I tried a different tactic; "How about you sell them to me, and that way it will not be you folk handing them out so you won't have to worry? Name your price."

"Oh no, no, NO! we can't allow anyone to give out that book because that will bring a time of trouble on us ahead of the time and SOP says we are not to do that!" so with that convoluted reasoning I gave up on those books; perhaps they still sit there, if no one has burned them since.

This conspiracy to keep the SOP and the Great Controversy from being shared in the world was not new to me even back then. I had already seen the same thing being done in the area in Ontario I had lived in before going west. A dear friend of mine in that area was very missionary-minded and had been elected to be lay-activities leader. She had gathered a group of likeminded ladies and they had purchased a nice supply of attractive paper-back Great Controversy books and they had purchases envelopes and postage stamps for them and then they placed a modest and tasteful add in the local paper offering a free copy to anyone who would mail in the little coupon they put in the ad, to the lady's address.

Well, as soon as word of this reached the Pastor—no doubt from someone who naively thought how pleased he would be with this project—he was all over the ladies! They were to cease and desist at once, and never were they to give away any of those books or place any more ads!!! I remember that lady, who was totally wheelchair bound, looking at me so puzzled because she could not understand

why! There on her shelf sat the books and the supplies and they were still there after she died—I don't know what happened to them then.

That was the beginning, a sort of pre-school, of my education in the realities of the Seventh-day Adventist structure's hierarchical control over the people—and when I went to Saskatchewan I got thrust into the higher grades! If I had not been such a bubble-head at that time I would today know much more than I do about the machinations of the structure of SDA in Canada! It took a while for the Lord to wake me up to smell the true situation. So let's get back to our mystery story.

It was at this time that we were forbidden to share the books that gathered dust on the church shelves that my new-found Jamaican friend told me that she has this pastor friend who worked in the offices of the Conference for that area and that he had shared with her a very interesting bit of information.

It seems that before 1988, some honest Advent believer connected with Pacific Press offices in Oshawa Ontario, where the Canadian Union Conference offices are, got the idea that because Pacific Press amazingly still owned an *original set* of the printing plates for the 1888 Great Controversy, [bet they don't now!] that how wonderful it would be if they printed a hardcover heirloom edition and sold it extensively among SDAs as a celebration of the centennial of that amazing book!! What a wonderful idea that was, and so somehow many copies of it were printed and cases of them were sent to the conferences across Canada.

Now here is where there are many gaps I would love to be able to fill in; I do not know how many were printed; I do not know if some cases of them were sent to all the Canadian conferences, or if any were sent to the USA, or if Pacific Press in USA printed any. I also do not know who was responsible for squelching the project; but squelch it they did! So, back to my story:

This pastor friend of my good lady-friend in that town had seen these cases of those beautifully bound masterpieces stashed away in the storage warehouse of the conference, and he, being a faithful servant of the Lord, offered to secretly sell them to my friend in cases of 24, at \$1.00 a copy to cover shipping. She had been buying some from time to time and giving them away and sending them to people. So she told me about it and I purchased some through her. Myself and my mother trod the streets of that little town offering free to anyone who wanted it, a copy of this lovely heirloom book. I do not know how many we gave out. Maybe some copies still exist in the homes of some people in that town.

Then later on I moved back to Ontario, and after settling into my son's basement and with Christmas coming on, I got the idea of getting a case or two of these books—so I arranged with my friend still in the town in Saskatchewan to send me some, and again I do not recall how many I got. He would only send them to her—so she forwarded them to me.

Now I must take a moment to describe these books; they were full sized and had all the original graphics and everything in them. Some copies had a lovely green cover and some were in red, and it was sort of padded. Originally, the 1888 editions had been printed some in red and some in green, but this cover was elegant! I have no idea what the plan was to sell them at, but such a book would have been worthy of a goodly price!

Now at this point I have to inform you that I was still a bubble-head, although I had received some rude smacks in the head from what all I saw out west, but the real truth was taking a while to sink in. So when I received these lovely books I neglected to retain a copy for myself or give a copy to my son; because of this mistake I have no evidence that I can now show that these things existed!!! Also later on as I was assisting in the reprinting of the Great Controversy by Harvestime Books, how I would have been helped if I had a copy of these original graphics on new paper to be able to scan in for our project.

So first I put an ad in the paper and offered the book to any one who would request it—I gave out a few that way. I also even took some copies to Toronto and stuffed them in mail boxes. But I still had some, so I carried on with my project and I took all the remaining copies of the book and wrapped them like Christmas Gifts and on Christmas morning early I went to all our neighbors and placed a wrapped copy at the doors of the houses around us for as far as my supply went. NOW here is another lesson—IF I would have gone in the day time and knocked at the doors and asked the people if they wanted them like we had done out west, likely some of them would have got them and some might still exist; but somehow—something happened—later when I asked one of the neighbors if they still had the gift book—not one of them had ever received the book!!

Those books had disappeared like the early morning frost on a sunny day in spring! I have no idea what happened—did someone steal them and gather them up to sell? I would hope so, because at least someone would be able to read them, but I fear the answer is far more sinister—likely someone of RCC persuasion spotted the situation and made away with the books before anyone had a chance to find them that Christmas morning. God knows!

So that is my amazing mystery story about how a godly project was stopped in its tracks and how God managed to rescue part of it, and at last how all the rest disappeared. My friend now rests in Jesus so I have no way to know if any still exist anywhere.

God have mercy! and may we all wake up to this fact that only as we recognize the true situation and fully take our orders from God can we accomplish anything in this time that parallels that of Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 2:6, 7 “And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, *though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions*: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.”

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‘Fighting Truth Decay’

2015 Update: Well, with much searching I did manage to locate one of the books that had been printed at that time in a used book page online. I purchased it but was somewhat disappointed as it was not the fancy edition that I had before, but had a cheaper binding; nevertheless it is a copy that shows that yes, indeed, they did print this edition and at least some of them were sold.

Strange things happen that most of us know nothing about!

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