

“Seventh-day Adventism”

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My high school days were spent doing everything but reading. In fact, I cannot recall if I read a single book during my entire senior year. This changed abruptly when, soon after graduating high school, I was introduced to Seventh-day Adventism. With my interest sparked, I soon began reading everything about Adventism that I could get my hands on. This included history, theology, lifestyle, music, and current issues. I credit my academic success at Michigan State University to what has now become a substantial collection of books, which instilled in me a love for learning. In fact, even my chosen area of study, dietetics, was influenced by the rich heritage that Adventists have had in promoting healthful living.

I have also grown to appreciate Michigan history, mostly because the Seventh-day Adventist church has had such a rich history in this state. For many years the headquarters of this now worldwide movement (~14 million members in over 203 countries) was centered in Battle Creek, Michigan. This interest has led me not only to visit the historic Adventist village located in Battle Creek, but also the Michigan history museum in Lansing. Understanding the history of certain areas of Michigan has led me to think about this state not only by what it is currently, but also, how it has changed and what it could become.

Adventist involvement in past social change has led me to an interest in the anti-slavery, health reform, and temperance movements of the 19th century. History is not useless. Lessons can be learned from past successes and failures that are applicable today. Not only have I been motivated to become active in specific areas of social change, I also have the benefit of wisdom which has been gleaned from past experiences.

My diet and exercise habits have improved drastically over the last few years. Largely due to reading these books, I have become better informed and more motivated to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Not only my personal habits have been affected, but also each day millions of Americans eat foods that were introduced by Adventists (Dr. John Harvey Kellogg) such as, peanut butter, granola, and breakfast cereal. The current understanding of health and disease has been benefited in many ways through scientific studies on Seventh-day Adventists. One of these is the Adventist Health Study, which was the first to find the connection between increased consumption of whole grains and nuts and a decreased risk of developing heart disease. In fact, over 300 scientific papers have been published which were founded on data obtained from studying Adventists.

This collection of books was gathered by frequent visits to the Adventist Book Center in Lansing and used bookstores, as well as mail order purchasing and the generous gifts of friends. They were collected in anything but a systematic manner, yet they comprise a balanced and comprehensive representation of the Adventist movement. To me these books are more than just a collection; they have shaped my academics, ambitions, and attitudes toward life.

