

Why Mini Print Centers?

Introduction

Why go through the trouble of establishing print centers when there are already mega publishing houses?

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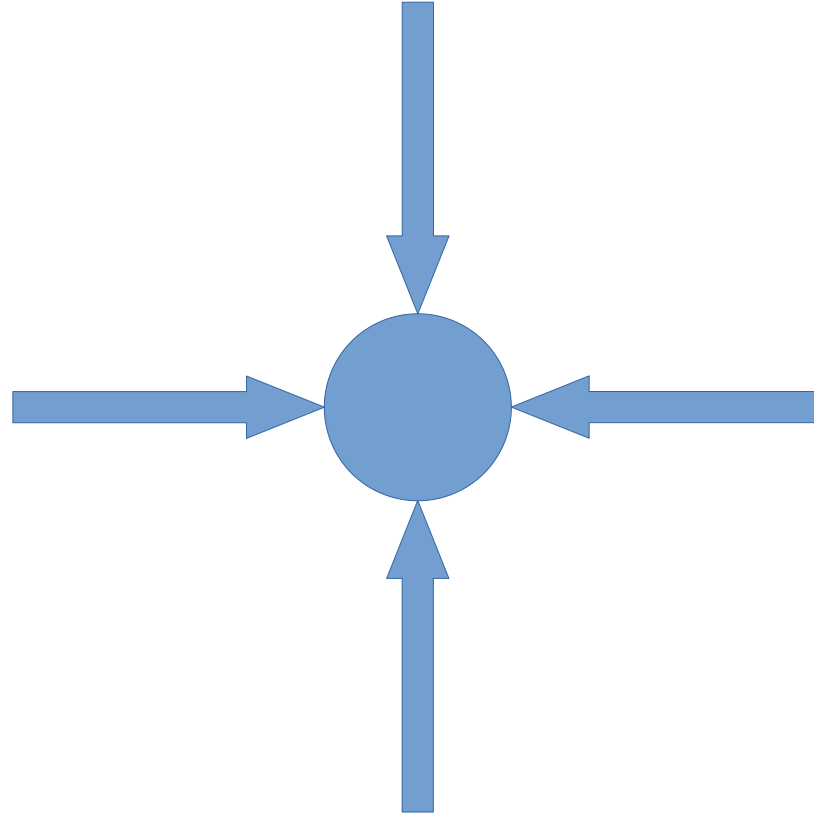
Introduction

First of all, we do not attempt to diminish the importance of the larger Adventist publishing houses. Our project is to compliment them, and to fill with our strengths where they are weaker.

Here, we would like to take a frank look at the concept of centralization and decentralization. Centralization has its advantages, especially when we analyze cost of production. We find it is often cheaper to invest in one big center for many countries than to maintain and operate multiple publishing houses in various places. There is less travel for managers. Machines and people can be maintained and managed under one roof.

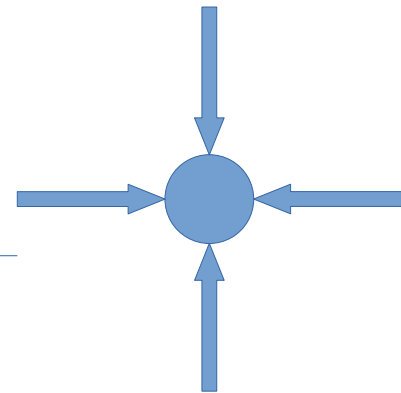
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Disadvantages of Centralization



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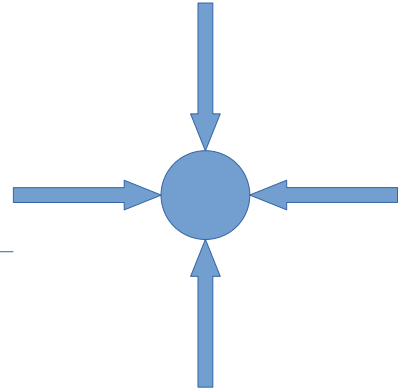


We must be careful not to analyze only the cost.

What if we have a cheap product, but it is not accessible to the people?
Of what use, then, are all the advantages of centralization?

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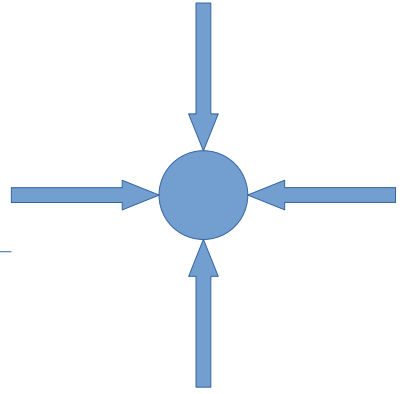
Shipping, customs, etc hassle

Based on our experience in Chad, we have found that ordering materials from bigger presses in other countries is a lengthy, complicated, and costly process. When ordering from Europe, for example, we must add additional time for transit by boat. Combine this with time at the port for customs processing, and then transport inland by truck, and it can often be many months before the printed product is finally available. And then when it does arrive, sometimes it has been damaged by water or mistreatment during transport.

The whole process of ordering from another country is complicated and daunting, and not for the faint of heart. Example: EDS

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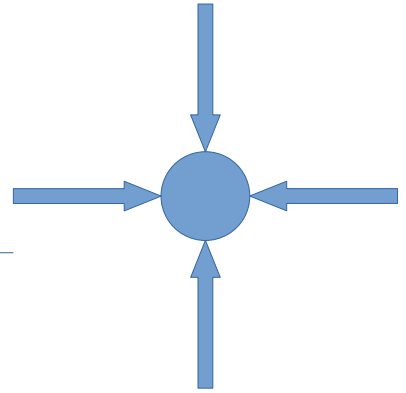
Monopoly

A press without significant competition may be tempted to raise its prices and lower its quality.

When there are several options, however, each print center is encouraged to do better quality work at better prices and in a more timely manner.

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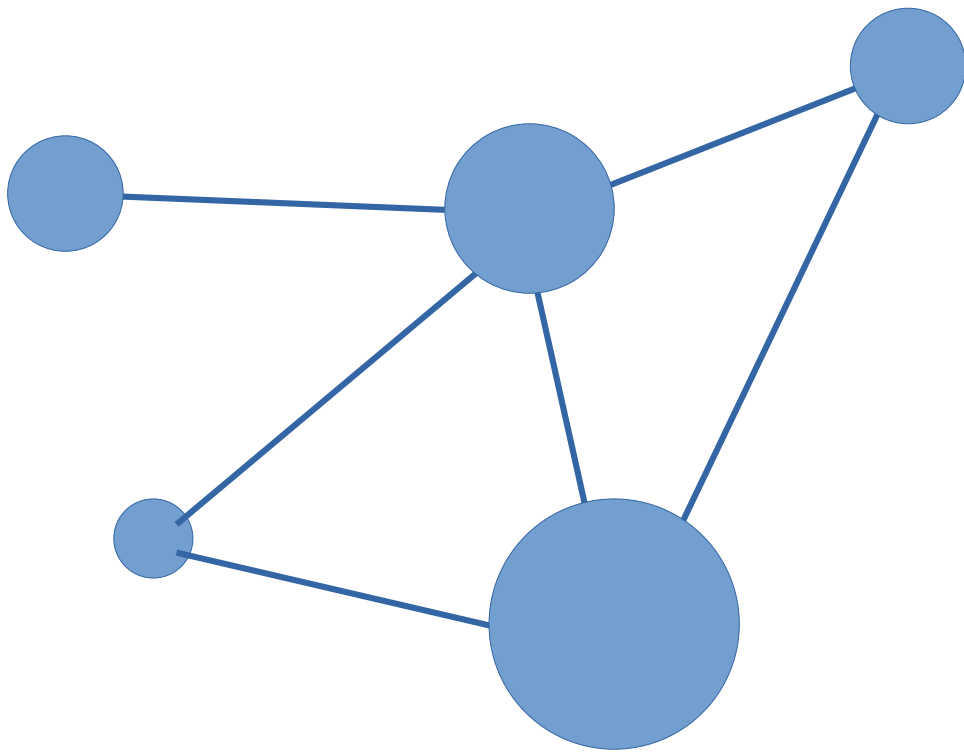
Inaccessible to the majority

First, if the centralized printing press is too distant, administrators of the press may be out of touch with the real needs in the field in other countries. Books or other materials may be sent that do not fit the needs or the culture of the people. Their ideas may seem good from their office, but the real needs on the ground may be different than imagined.

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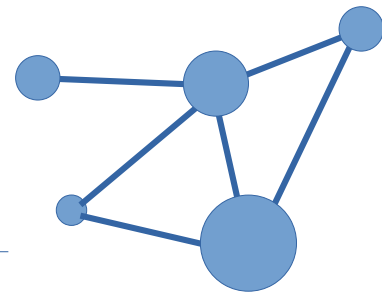
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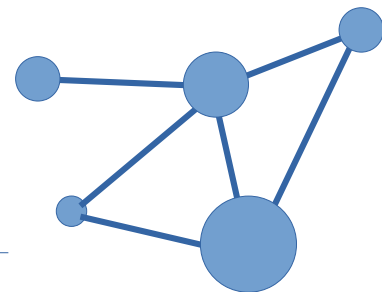


With the decentralized model, think about a small publishing house in each country, or even in each conference.

In this scenario, we assume that each publishing house would need to acquire land, pay for electricity, housing, staff, among other expenses. Compared to a centralized model, this seems inefficient from a financial perspective. To this question, we would present two responses.

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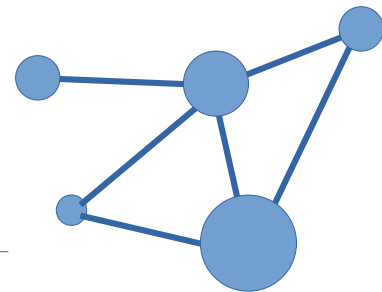
Advantages of Decentralization



- First, finances may be managed. Keep in mind that our project is not to establish mega-publishing houses. These big operations require a significant investment of land, building, etc. But a small print shop can be run in a spare room of a house to start with. Even if you decide to build a building, it doesn't have to be big or fancy. Running on solar power can reduce long-term electricity expense (diesel, for example).
- Second, we must not focus purely on finances when making our decision. We must analyze all aspects of the work and the advantages and disadvantages. What we may think of as a weakness might actually be a strength. A decentralized plan makes the mini publishing house more accessible to the average member. Different minds running different publishing houses are a strength to each other when working together with a spirit of unity. Collaboration among the print centers is a great strength.

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Advantages of Decentralization



Hard to shut down

It is easier for the enemy to disrupt a single centralized institution under the control of one person or one committee than to disrupt multiple institutions.

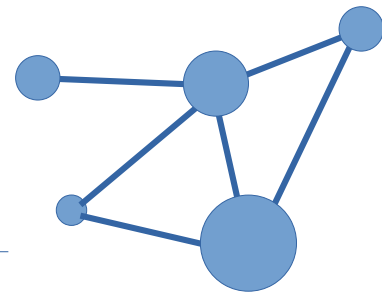
When a centralized institution rejects God's principles and stops functioning well or shuts down, it cripples the publishing work for the whole region.

While Satan may succeed at bringing one or two down in the decentralized model, he is not likely to get them all if there are multiple ones.

See Redundancy

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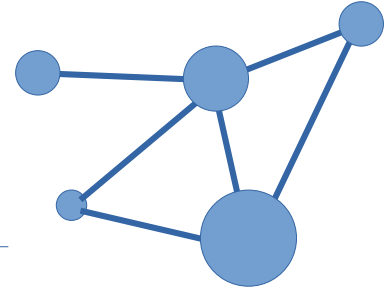
Customized work according to the context

It is not likely that the managers of a mega press in a distant country understand the real needs of the people in the local villages of any given country. Of course, truth never changes. But adapting truth according to age, culture, and education level is important. A tract written for Americans may be really wonderful, but it may not touch a heart deeply in a country in Africa.

A decentralized model allows us to produce localized materials to address the real needs where they are.

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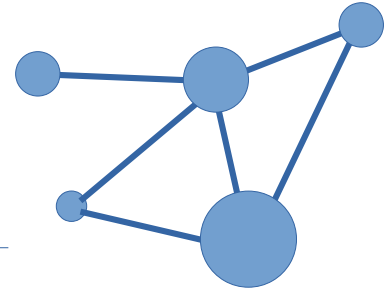


Practical access and faster response times

A small locally situated print shop is well placed to rapidly produce comparatively small quantities on demand. Often, for needs that suddenly arise in the community, there is simply not enough time to make an order from Europe and wait for months to finally get what is needed. By the time the materials arrived, the moment would be past. But with a decentralized model, we can write a tract, edit it, produce it, and distribute it all within the same week, because the print shop is accessible and available.

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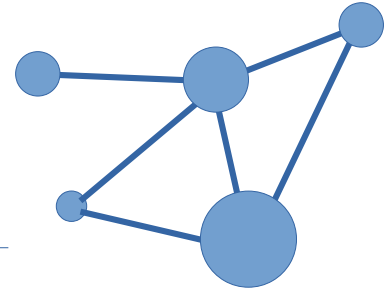


Practical access and faster response times

The Holy Spirit may be working on the heart of a church member to give Bible studies to his neighbor. To his dismay, no Bible study guides are available. What does he do? If the nearest Adventist press is a mega printing press in Europe, he has no practical way of acquiring the studies and both he and his neighbor are at risk for losing interest. With a decentralized model, a small print shop is close to him. Within a short time he has what he needs. He grows in his faith by sharing truth with others. His neighbor discovers truth and gives his life to the Lord. The church grows in numbers because the neighbor is baptized. The church grows in strength because both the older member and the new member are now working to save souls and give studies to their neighbors.

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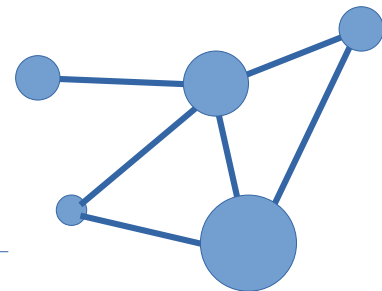
Practical access and faster response times

Story of “Can Somebody Steal my Soul?”



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SOP Counsel

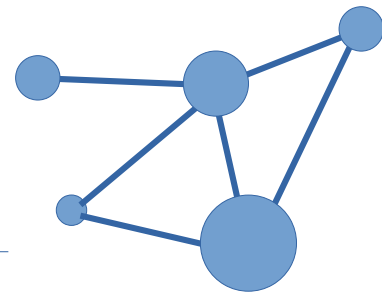


We find much counsel to establish publishing centers in different places and not to depend on one single publishing house to serve a large area. Many of the following statements were made in the context of specific advice to publishing houses in Battle Creek, the Pacific Press, or the Review and Herald. To understand the full implications of these brief excerpts, we encourage you to read their context.

It is God's plan to establish publishing centers in different places. As we strive to follow God's plan, He will make it a success. Notice these statements:

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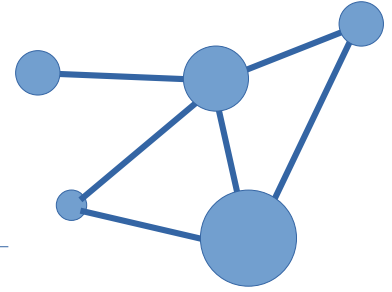
“[Printing] plants are to be made in many places. First one and then another part of the vineyard is to be entered, until all has been cultivated.” 18LtMs, Lt 254, 1903, par. 15

“The work of publication is to be developed in new lines and carried as it has never yet been carried.” PM 147.1

- This implies a systematic plan: first one, and then another. When can we rest and say that the work is done? When all has been cultivated! We are a long ways from this yet.

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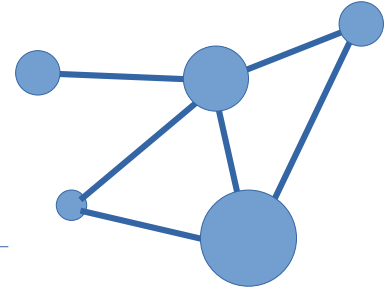


“There is much to be done in the way of establishing centers for our work in new fields. Missionary printing offices should be established in many places. In connection with our mission schools there should be facilities for printing and for training workers in this line. Where there are in training persons of various nationalities, speaking different languages, each should learn to print in his own tongue, also to translate into that tongue from the English. And while he is learning English, he should be teaching his language to such English-speaking students as may need to acquire it. Thus some of the foreign-born students might defray the expense of their education, and workers might be prepared to give valuable help in missionary enterprises.”

PM 196.3

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“In many cases the publishing work will have to be started on a small scale. It will have to contend with many difficulties and to be carried forward with few facilities. But none should be discouraged because of this. The world's way is to begin its work with pomp and show and boasting, but all will come to nought. God's way is to make the day of small things the beginning of the triumph of truth and righteousness. For this reason none need to be elated by a prosperous beginning or cast down by apparent feebleness. God is to His people riches and fullness and power as they look to the things that are not seen. To follow His direction is to choose the path of safety and true success. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” 1 John 5:4.” PM 196.4