

Our God Story

May 25, 2025 — Currently, HIS Print Media Ministries, the printers for the now closed Free Tract Society have printed 31 legal-size boxes of Know Your Future booklet tracts in English and Spanish. With the recent purchase of a newer 2015 booklet maker with face trimmer, they are doing the weeks of bindery work to covert the printing into packaged booklets, for personal delivery to a customer. This four-page article describes the miraculous chain of events that led to printing this large order each year.

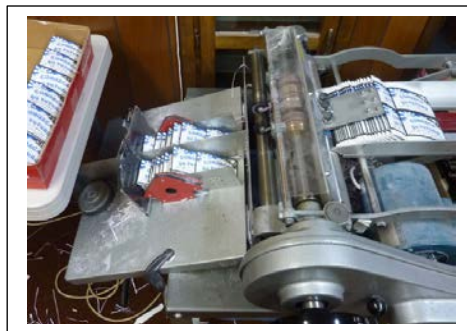
Pro 16:9 We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps. – Proverbs 16:9 New Living Translation

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure. - Philippians 2:13

Axiom: The will of the Lord makes a way for itself.



Two Color Ryobi 3302 Press



Rollem Slitter 4 full bleed cover



Stitch Fold booklet maker

A few years ago, Harriet and David (His Print Media Ministries) started a 200-page e-book titled *Our God Stories*. The idea was to show personal real-life examples of how God is not too busy to care about our individual needs and dramatically answers specific prayers for which there is no explanation except to say, “God did it!” Related to our printing, one story really stands out – how we got the Ryobi two color printing press that we have been using to make hundreds of thousands of the small gospel tract booklets (English and Spanish) titled Know Your Future, written by the late Mel Gerrard of The Wayside Harvesters, Inc. I start with my first introduction to the booklet at a group evangelism outreach to the Pasadena Rose Parade. I had gone down the parade route with friends holding poles with photography clips containing booklets on the end. “Know Your Future, Live Forever, Free Gift” I called out. The positive response of people reaching out for one of these gospel tracts was impressive.

IN 1978, I took a volunteer opportunity to work with a popular healing evangelist who had opened a small Good News publishing center. He came to our city and Frank, my spiritual father, who had five vertebrae out of joint in his back, felt something like electricity go through him. He was instantly healed. Doris, a Christian chiropractor sitting next to him verified the miracle. Frank and Frances told Dick Handley about me, and we connected. I decided to take two graphic arts courses at the Fullerton city college graphic arts division. I told Frances, my spiritual mother, “I don’t know why I am taking these printing classes. “I think it will come in handy someday, she replied.” Then the “bearing witness” of the Holy Spirit within her (Romans 8:16) hit her motor nerves, making her shake. “That’s right! That’s right! In one week’s, time, the Evangelist, with an unexpected gift of \$100,000, had bought printing equipment, and started in Christian printing. I really didn’t know anything about printing at that time, but years later, after experience and training, my wife and I ended up printing and mailing oversees the gospel tracts this minister had written.

In 1981, I was given the use of two tabletop printing duplicators I used to make gospel tracts for Sondra Berry Young at the Holy Ghost Repair service in Hollywood. This entry level printing training got me a job in duplicating at the local city college. From there I went to the print shop. In the year 2000, the college closed their printing press training, and gifted me with five printing presses, and related equipment. The print shop downsized and Jack, the supervisor, and I looked for a more modern two-color printing press. At the annual Gutenberg printing festival in Long Beach, CA, I was drawn to the Ryobi 3302 for big print jobs with exact registration between the two colors, and good registration on the sheet at 9,000 copies an hour. It would be the ideal machine for printing the KYF booklets 4 to a legal-size sheet. I had used the Adobe Indesign page layout computer program to make English, Spanish, and French documents from which I could do color separations, print polyester films on a laser printer

to expose the image onto a metal offset printing plate good for hundreds of thousands of copies, on the 3,000-watt mercury vapor bulb exposure box given me by the college. After the Gutenberg event, Jack decided to get a more automated Heidelberg two color printing press for the new print shop location in a temporary building. I had used a press the college gave me to make 40,000 Spanish booklets for The Free Tract Society of Los Angeles with the understanding that they would send them to Cuba.

When my father died of cancer, he agreed to pay for a remodel of the Quonset hut on the family ranchette to use it as a print shop. My mother and aunt were sorting things out at the main house when my aunt gave me a portable usb hard drive. The Lord impressed me to look at the contents, and I found a file with my name on it. Because I had a history of helping people down on their luck, my parents had stopped giving me cash gifts for special occasions, but the amounts had been tallied in a Microsoft Excell spread sheet account in this folder. I called my sister, and she verified that the estate owed me this money. I decided to shop for the used Ryobi 3302 printing press I had wanted. I found one at QP Printing Equipment for \$8,500 plus \$400 delivery by their associate, Paul. Paul was a member of the Knights of Columbus and decided to spend forty hours cleaning the press up. The boss was puzzled and asked what he was doing. "I'm working for God!" he replied.

Paul had someone look over the press and told me it would need a new set of ink and water rollers within six months. My wife and I were in the vicinity of Printers Parts of Los Angeles, when I told her we needed to stop there and get the new rollers. I had learned about this company while working at the city college print shop. Sam, the owner told me that his dad had been an organizer in the Methodist church in Mississippi where he grew up. He said it would make his dad proud if he gave me a 30% discount on the parts. He also said that Larry, who worked for him part time, a factory trained technician on our model press, could be persuaded to take a family vacation in Santa Barbara where we had been using the press, during which he would install the rollers without charging us the usual travel time. He also brought rollers for the single-color Ryobi press the college had given me. Larry said the time spent with us was the nicest two days he had worked.

With the new rollers, we got a call from Mr. Gomez, an apartment manager, who wanted large quantities of the Conozca Su Futura Spanish booklets. We had made some for The Free Tract Society to resell, but Jose wanted them at a cheaper price, so they referred him to us. Then a lady from a Pentecostal Spanish church in Los Angeles called and wanted thousands of copies of a Spanish Four Steps to Peace with God tract booklet. One day I decided to make a box of each of some of the twenty-five plus two-color tracts I have written, with the Free Tract Society Address on the back, the idea being that we could start doing more work for them. I had planned to do a perfect job, when unwanted background ink started appearing on the paper in the non-image areas, and I could not make it go away. I got angry and told the Lord, "If you don't solve this problem, I will never print for You again!" Then the thought came to me, I probably had this problem before and made some notes about it on 3 x 5 cards. Unknown to me, my wife, being an organizer, had been straightening up around the two computers next to the printing press. I looked on the corner of the computer desk and saw a stack of 3 x 5 cards my wife had placed there. Going through the notes, I read, "In case of background toning of ink, add more varnish to the ink." That was the answer that saved the printing ministry. Little did I know, that in 2023, I would receive a two-question e-mail from the director of the Free Tract Society reading, "Are you ready to take over the Free Tract Society of Los Angeles? Where do we deliver the Equipment?"

After getting married in 2010, I moved sixty miles north to Santa Maria. We had to travel sixty miles back and forth to do printing or stay overnight in the print shop Quonset hut on the family ranchette. To our surprise, Harriet's son searched for and found the ideally suited old Teamsters Union building, two miles from our home, and over twice the size of the Quonset hut. By renting a U-Haul trailer we were able to move most of the equipment, except for the larger two-color printing press which weighed 2,800 pounds! Using a floor jack and four car moving dollies, I got the press ready to move. Just to align it with the Quonset hut front door, I had to use a double strength ratcheting come-a-long attached to a metal door pillar. Harriet saw a flat bed tow truck at the gas station and thought that could work. Thomas towing in Santa Barbara agreed to do the move for about \$425. I had been corresponding with a man in Canada also working with gospel tracts. He told me he wanted to reimburse me for the towing fee. The tow company left the press in the six space parking lot behind the new print shop that now had a city non-profit business license, and apologized for not being able to stay and help me get the press through the 36 in wide back door into the press room. It was afternoon and I needed to get the machine inside and in place before dark.

A man on a bicycle and his girl friend came through the alley and asked if we needed help. He made a phone call, and his friends arrived. Using a pry bar, come-a-long, and ropes, we got the press inside after removing the door and side door jam. Once in place, we removed the four car dollies. I then told the team to gather in a circle in the parking lot so I could pray a blessing over them. I lead them in a prayer of salvation, and they all asked Jesus into their hearts as Personal Lord & Savior.

I had hired an electrician whose license had expired to put in a sub panel and three 220-volt outlets, including the big press circuit. Unknown to us, he had not gotten a city permit for the work, and the city inspector could not approve the work. The property was multi-zoned (business and residential). There was a hotel across the alley, an adjoining health clinic next door, and apartments were across the street. The planning commission (building department) was concerned about the press making so much noise it would disturb the neighbors. The Lord gave me an ingenious solution to both issues. I downloaded a sound level measuring app for our tablet computer that uses the microphone built into the tablet. With the press still at the Quonset hut, I turned on the press and measured sound levels at various distances from the press, including outside with the door open, and the door closed. The noise level was no worse than a vacuum cleaner! Regarding the needed electrical permit, A commercial electrical contractor and his wife made a couple hour trip from Bakersfield to get the Yearly Bible Reading Schedule booklets we made for them. To me, had seemed like a waste of their time to me I called him about our problem. I took a floor plan drawing of the print shop given us by the realtor, scanned and enlarged it, and drew in the added sub panel and branch circuits. At no cost to us, the contractor drew up a plan, mailed it to us, and we took it to the planning department, paid the fee, and got the permit. The building inspector came out and the whole building was approved for a non-profit Christian Evangelism Printing facility.

With the press up and running at the new location, we printed five boxes of a Spanish prison art tract I wrote for a Christian artist on death row. A local Hispanic couple we were helping delivered the boxes to San Diego on a trip to visit relatives, where a missionary in Mexico picked them up and distributed the tracts to various ministries, including Tijuana, possibly the most dangerous city in the world. In Spanish and English, as many as 250,000 of this tract have been distributed!

When we printed our first large amount of Spanish Know Your Future booklets, we had tried to trim the white top and bottom borders off using a regular cutter which was not the ideal machine because the stapled side made the top not level with the cutting table. I got the idea to get a Rollem Champion 990 that uses rotating slitting blades and cuts one booklet at a time (see picture on first page). The Rollem office had a reconditioned machine for \$6,000, and the only stapled booklet they machine had ever been used for was an Avon cosmetics catalogue. I had no credit at the time, and made layaway payments. When I had paid the asking price, I made some four to a page stapled and folded booklet set samples on my color laser printer and drove about 200 miles to have them set up the machine for a test run. It worked, but they wanted \$300 more for the custom stand with a hole in it for the trimmings to fall down into a bin below. Fortunately, I had the extra money. Once set up, this machine accurately trims the booklets to a full bleed at a fast pace, each set of two-up booklets pulling the next one through after it.

One day, the Lord gave my wife a “word of knowledge” about Mel Gerrard, the founder of The Wayside Harvesters, Inc., and author of the English and Spanish Know Your Future booklets we had already been printing for other ministries. “We need to call the Wayside people”, she said. “Something has happened, and I think Mel has died, and they are having a problem with their booklet tracts.” I had gotten the graphics for printing the documents from the graphic artist at the printer in Palm Desert, and already had the documents laid out in two colors, four booklets to a legal-size sheet, for our Ryobi Press. The son, Andy, told us his father had died. The printshop doing their booklets has burned in a fire, and not contacted them, leaving them without the computer documents needed to continue making the booklets through another printer. We began making their booklets every year by the hundreds of thousands at the low price of six, then seven cents each. They distribute the booklets to other countries for free. By comparison, Chick Publications now sells their small tract booklets for over 17 cents each. Shipping rates were so high we rented an economy U-Haul van and delivered 37 legal size boxes in 100+ degree heat into hot outdoor sheds. My wife and the older lady filling booklet orders tried one box on a hand truck, and it was too much for them. At age 73, I did the rest, not knowing until I got home, that I had the Corona Virus during the delivery.

On one order, the Wayside Harvesters wanted another thicker booklet that had been full color, but I had converted it to two colors for our press. Later they wanted more, but they wanted the full color cover because the graphic for a treasure chest, and the heavenly city did not stand out on the two-color version. I got an inspiration. I printed the cover on larger 11 x 17 paper in full color on the Canon professional color laser printer with printing press like good registration. I then cut the sheet down to legal size and ran the inside of the cover and all the other pages in two colors as before. Doing full color on our two-color press would require running the four primary colors in exact registration in two passes through the press, something I had only tried once on a one-color press we had at the city college. I considered that too difficult a job, so the Lord helped me find a work around.

A man of God who visited our print shop told me the Lord was going to give us equipment upgrades. Not long ago, a local bindery equipment repair man called us and said he had a nice electric cutter and folder he wanted out of his garage, and he thought of

us. We had been using a 2002 booklet maker for stitching from spools of wire and doing the face trims on a Rollem Mini adapted with two bevel blades and custom feed tray guides to keep the trim square with the two up booklets. The Rollem 990 slitter machine made for slitting single sheets of paper to make full bleed (no white border) booklet covers, worked fine for booklets of 16 to 24 pages. The newer 2015 Stitch / Fold booklet maker is more durable and came with a factory face trimmer that has two matching blades that cut the paper like modern commercial electric and hydraulic guillotine paper cutters. This machine looked barely used, but, because it had sat without use for years, it too needed repairs to work with our 1990's Baum (Plockmatic) 10 bin automated friction collator that needed a lower height stand. Unexpectedly, two of the four fold rollers in the booklet maker deteriorated and melted, and had to be replaced by David and a Mr. Fix it man at church. David had been praying to get the newer equipment he had seen in an Ad. Harriet suggested calling the head salesperson and telling him we are nonprofit and need a discount. The price was lowered by \$1,500!

Psalm 34:19 (Living Bible) The good man does not escape all troubles—he has them too. But the Lord helps him in each and every one.

Psalm 37:5 (Living Bible) - Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.

Romans 8:32 (Living Bible) Since he did not spare even his own Son for us but gave him up for us all, won't he also surely give us everything else?