Family Christian Stores Acquired by Management Team, Investors

Family Christian Stores announced Thursday that its management team has partnered with a group of Atlanta-based Christian businessmen to acquire the company from its private equity owners.

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed involving the nation's largest Christian retail chain with 280 stores in 36 states. Family Christian reported that while its ownership structure and financial purpose has changed, there will be no impact on its core operations, stores or staff.

Under the new ownership, the Grand Rapids, Mich., chain has pledged to contribute 100 percent of its profits to Christian causes, specifically ministries serving widows and orphans both in the U.S. and abroad.

Family Christian's James Fund charity was founded in 2003, sponsoring mission trips with staff and giving more than $2 million to organizations and projects caring for widows and orphans, company officials said.

The new ownership structure will allow Family Christian to not only equip Christians in their daily walk, but also to increase the chain's impact by providing substantial financial support to faith-based causes.

"The management team and our investors are buying Family Christian because of our shared belief that the company is uniquely positioned to be both a best-in-class Christian retailer and a significant source of financial support to help those in need," said Cliff Bartow, president and CEO of Family Christian. "While we have long been committed to giving to

Christian causes, we felt called to multiply our impact.

“We have been on a journey for several years to find potential like-minded Christian owners who share our passion and calling, and believe it’s the providence and sovereignty of God that we met and now partner with our new co-owners,” he added.

The investment group comprised of the three businessmen includes Richard L. Jackson, founder and CEO of Jackson Healthcare, the nation’s third-largest health care staffing company; Larry Powell, president of Powell Family Enterprises, a private equity investment company; and Michael Kendrick, founder of Blueprint for Life and Ministry Ventures, a nonprofit organization dedicated to launching new ministries.

“Each of these men have been blessed with professional success and share a mutual calling to give back to help those in need,” Bartow said. “This alignment of business acumen and Christian calling led them to the collective decision to join with us to acquire Family Christian and move it from an organization that contributes 10 percent of its profits to one that contributes 100% of its profits to faith-based charities and ministries.

“It is the hope of all involved that this transition can be a model of Christian business and ministry excellence that can be replicated by other organizations that wish to use their business resources to maximize kingdom impact,” he added.

The chain has “ambitious plans” to grow its revenue and increase financial support for ministries around the world, including maintaining store update efforts and looking at new product assortments and resources to better meet the lifestyle needs of customers, company officials said.

“We are excited about what this ownership change means for our customers, staff and vendor partners who join us in the ongoing Christian pursuit of putting faith into action,” Bartow said. “In many ways, we are returning to our roots as a Christian, family-owned business focused on making a significant impact in helping those in need.

William Blair & Co. served as financial advisor to the investors.