

American Bible Society Shutting Down \$60 Million Museum

The American Bible Society recently announced that it will be closing its Faith and Liberty Discovery Center in Philadelphia. The museum, which cost approximately \$60 million to build, will cease operations on Apr. 1, 2024, with the last day for public visits being Mar. 28, 2024.

The FLDC, located on the Philadelphia Independence Mall near the Liberty Bell display, opened in May 2021 with the goal of educating people of all religious views about the impact of Christianity on American history. However, it struggled from the start, with ticket sales significantly lower than projected. In the fiscal year through June 30, 2022, the center only generated \$54,000 in ticket sales, while reporting total expenses of around \$11 million.

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ABS cited “structural limitations,” the impact of the COVID lockdowns and “other factors impacting sustainability” as reasons for the closure in an announcement to The Christian Post. The organization also faced financial challenges, including the loss of a major donor in 2022 and layoffs within the company.

In a public statement, ABS President and CEO Jennifer Holloran expressed gratitude for the center’s service and the inspiration it provided to visitors saying, “the Faith and Liberty Discovery Center has served as a place of exceptional learning and inspiration since its doors opened.”

Rob Wonderling, the FLDC Executive Director, echoed this

sentiment, saying it had been an honor to serve the center and witness the ways it spurred personal discovery and engagement. "The center was an innovative vision for sharing the importance of Scripture and I'm proud of the role our dedicated staff played in its mission," Wonderling shares.

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As the ABS works toward a new vision for the organization, Christianity Today reported, "Historically the organization has funded Bible translations around the world with a goal of translating the Bible into every living language by 2033. In recent years it has focused resources on its Bible-based trauma healing initiative to help faith communities address community trauma." {eo}

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