

Family Christian Bookstores to Shut Down All Locations After 85 Years

Family Christian announced today it will close its doors—after 85 years in business. Changing consumer behavior and declining sales led the world's largest retailer of Christian-themed merchandise to make the difficult decision to close.

Family Christian is a not-for-profit business that employs more than 3,000 people and operates more than 240 retail locations in 36 states. Family Christian Ministries has provided humanitarian aid for more than 14 million orphans, widows and oppressed people across the globe.

"We had two very difficult years post-bankruptcy," said Chuck Bengochea, company president. "Despite improvements in product assortment and the store experience, sales continued to decline. In addition, we were not able to get the pricing and terms we needed from our vendors to successfully compete in the market. We have prayerfully looked at all possible options, trusting God's plan for our organization, and the difficult decision to liquidate is our only recourse.

"At its core, Family Christian is an organization with a heart for service. We are grateful for all of the millions of lives that have been impacted thanks to our guests' and employees' heart for bringing the light of Jesus to the darkest corners of our world. Through their efforts, there is no question we have transformed lives now and for eternity," said Steve Biondo, senior vice president of human resources and organizational development.

"Family Christian has left a powerful legacy of helping people find, grow, share and celebrate their faith in Jesus Christ," Bengochea added. "Today and always, we are grateful to God for

the privilege of serving Him and look forward to finishing strong for His name's sake."

In a letter to vendors, Bengochea pointed to the issue of "changing consumer behavior." He said the chain responded by improving its product assortment and in-store experience but that the business was "not sustainable on our sales."

He also thanked those who "made concessions to try to save Family Christian" and said, "We are trusting God's plan for our organization, and while our hearts break, the difficult decision to close our stores is our only recourse." {eoa}