

Hobby Lobby Stays Open During Coronavirus Outbreak: 'God Is in Control'

Around the U.S., many stores are closing their doors temporarily as the coronavirus spreads. But Hobby Lobby and Mardel Christian bookstores founder and CEO David Green says his chain of craft stores will stay open. And his decision is garnering some attention online.

In a letter, Green encouraged his employees for Hobby Lobby and Mardel that "God is in control" and said everyone at the company might need to "tighten our belts."

"While we do not know for certain what the future holds, or how long this disruption will last, we can all rest in knowing that God is in control," Green wrote, according to the Christian Post. "... To help ensure our company remains strong and prepared to prosper once again when this passes, we may all have to 'tighten our belts' over the near future."

He also said his wife received a word from the Lord about this time.

"In her quiet prayer time this past week, the Lord put on Barbara's heart three profound words to remind us that He's in control: Guide, Guard and Groom. We serve a God who will Guide us through this storm, who will Guard us as we travel to places never seen before and who, as a result of this experience, will Groom us to be better than we could have ever thought possible before now."

While some have criticized Green for refusing to shutter the stores' doors, the Hobby Lobby CEO said the company will enforce stricter health and sanitation guidelines to ensure everyone stays healthy.

“If an employee is suspected of having COVID-19 based on symptoms and/or known direct or indirect exposure, we will send that employee for medical care and to self-isolate at home, and will promptly coordinate with public health officials,” CBS reports Green as saying.

But Hobby Lobby isn't the only Christian business that has said it won't close its doors.

Last week, Dave Ramsey sent a letter to his employees, saying they would still be required to work from the office despite an employee testing positive for COVID-19. He said the company would provide exceptions for employees whose situations required them to be at home (such as those with a newborn baby, elderly living with them or who had been recently out of the country). After his controversial letter was leaked, he announced the company would implement work-from-home policies.

Several other stores have also refused to close, saying that they fall under what some states refer to as “essential businesses,” which are allowed to stay open during a lockdown.

The New York Times reports that the Guitar Center, Dillard's and Michaels all stayed open to an extent for a time even during lockdown orders. In California, Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft stores remained open despite the order for all nonessential businesses to close, reports the OCR.

According to a petition with over 20,000 signatures, Michaels employees are asking the government to force Michaels to close in Canada and the U.S.