

'Love Wins' Doesn't Win with Christian Retailers

Best-selling author Rob Bell's controversial new book, *Love Wins* (HarperOne), has debuted at No. 2 on the *New York Times* Hardcover Advice & Miscellaneous best-seller list for the week of April 3.

HarperOne brought forward publication of the book—subtitled “Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived”—from March 29 to March 15 because of interest in the title, which critics say promotes universalism.

Founding pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, Mich., Bell has denied that he espouses universalism—the belief that all humans end up in heaven, and hell is not physical place.

HarperOne Senior Vice President and Publisher Mark Tauber told *Christian Retailing* that parent company HarperCollins expected the controversy surrounding *Love Wins* to help sales.

However, LifeWay Christian Stores would “not offer” the book, according to LifeWay Christian Resources Director of Communications Micah Carter. Family Christian Stores officials declined to comment, but the chain's Web site did not feature *Love Wins*.

Located within 20 miles of Bell's church, Baker Book House ordered almost 500 copies of the book to meet the expected demand. “The proximity alone is sufficient reason to carry a couple of hundred, but now with the increased attention, we anticipate even larger sales,” Sue Smith, manager of Baker Book House, told *Christian Retailing*.

Berean Christian Stores had not ordered any copies of *Love Wins* for its 18 locations, according to Director of

Merchandising Greg Moore. "However, we have it available in our system for any of our customers that would want to place a special order," he told *Christian Retailing*. "Once our management team has had a chance to read and discuss the book, we will make a decision as to whether that policy will change."

Parable Group Sales and Marketing Manager Randy Maricle said that *Love Wins* would not be promoted in any of the marketing group's catalogs.

What are your thoughts on Bell's controversial book?