

News and Current Events :: Sales soar at 'Christian' stores

Sales soar at 'Christian' stores - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/2 21:16

[Image: https://www.sermonindex.net/images/forum/2004/may/featured_news.gif]

MELBOURNE, Fla. -- For Christians, these are inspirational places, sanctuaries really. And they aren't churches.

They are stores where the shelves are packed with products ranging from Bibles to belt buckles that are made for, and by, Christians.

In addition to the spirituality of it all, Christian products average about \$4.5 billion in U.S. sales annually, according to Andy Butcher, editor of Christian Retail Magazine in Palm Coast, Fla., near Daytona Beach.

Nationwide, chains like Wal-Mart, Target and Barnes & Noble are selling Christian products, too, as the market grows.

But it's the inspirational quality of Christian retail stores, not just the merchandise, that draws people.

Re: Sales soar at 'Christian' stores - posted by rocklife (), on: 2005/1/2 22:23

I really appreciate having christian stores to go shopping. First of all, its not at church, where the focus should be God, not money (though some churches have stores in them, that doesn't seem right to me).

The atmosphere at the stores is also nice, there is a difference from other stores just by friendliness of staff and service and even with other shoppers.

Just my 2 cents.

Re: Sales soar at 'Christian' stores - posted by hredii (), on: 2005/1/3 2:54

Does anyone have suggestions on how to pray about this? I am not trying to be sarcastic, just at a loss of how to attack this in prayer. I do believe praying for Christian stores is a very important issue of prayer.

Let us pray for these products and stores are made in to the image of Christ; And for protection from the spirit of the world and also from false teaching.

Any other suggestions/ideas I would love to hear.

How do you yourself pray about this?

Re: - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2005/1/3 3:13

Well, perhaps we should pray that the products are honoring to God and instruments of His blessing, but that they also be in keeping with certain commandments by not being *literally* made in the image of Christ ;-)

Among the more important things, as you pointed out, is that the owners and operators of these stores not be trapped into acting like the world. Let us serve, and not do the disservice of watering down our message and/or faith for various reasons; we may think it will reach more people, but even if that is so it will only do that disservice to that many more people.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/3 9:15

Quote:

-----Nationwide, chains like Wal-Mart, Target and Barnes & Noble are selling Christian products, too, as the market grows.

Intresting brothers you just brought out some great ideas for prayer towards christian stores!! I was kinda sad with the news that so much of Chrisitan products are a mock of secular items and there are many people making money off the Christian niche like a business.. I find its easy to get so mesmorized with all the Christian "things" available...

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/1/3 9:17

This might likely get me in trouble but...

Find it a little distressing what is being offered as a whole, the 'best sellers', the garb, the mass merchandising...Is it now fashionable to be a Christian? IF the stores were to run videos of the persecuted church on the overhead monitors or play say...oh, how about "Ten Shekels and a Shirt" over the sound system, or Leonard Ravenhill's "Judgment Seat of Christ", how long do you think they might stay in business?

What if all the 'bargain' books were put up front as 'best sellers' and all the "How to have a prosperous and successful life in seven easy steps" book's were removed?

Cynical? Perhaps, I just recall that the rather large retail bookstore near here used to be much smaller and also a time when I dared to go in there and felt so convicted that I could hardly lift my eyes to the clerk.

Can't but help being reminded of this recent posting from our dear friend Ed, (Gideons)
(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id3343&forum35#27594) ORAL ROBERTS VISIO
N Scroll down to the heading **Financing the End Time Harvest**

In doing a comparison between what that pastor has to say and what gets passed off as 'Christianity' largely anymore, especially here, you would think it fair to label us as a cult. A cult of entertainment junkies.

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/1/3 9:37

My, see I have gone off on a little tangent here.
Yet wonder if this statement from the original is really true;

Quote:

-----But it's the inspirational quality of Christian retail stores, not just the merchandise, that draws people.

Is it?

Would be curious to hear others thoughts on this.
What is your sense upon walking into our modern day Christian retail stores? What grabs your attention?

Not looking for agreement. Just curious, maybe I am just cynical.

Re: - posted by Gideons (), on: 2005/1/3 11:53

Brother Mike,

My trips to Christian bookstores are becoming infrequent. I see so little emphasis on repentance and holiness and so little on actually walking with Jesus.

Most of the Christian books seem to focus inordinately on the "self" life. What's in it for me? How can I get what I want and have Jesus too?

How many honest books can you find on being a disciple (i.e. a disciplined one)?

I read a book a few months ago that was referenced by Ravenhill in one of his books. It was entitled "The Golden Calf." Unfortunately, much of what I see focuses on the worship of Baal rather than surrender to Christ.

Maybe the bookstores are better than they are around here I'm not certain but I don't frequent them much any more. I pray my tone isn't harsh. I'm not trying to be harsh, but am trying to be honest here.

"Day after day", on: 2005/1/3 14:31

"For day after day they seek me out;
they *seem* eager to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that does
what is right
and has not forsaken the
commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions
and *seem* eager for God to come
near them.

'Why have we fasted', they say,
'and you have not seen it?

'Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?'

Yet on the day of your fasting,
you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

Your fasting ends in quarreling and
strife.
and in striking each other with
wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard
on high".

Isaiah 58: 2-4

Re: "Day after day" - posted by KeithLaMothe, on: 2005/1/3 16:24

My initial thoughts upon seeing the topic were something along the lines of "More compromise?"

Just a general tendency of mine to associate "popular" (if such it is) Christianity with compromised Christianity. Not necessarily true, but not far off the mark in many cases.

I think trade is fine (so long as people are eager to sacrifice for those in need that can't really give anything in return), and on one hand I'm glad that ostensibly Christian products are gaining space in the marketplace and thus the culture. My concern is about whether these products are indeed honoring to God and truthfully representing Him. A great many true books and such are undoubtedly available, but the industry as a whole may be guilty of lying by omission if it is not presenting the entire truth (if they leave out Justice, Sin, Repentance, etc).

I have to admit, I'm cynical on this. May the Lord have mercy on us and give us the grace to realize we don't have to be His PR staff.

Re: christian bookstores - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2005/1/3 18:49

I've been wanting to respond to this all day, but haven't had the time. I'll just share my experience with 'Christian' bookstores over the last few years. I have come full circle, so to speak.

A few years ago, before my own great 'awakening', when I was a lukewarm pew sitter- still running my own life (I say all of this for those who may read this and not know me :-)) I used to go to our local Christian bookstore quite often. To get the latest christian c.d. (it was all about the latest music back then), maybe pick up a new Christian self-help book or buy a gift. If I had really been living hard and letting loose then I would go visit one just to make me feel better and relieve my guilt. :-?

Then after the Lord took the veil off of my eyes about my own sinfulness and unsundered life- as well as the rest of christendom's- i could not walk in a Christian bookstore. It was one of those things where when you see the awful truth for the first time, everything that you once thought was good - is so terribly, terribly corrupted- it seemed.

I mean how could I, in all my lukewarmness and hypocrisy be "doing the Christian thing" by buying from a christian bookstore and further more they were selling me all of this hype to go along with it, like I was ok and just fine and dandy for living the way I was. Hey, I was buying "Christian" things wasn't I? I mean most people don't even do that! i realized that many, many other people had to be just as duped as I was. Being sold a lie.

So I took a long break from the Christian bookstores because they were a symbol of hypocrisy to me- mostly my own I see now, but also the church's. But slowly I got some balance. I had to buy gifts for people and I realized that they did have a small classics section. Also, a big factor was that I could get many good things (books, videos, ect... for my children- and that was important to me).

I also like to decorate, or feather my nest with lots of scriptural and meaningful pictures, and plaques, etc... I mean I have neat wooden signs above three of my doorframes with "Be still and know that I am God" and "God is Faithful" and "Bless Our Home"- this is just the beginning. I like our home (and my family likes it as well) to be filled with meaningful scripture and symbols of our faith. I also like to buy these kinds of things for gifts for other people. Even a catholic family member will not mind getting a beautiful picture frame for her children with a scripture verse on it. It's one way I silently share my faith.

Now, when I go into our bookstore (ours is a Family Christian Store), I head straight for the Classics section, glance at the kids section for my children and usually look at the home/gift area for gift or home ideas. I usually pass the aisles and tables of "Top-sellers" and just shake my head. Or I explain to my children, if they're with me, why I don't agree with this or that book.

What concerns me the most is those who don't know any better. Like I didn't. For those who are new christians or maybe not even christians yet, but are seeking- they just take it all in and believe what they're trying to sell them.

I do appreciate the fact that I can be in a nice atmosphere and get nice things for my home- and get 'some' of the classics. I do have to admit that I appreciate that I can take my kids in there and let them roam and not worry about what they may be seeing or looking at (as compared to a Barnes and Noble or other bookstore or video store).

So, I do have to say that i've come to a balance. Probably if there were no gifts or home items in our store (ours is quite large) then I may not go in it at all. Occasionally I'll also run into someone from my lukewarm christian walk, and I'll get a chance to share about the "new" old books I've found.

I did tons of Christmas shopping at our christian bookstore, for family and friends. And most of the things I received from my children and husband were from there.

I know that christian stuff can be cliché but I am one who loves the Lord so much that I don't care if His name is on my writing pen, my checkbook, my pictures in my house, my "children kneeling at the cross" window sticker. I want the world to know that He is everything to me. I don't care if they think I'm a Jesus freak or not. I am.

Ok, I guess that enough. if anyone is still reading this far, God bless you. :-)

In His love, Chanin

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/3 19:00

Quote:
-----My trips to Christian bookstores are becoming infrequent. I see so little emphasis on repentance and holiness and so little on actually walking with Jesus.

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Amen Brother Ed. There is such a wealth of books and materials but most of them are frivolous and just add the ever growing amount of Christian books that have a sense of godliness but deny that power thereof. Me too am quite synical about this and surely the Lord does use all kinds of books and materials in the store to bless and strengthen people. But its matter of what is good and what is best.

Quote:
-----Now, when I go into our bookstore (ours is a Family Christian Store), I head straight for the Classics section

WOW Chanin.. thanks for sharing that my feelings are the same totally! thats funny you wrote about the "classics" section which is an every smaller section whenever I visit my local christian bookstore. The funny thing is the hymn music section has expanded because I have tormented so many people there to get more albums of old hymns :-P (good work greg pats self on shoulder)...

It's seriously sad though to see an financial section beside the smaller classics section.. and some of the financial books obviously catering to the carnal nature of having more wealth.. something in which Jesus did not teach.

I usually get most of my books online now and get the specific ones I want that will be edifying and strengthening. Old used christian bookstores are a favorite to find some old gem for a very cheap price is always awesome. 8-)

Re: - posted by phebebird (), on: 2005/1/3 22:46

I used to totally anticipate going to the Christian bookstore. Now, when I get coupons in the mail for our local bookstore, at first I get excited, then I think "What's there to buy there anymore?" I mean, walking in the front door I am confronted by what's-his-name's book "Live Your Best Life"--creeps me out...

I DO go there to buy stuff, but often they don't have what I want. I bought out all of their copies of The Heavenly Man a couple times, but the "classics" section is shrinking. There used to be an AWESOME used Christian bookstore not so far away, but they went out of business. One of my favorite stores now is in the local Calvary Chapel. They have all the classics and missionary biographies and generally all of the books that I haven't seen anywhere in ages besides on my parents' and grandparents' bookshelves. You also don't have to wade through all the fluff to find what you want.

The other night I was visiting at a church we used to attend a few years ago. They have a small store in there. You will never guess what this evangelical church had very largely displayed up front--an album entitled "How Great Thou Art" by the MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR!! I asked the clerk why it was in there. "Have you heard it? It's great!" she said. I suppose it was the same song, but, come on, were they advertising for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir???

Speaking of "fluff"... I remember how much Christian music bothered me after seeing The Passion in February. It was sort of a defining moment. I came home after the movie and put on a Christian CD that I had previously thought to be very worshipful. I suddenly found myself flipping past song after song after song. I COULD NOT FIND ONE SONG on the whole thing that talked about anything besides ME. "Lord, bless me", "Lord, love me", "Lord, give me goosebumps so I'll be a better Christian". I went through CD after CD that way and finally got out a CD of old hymns and found some relief in "Alas and did my Savior bleed" and "There is power in the blood". Now I burn my own CD's of worship music... and old hymns.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/1/3 23:07

Quote:
-----"How Great Thou Art" by the MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR!! I asked the clerk why it was in there. "Have you heard it? It's great!" she said. I suppose it was the same song, but, come on, were they advertising for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir???

Yes its so sad that we have lost this heritage of our hymns and some of the only people that are keeping it in the mainstream are cults. What a sad picture..

Quote:
----- I went through CD after CD that way and finally got out a CD of old hymns and found some relief in "Alas and did my Savior bleed" and "There is power in the blood". Now I burn my own CD's of worship music... and old hymns.

Its so awesome how in the last year the Lord has really shown me the beauty of hymns beyond what I really could ever imagine them to be. There is something so majestic with the way the authors used the language to represent and portray their devotion to Christ. Comparing old hymns to today's modern music overall its night and day. I am tired of the newest 'beat's and 'rythmn's I want to worship God with my intellect, emotions, everything that I am...

On another sidenote I know we live in a consumer market and lifestyle but didn't the early church also? were they selling books or manuscripts, services? etc..

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2005/1/4 1:19

God knows I love you folks!

What great replies here. Such honesty, Oh it is so refreshing, I think it is one of the outstanding things about this fellowship we have here.

What had started out as a dirge brought forth some of the other thoughts that also began developing throughout the day.

Needed to recall that there were many books early on that had an effect on myself as I grew and not all of them were classics. But that was a distinct turning point as I have mentioned here before. A dear lady working in this same store mentioned earlier pointed me in that 'backward' direction as I wrestled with the WOF movement and all the confusion that was beginning to develop. Haven't turned around yet :-D

Guess I am trying to say that we were all there once in some form or fashion. I used to love Philip Yancey, Max Lucado...Read all the Lee Strobel books and reflecting now think they were good books though I don't recall much from them. Also recall first reading Oswald Chambers and thinking *this is way to radical!* But those were early days and coming to faith in the rather strange way I did, found as time wore on that the 'older' books had that missing 'something' that my heart was seeking after. Truth. Reality. Honesty. Stranger still was the blessed revelation that there really is no such thing as an 'old' truth. Whether it was written 200 or 50 years ago, the only thing that changes are mens perceptions, the proclivities to sin are the same, just dressed in different garb. It just seems now that compromise is on the rise and as was attested to by many here, the 'classics' are shrinking.

Think a lot of you hit on the balance aspect and loved your take on things Chasin, would be lying if I said I didn't agree with that. Think it would be fair to say that the difference is that surrounding yourself with the things that speak of the Lord *now* is for completely different reasons...before it was a buying into, now it's because you are *Bought!*? I bet your house is just awesome, what a testimony it must be and what a warmth to be confronted with (Guess that might depend on where you stand with the Lord :-))

Liked what Keith said here:

Quote:
-----My concern is about whether these products are indeed honoring to God and truthfully representing Him. A great many true books and such are undoubtedly available, but the industry as a whole may be guilty of lying by omission if it is not presenting the entire truth (if they leave out Justice, Sin, Repentance, etc).

Think that's the rub, that unbalance, overemphasis and the fact that it is predominant more than anything.

And Phebe:

Quote:
-----I used to totally anticipate going to the Christian bookstore. Now, when I get coupons in the mail for our local bookstore, at first I get excited, then I think "What's there to buy there anymore?" I mean, walking in the front door I am confronted by what's-his-name's book "Live Your Best Life"--creeps me out...

Me too! That's really the kind of thing that got me going on this rant to begin with...

Re: Sales Soar at 'Christian'stores - posted by inotof (), on: 2005/1/7 10:21

hi-
having worked in a Christian bookstore for the past three years it has been my prayer that when people come in, that my fellow workers as well as my self don't just try to sell something. I never want someone to leave with a book or a sermon just for the sake of making a sale. When we do that I think we dishonor our Great King and it becomes all about the money. We can also pray that it becomes more than just a 'bookstore' there are many independent stores that do community outreach and to them the store is ministry, not just a business. just my opinion