

# CHRISTIAN BUSINESS OWNERS CONFERENCE



Steve Green, president of Hobby Lobby, served as the keynote speaker for the 2015 Christian Business Owners Conference, held on the DBU campus on Thursday, April 9.

During his talk, Mr. Green shared about the journey their company had traveled, from starting with a single store in 1972 to now having some 650 stores nation-wide, with more than \$3.65 billion in sales in 2014. At the heart of their business is a desire to honor the Lord by operating in a manner consistent with Biblical principles.

His father, David Green, the founder of Hobby Lobby, was the son of an Oklahoma pastor, and the only child in the family not to pursue a career in vocational ministry. Accepting a different calling on his life was difficult for awhile, yet as he turned his side business of making small picture frames into a full-time job, Mr. Green sensed the need to make this business his ministry.

"We want to make money," Steve Green explained. "The more money we make, the more we can do in the way of ministry."

Yet, in 1985, after 13 years of moderate growth and success, it appeared that their ministry had come to an end. In the midst of the collapse of the Texas and Oklahoma economies, David Green called his children in for a family meeting about the future of the company.

Seeing no way through the downturn, David shared with his family that they would continue to turn the business over to the Lord. As Steve recalled, his dad prayed, "if You want this company to survive, You will need to intervene, because I can't make it happen."

In the years that followed, profits grew, and more and more stores opened up. Eventually, the company expanded throughout the country with locations dotting every one of the contiguous 48 states. They even opened a Christian bookstore and educational supply chain called Mardel and a home furnishing store called Hemispheres.

"This is not our business," Mr. Green shared. "It is just what God has entrusted to us. It works best for us when we follow God's principles."

During his talk, Mr. Green also shared about a new project undertaken by the Green Family, the Museum of the Bible, which is scheduled to open in

2017 in Washington D.C.

Following Mr. Green's talk, Dr. Denny Dowd, DBU provost, announced the creation of a special scholarship at DBU in honor of Mr. Green, totaling \$36,000 and made possible through the funds raised at the conference.

This marks the second year that the Christian Business Owners Conference has been held, which last year featured Norm Miller of Interstate Batteries as the keynote speaker. The Conference is designed to create a forum where Christian business owners can fellowship and network, as well as share best practices for transformational servant leadership, learn to better integrate faith into their spheres of influence, and promote the personal and professional growth of those around them. Hosted by DBU, the Christian Business Owners Conference was sponsored by Grand Bank; Flagg Law Group, P.C.; Liechty and McGinnis, LLP; Marketplace Chaplains; RHA Architects; Saville; and Swingle, Collins and Associates.



(Pictured left to right) Dr. Denny Dowd (provost, DBU); Dr. Jim Denison (president, Denison Forum on Truth and Culture); Pete Schenkel (board member, Grand Bank); Dr. Gary Cook (president, DBU); Steve Green (president, Hobby Lobby); Mark Wells (vice president, Grand Bank).