



COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL POLICY

Remarks

Mr. Steve Green

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I appreciate the opportunity to be here to share a little bit about Hobby Lobby and a little bit more about what I am able to be a part of that we are doing for our bible collection that I am very excited about. My dad started by manufacturing mini frames while he was working for a company called TG&Y. Anybody remember TG&Y? He was working for TG&Y at the time in 1970 when he started manufacturing mini frames. It was two years later when he opened the first retail store. He leased a sixteen square foot space and in the back half is where he manufactured the mini frames and in the front three hundred square feet opened a little art supply store and called it Hobby Lobby. It was a few years later in 1975 when he left TG&Y for good to commit his time and energy to the Hobby Lobby venture that he had. The year before in 1974 when the store did one hundred and fifty thousand in sales and in 1975 we did seven hundred and fifty thousand in sales. So that was a five times increase and we are trying to do that again but we are not having that much success. And ever since dad started going full time it has basically been on a growth projection. It has just been growing fast.

I think my dad had an idea and a vision that he would have a large chain of retail stores and the arts and crafts business is what we settled in on. The sales chart for the last twenty one or twenty-two years if you were to look at it is just a steady growth continually increasing, adding stores every year as best we can. The first billion, it took us twenty-nine years to get to a billion dollar in sales and that was in 2001. And then eight years later we hit three billion in 2009. And then three years later what took us thirty years we did in three years, we reached the three billion mark. So basically we have been continuing to add stores. Right now we have opened 525 stores across the country. Here in a couple of weeks we will be opening one in Tucson. We don't have one in Tucson. So for those that are locals, we will be here. We are in forty-three states, we are looking in all the forty-eight contiguous states, and we are not looking in Alaska and Hawaii.

We are not crossing a border or a body of water but other than that we are looking in all forty-eight states. We feel like we could put eleven or twelve hundred stores or what would fit. So with 525 stores we are really just about half way there. We have a lot of growth left here in the US to have a lot of stores in. This year we anticipate putting in 35 to 40 stores, we are trying to put in as many as we can. We are trying to grow as fast as we can. Put as many stores as we can because that is where we make our money and we want to make more money because we want to do more ministry, bottom line. My father probably hasn't made any more in salary for the last five or ten years. He is not interested in making more money. He is interested in making more profit so that we can do more in the way of ministry. So that is a pretty quick run from 1972

until today. There are a lot of stories and a lot of things I could share but I would like to talk about 1985. 1985 was an interesting year for Hobby Lobby. It was following that year in 1986 when my father invited the family over to the house. He wanted everyone to come over and asked those that had kids to get some babysitters because he wanted to meet with the family. There were a lot of people involved in the business or ministry either way, for us it is one in the same. My mother was involved, my father, my sister, my brother, my wife, I had two cousins and a brother-in-law we all part of the business. We all came over to the house and after we all sat down in the living room dad basically said, "I don't know how we are going to survive." He had always been able to figure out how to make things work. We were living on the edge, we were growing. It was a young company. It was challenging financially for most businesses when they first get started and no different for us. In 1985 it was the only year in our history when we did not make a profit. We lost money in that year. The following year was when things really got tough. He basically said I have always been able to figure out this bill will come due and we will have this revenue or this line from the bank will have an increase and that will be able to help me pay this tax bill or whatever the case might have been. But it got to a point where he said, "I don't know how we are going to survive." He spent a lot of time in 1986 in prayer. If you read his book he talked about how he would be under his desk or walking the park just saying God, I don't know how we are going to survive. Then he came to the realization that he couldn't make it happen. He had always been able to do it with his skills he was just always a talented retailer and he was always able to do that but he got to the point where he knew that his skills could not make this company survive. So there was a point where he said, "God, if you want this company to survive you is going to have to do it." And it became a very real lesson for both him and the family that this is not our business, its God's business. And even recently, he has made the comment multiple times that we are just stewards of it. We are here being stewards of what God has entrusted to us. That is the position that we have to take knowing that God has blessed us. He got us to where we are and we want to do all we can to please him. Which if you go to our website and go to the statement of purpose that we have there are five statements? The very first one says that our purpose is honoring the Lord in all we do by operating the company in a manner consistent with Biblical principles. That is our effort. We have never done it perfectly but that is what we strive to do to operate the company according to biblical principles. We realize again that as a steward we have a responsibility to honor god in all that we do and that is what we strive to do. If you look at the very last statement in our statement of purpose is that we believe that it is by God's grace and provision that Hobby Lobby has endured. He has been faithful in the past, and we trust Him for our future. The fact of the matter is in 1985 this was very real. It is by God's grace that Hobby Lobby has survived and it is our effort today to still trust him with our future. And there have been different times that we have been tested. Closing our stores on Sunday was a challenging and a bit of a scary time. At the time when we started closing them down, we were starting to do a hundred million dollars in business. Not too many people are willing to walk away from a hundred million dollars in business and feel like they are going to be able to survive. But after a couple of years, we took a couple of years to do that, we were having record profits. Running our newspaper ad's which you may be familiar with. I know my dad talked about when he first started feeling

convicted to do that. He was reading the Christmas paper one year and saw that no one was recognizing the season for what it was all about and he feels like god was saying well neither are you. You are just putting in your ad like you always do. At the time people weren't even saying Merry Christmas. They were saying Season's Greetings or Happy Holidays which we still even see that today. While we may say Merry Christmas it was just our regular weekly ads. Dad felt convicted because we were selling a lot of Santa Claus's and a lot of Easter Bunnies at Easter time that we wanted people to know here is what we felt these seasons are all about. So we started that and again it was a bit scary here we had gone and had never been real public about our faith and as would have been considered it was not appropriate for a business. You are a business. You are a secular business; you have no business being vocal about their faith. But felt convicted that we wanted to do that needed to do that. So the first ad was a quarter of a page ad at Christmas and then it went to a half a page at Easter and then a full page the following Christmas and it has been a full page ad ever since. But sometimes those were some scary challenges that we had faced. But we went back and we realized that if we were going to honor god and if we do trust him we really don't need to be afraid of doing it his way. And if we do it his way, whatever he chooses, it's his choice. When we face trials there are only three options that I see. A trial could be averted. You think of Daniel when he was being asked to eat the King's meat. He appealed to the guard there and he said would you just let me have some water and bread and the guard said well we will try that out and see and he was able to successfully avert the trial. A second option is sometimes we see that we are delivered. Daniel, later in his life, actually had to go to the lion's den and in the lion's den he was delivered. So it can be averted. It can be delivered. But there is a third option which a lot of times people would hesitate to accept that God would allow it but he does sometimes and that is suffered. There are times when God allows us to suffer through a trial. Christ did go to the cross. We have a foxes book of martyrs, it is huge, it tells a story after story after story of those who that died for their faith. Sometimes that is what God uses. I don't know what Hobby Lobby's future is but we are in good hands whatever the case is. I have a couple of quotes here and I have a question for you and that is, who do you think said it and do you agree with it?

The first one, The King James Bible of 1611, the Authorized Version, includes passages of outstanding literary merit in its own right. For example the Song of Psalms and the Sublime in Ecclesiastes, which I am told is pretty good in the original Hebrew too. But the main reason the English bible needs to be part of our education is that it is a major source book for literary culture. So here is the person arguing that the bible should be taught in the schools. Now is this some evangelical Jim Dobson that is trying to get it into the schools and trying to use an argument that lets use this literary culture as our mode of getting it in the schools. Who would have said this and do you agree with it? Here is the second quote. Why may not the bible and especially the New Testament without note or comment be read and taught as a divine revelation in schools? Its general precepts expounded, its evidences explained and its glorious principles and morality implicated. Where can the purist principles of morality be learned so clearly or as perfectly as from the New Testament? Now they are arguing for it to be taught as a divine revelation. Now this is going way over the line. So obviously this person doesn't have any legal

sense to them but arguing for it as a divine revelation and its principles and morality being taught. We can't do that obviously. That's not appropriate. Do you agree with it? And who in the world would have said that? We have started our bible collection. It was in September 2009 when we bought our first artifact and there are four legs to this, what our intent is with this collection. First is the green scholar's initiative which is a scholarly study on our collection. Then we have a traveling exhibit. We have several and I'm going to share a little about that. Our permanent bible museum that we are working on, that is our ultimate goal. As well as a curriculum that we are working on that ties in with the museum. So I want to take a look at each one of these. the first one is the GSI or the Green Scholars Initiative. It is a rescripts because it is written on. The top text is the top black text is seareach it is monastic instructions as I understand, that was written on top of scripture. It is the underlying text which we are wanting to pull out. It is scripture in Palestinian Aramaic. It is the largest portion of scripture in Palestinian Aramaic which would be the closest language to Jesus' household language. So it has been studied, I think it was in the forties, and published with new technology that Oxford is coming up with, scanning technology. What we are able to do is pull out that underlying text where it is either invisible to the naked eye or where it has been written over. So we are working with Oxford to scan every one of these leaves about twelve different times. We have done this a couple of different times. Taken a computer program to help pull out the best parts of each page and then we are taking those scans to Cambridge and having leading experts in Palestinian Aramaic at Cambridge analyze it and study it. This is an example of one of the mini projects that are Green Scholars Initiative is working on. In most every case we are wanting to engage students so that we can raise up a whole new generation that has a love and a passion for God's work. There is another artifact that we have in the exhibit that I will be sharing with you and I have brought copies and I see them on the back table the you can feel free to grab when you leave. This is a letter from Martin Luther. Martin Luther wrote this letter when he was on his way to Augsburg. He was in Nuremberg on his way to Augsburg. From Wittenberg on his way to way to Augsburg and he is in Nuremberg and he wrote this letter. He is getting ready to go on trial for Hierarchy. And he writes this letter talking about the opposition trial that is coming up and he ends the letter stating this, fair thee well and preserve, knowing that it is necessary either to stray from man or to be condemned by God. Stray from men or be condemned by God but God is truthful while man is false. And we know the story of Martin Luther. but this is a letter and you can. We had it translated, again another project for our GSI scholar's where we tell you a little about the background and then the translation, you can read the full letter. That is just a couple of examples of the GSI projects that we've got going on. Here is a list of some of the scholars that we are working with. These are senior scholars. Some of these names you may or may not know. Mariam Ayad who is at the American University in Cairo, Gordon Campbell who is a part of helping us flesh out the museum, University of Lester, Emanuel Tov, a Dead Sea scroll expert, Hebrew University, Ralph Hanna, David Lyle Jeffrey, Alistair McGrath, Dirk Obbink, Tom Oden, Marcel Sigrist, Christopher de Hamel, from these Universities around the world. These are some of our senior scholars that we are working with. This is a list of some of the lower level of scholar that is working, research scholars, that are working under those senior scholars, Michelle Brown who

was with the British Library now at the University of London. Robert Duke, Jeffry Fish, Curt Niccum, Stephen Pfann, David Riggs, Peter Williams, Benno van den Toren and again some of these name you may be familiar with if that is the world you are in this is just kind of a list and a sample of the people that we are going to engage to help us study our collection so that when we have a museum it will be done with academic credibility. We want to look under every rock and as long as these scholars are just going to present the evidence without being adversarial. if you want to say that this piece of pip racy says that Jesus had a wife then I don't have use for you because you are making that up. It is not what it says.

But if you are going to give me the facts, I don't care what stripe you are from, but if you are a good scholar we have use for you. And that is what we are engaging in our GSI program. This is a shot of St. Peters Square. Does that look familiar? That is the Vatican on the right-hand side. Those are some of the banners of our traveling exhibit that we call the Verbum Domini which means word of the lord. These are probably some of the largest banners that have ever been placed at St. Peters Square. The Vatican told us that we would be able to put them up and then they said no and then they said okay yeah. What happened was the scaffolding here was up because they were doing restoration work on the colonnade and so they let us cover up some of that scaffolding with our banners. And this is an exhibit that is kind of a mini passage which is the US exhibit. I'll be sharing if some of you is familiar with that it is just a smaller version of that. it is about a 5000 square feet version of a twenty to twenty-five thousand square foot traveling exhibit that we have here in the US. We had this on display during the Lent season this last year. They asked us to come back this year. We said let us come up for air. so we are going to go back next year, that is what the schedule is. After this exhibit, you might have remembered last year, the Pope went to Cuba. When he was in Cuba and talking to the Cardinals there was plugging our exhibit and hoping we would be able to bring it to Cuba. Well we have made a trip to Cuba and are working to see if we can't do that in the possibility of November of this year we will have an exhibit in Cuba as a result of this. Then there were several other opportunities that we are looking into that was a result of this particular exhibit. This is just a wider shot of St. Peters Square early in the morning and the Pope's room is off to the right there off the screen where he will do his Sunday morning message having the banner that comes out his window and shares there. that previous picture with the crowd was a Sunday morning that he was getting ready to speak. and there was a Cardinal at the time that was over the Vatican Library and the Vatican Museum and was interviewed on a local video station there, and he has since retired, there is something going around there. He was interviewed and he made the comment that this was the most important exhibit that had ever come to Rome. That didn't mean that much to me because I had never been to Rome but he was over the Vatican library and the Vatican museum so I felt like that was interesting comment from him. This was a clip we did for the exhibit when it was in Oklahoma City.

We started in Oklahoma City, we went to Atlanta, we are in Charlotte through the end of this month. we will be down for a month and a half. we will open up in mid-May in Colorado Springs. As indicated there were 400 artifacts on display were over 400 items today and I really

don't think it would be an overstatement for me to say that for you to see what is on display at the exhibit, to see the equivalent of that you would have to travel the world. There are one of a kind artifacts, Martin Luther's letter, you can't see that anywhere else. You can go to the Vatican and see the, I don't know if you can see it at the British library, the Atticus or something which would be older and significant. but that is the type of artifacts that we have on display there. Once in a lifetime opportunity if you are ever in the area I would highly encourage you to go. We have tried to make it where it is really engaging, where that we don't just want to put a book under glass and just say here is an old bible, but we are trying to tell the story in an engaging way. That is what we think we have done at passages. So that is the traveling exhibit here in the US. We also have had some exhibits at Universities and the one at the Vatican, the Passages exhibit, we are doing an exhibit in Israel at the Bible Land Museum in August. Cary is helping me out here making sure I have my dates right. We've had items on loan. we have an item on loan to the Israeli museum and at South Western we had some dead sea scroll artifacts that were on display there and so we bought this collection to tell its story. Not because we are collectors, by nature we aren't and so with the items sitting in our closet they were just kind of burning a hole in our closet and so we decided to start telling the story. we did it by building out the passages exhibit. We engaged Cary Summers who is sitting there by my wife to help us build that out and if you go see it that is the work of Cary Summers and he is also helping us with our museum. The museum though is kind of the long-term goal. There is kind of three stories we are telling in one.

First is the history of the bible which is more of what passages is telling. It is telling the history of the transmission of the bible. You have Jerome, Tyndale, Luther, Wickliffe so we are really telling about the transmission the scribal tradition for the Jewish people, the Monastic tradition and the meticulous transcribing of this text throughout history. And that is more of the focus of passages but there is also a history of the book itself that we are going to be adding to the museum. The archeological evidences of the book. We can't prove everything in the bible as truth but time and time again archeological evidences over and over continue to show that what we have is a historically accurate representation of what was going on at the time. And so we want to show that. We are looking to tell those stories. The goal of this section ultimately is to show that the book is true. It is accurately transmitted and historically it is accurate. You can believe it if you want to or you can choose not to but the evidence for this book is overwhelming and time and time again that is what it shows. The next section is the impact of the bible which is again uniquely different than history. The impact shows how this book has impacted our lives and it has impacted just about every area of our lives because it speaks on every area of life from government to education, science, art, literature and music, any area of life. It speaks to it and it has had an impact. What we want to show here is that wherever this book has been applied it has been good for man. American history is an example of that. It was built upon a biblical world view. There are a lot of principles of our government that the average American today may not even realize its roots were in the bible. The concept of this three branches of government because man at nature is depraved. And we need to have a balance of power. That is a biblical concept and that is just

one of many that we can tell, one of many stories. So the impact shows that it is good if we will just apply it. It is true and it is good. The third section Is simply, by the way, what does this book say? What is its story? The story is that God created us perfect, we fell and we needed a redeemer. And he sent his son to pay the price for our sins. That is its story. Now we will have time to do that. If you saw Sunday night The Bible on the history channel, the most watched program Sunday night. It is a ten hour, it will be ten hours of the bible. It is kind of the same concept for this section in the museum. The goal is somebody goes through this and they say oh so that is what the bible says I never knew what it said. I've got a copy on my shelf, I've never read it. I've heard about it but I never knew what it said. We have the most ignorant population we have ever had because we don't teach it anymore. So we need to be able to tell them here is the cliff notes version of the bible. And again that is what Mark Burnett and Roman Downey are trying to do with their ten hour telling of the story. We do have a location.

You might recognize this shot in the upper right-hand corner. Does that building look familiar? It is the Capitol and that is the mall going on there to the left. The blue box inside the yellow box if you can see that is the building that we own. The right hand side is an office building that will maintain an office building but the left hand side is the Washington Design Center. That is what we will be converting into the bible museum. We have tenants there that we are working with to try to hopefully be out by the end of next year and then we think it will take us a couple of years to construct.

We have some floors we are looking at tearing out, building on top of the building and having the bible museum there. So you may also recognize the M there on the top right hand corner that represents a metro. So the metro stops comes up the office building. Just two blocks north is the Aerospace museum, you may recognize that, there on the mall. The most attended museum in the county. So having a Metro stop and being in that proximity to the Aerospace museum, we feel like is a great location and we hope to be able to be a great impact.

Back to my quotes. The King James bible. Who and do you agree with it? Now, if you don't agree with this and you feel like someone is overstepping their bound than Richard Dawkins has a stronger argument for the bible in schools than what you do. This is Richard Dawkins in his book The God Delusion. and he gives over one hundred examples of where our everyday language comes from the bible, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, the writing on the wall, the good Samaritan. Over 100 examples so that is his argument. We should know this book because it has impacted our language. For that reason alone is what he has argued. What about this one? obviously somebody doesn't have a legal mind. I'm trying to give you a hint. That was a supreme court is 1844 within the ruling, it was a unanimous decision, and this was part of, I encourage you, go read the Vidal vs. Girard's Executioners. I don't know if I'm pronouncing those names right, but look it up, this is just straight from there and they are talking about the public schools. We have come a long way but unfortunately not in the right way. It is silly that we do not teach this book in our schools. Our world recognizes it's had an impact. Life

Magazine, in the year 2000 but out a publication, The Most Impactful Events and People of a Millennium. so for one thousand years what were the one hundred most impactful events or people. Guess what was number one? Guttenberg printing the Bible, number one. They recognize that. The History Channel just a few weeks ago had a program called The 101 Objects that have Changed your World or something like that. I don't know if anyone saw that. Guess what was number one? The Bible. The History Channel recognized that. They interviewed Jerry Pattengale who heads up our GSI project for that program. It has impacted our world. And for us not to teach it in our school, that is just crazy.

I have a tenancy to agree with Dr. Benjamin Rush who was the youngest signer of the Declaration of Independence as I understand. He said this, "I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans, and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government, that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity, by means of the Bible." That was one of our founding fathers. We could go quote after quote after quote arguing for this. That is part of the reason why we want to build that forth leg that is the curriculum.

We are wanting and we are building this for the public school systems. We will go into as many public school systems as we can and we will take the same model that we are doing with the museum, those three levels. We are looking for a four year program. The first year, a ninth grade level where it would be a summary of all three. Here is the bibles history, here's the Bible's impact and here is the bible's story. Cover all of that in one year. The next three years you would take one of those and go in-depth. You can take a whole year on its history, a whole year on its impact and a whole year on the bible story. Now most states, many states , it is allowed to teach the bible in schools as an elective. We will take everything we can. But at some point as we get down the road will say this should be mandated. Can you imagine every kid in this country being taught the Bible. Not as a religion, not as a way of prolixitizing, non-sectarian way. It is not about a faith tradition or denomination, it is about a book. A book that has had an impact. If Shakespeare is required you are not going to require this book for reading? Richard Dawkins has got something right and that is what he's got right. That is where we are heading with our curriculum. That is our big harry audacious goal. Every child should be understanding and have a basic knowledge of this book. That has been the most impactful book in the world. It is crazy that we don't. This book has some pretty crazy claims. It says it is God's word. The Lord gave me two stone tab scribes of the finger of God. Probably the very first thing that was written down was the Ten Commandments that God himself wrote. This book claims to be God's word. Now that is a pretty bold claim. It also says that it is going to last forever. Grass where the flower of fate is but the word of our God will last forever. That is a pretty bold claim. Now men throughout history have claimed that their words are going to last forever. We just don't have record of it because it is gone. But this has lasted forever, it has so far.

Now this last one is kind of crazy. It says it is living. For the word of God is living and active. Imagine a writer today saying my words are living. We had just kind of laughed them out the door.

This book has some pretty bold claims. How can you prove any of these? How can you prove it is God's word or disprove it? Or that it is going to last forever or that it is living. Those are some bold claims. Now, if you take a look at that lasts forever, this book has more main script evidence than all the major classical works combined. And it was not just one guys writings. You add the complexity, it is over forty authors over fifteen hundred years writing on every controversial subject known harmoniously. Wow, you present that picture, that points to maybe it is God's word. Maybe there is a divine behind it which is why we have it. And if that is the case when you read it, that living God shows up and in that way it is alive. We have the most incredible book and the most incredible story to tell and that is what we want to do is to tell that story.