

**B**efore Mart Green was 20, he was well on his way to business success. After learning the ropes from his father, David Green — owner of the Hobby Lobby arts and crafts chain that has 381 stores in 30 states — Green started Mardel, a Christian bookstore that has grown to 23 outlets in six states.

But nearly a decade ago, Green was taken from his comfort zone in the retail world and divinely led on what he describes as “an adventure.”

Green formed Bearing Fruit Communications as a way to encourage people through targeted media campaigns to read the Bible. That eventually led to the production of *Beyond the Gates of Splendor*, a documentary about the deaths of five missionaries at the hands of Ecuadorean Indians, and shortly thereafter



Mart Green

#### **EMPOWERMENT**

I was just 19 years old, and my dad had just started his business and had six Hobby Lobby stores. As I worked for him, he invested in me and empowered me.

A lot of people will say, “I can’t believe you have more than one

Christian bookstore. I can barely handle the one I have.” A lot of times, those people are trying to do everything themselves.

One of the gifts I was given was empowerment, so I enjoy empowering people and letting them run their store and give each store its own personality.

#### **FORWARD THINKING**

My dad has always said, “Don’t think one store. Think 100.” You have to think ahead. I always built Mardel knowing I was going to build more stores.

A lot of Christian bookstores that opened their second book-

you think you’re just doing something once and then it’s over, it’s a different mentality than saying you’ll be back and you’ll be doing it again.

#### **GIVING**

Hobby Lobby has always been a means to an end. That became the same thing for Mardel. I knew why my dad was in the business and why he opened more stores. It wasn’t because he needed another car or another house. He just wanted to give more.

Giving was always a part of it. We’ve always given at least 10 percent. Obviously we give more than that now. It didn’t matter what size we were. We didn’t wait until we grew to a certain size before we started giving. We gave from the very beginning.

#### **FOCUS**

You need to know why you’re in business or ministry. Focus on that and do that really, really well.

#### **INTEGRITY**

There has to be integrity at the top of any business or ministry.

store have not done well because they didn’t think about expanding from the beginning. For me, that philosophy was kind of drilled into my head. And I did the same thing with the films. I told the film team, “Don’t think one film. Let’s think 100 films.”

That means let’s go ahead and buy the equipment. Let’s go ahead and prepare. Sometimes if

That might be a given, but I always saw that lived out. My dad was always fair with people as best he knew how. His business decisions were always with integrity — let’s do the right thing.

Even if it cost us money, he would do the right thing. It was never about making the best

continued on page 22

# 10 KEYS TO DISCOVERING LIFE'S ADVENTURES

BY MART GREEN WITH CHAD BONHAM

# DISCOVERING LIFE'S ADVENTURE

financial decision. It was always about doing the right thing and not letting the financial aspect of it outweigh the right thing.

## OPEN HANDS POLICY

God gave me Mardel and I thought, *Wow! This is my life.* But after I had been doing it for about 20 years, God moved me in a different direction.

At first it surprised me. I couldn't imagine moving up from that position or doing something different. And even when Bearing Fruit started, I just assumed God would send someone to run Bearing Fruit and I would run Mardel.

It took a long time of prayer and fasting to finally get to the point where God could send

several people to Mardel that strengthened that company and gave me time to do Bearing Fruit. You've got to keep an open hand because whatever you're holding, God may ask for it. It's not yours. You're just a steward of what God's given you.

## LOVING THE WORD

I once saw a man weep when he received his first Bible. That's when I realized how I had taken God's Word for granted. I had 40 Bibles in my home and this guy wept for the one he waited 40 years to get.

It took that experience to make me love God's Word at another level. Of course I had grown up loving God's Word, but that's when I really saw how the Bible is

the most powerful force on earth and it became alive to me.

## ADVENTURE

Go on an adventure. God has an adventure for your life. When you go on that adventure you're going to get uncomfortable and you're going to get wounded but God is going to provide. So the journey is worth it. It was going on the adventure that really helped me in my prayer life and it took me on the journey of fasting.

I was so far in over my head with the media venture that I had to cry out to the Lord and just say, "OK, God, You've got to show up on my behalf. I've stepped out of the boat." And God convicted me early on and told me, "You can't be wind conscious and you can't be wave conscious. You've got to

keep your eyes on Me, and if you keep your eyes on Me you're not going to have to worry about the wind and the waves."

## TRANSPARENCY

Wherever your deepest wound is, God will allow you to use that to minister to others. Like it says in 2 Corinthians 1:4, God heals our wounds so we can help others who are going through the same things we went through.

Satan does attack us. Sometimes we get wounded. We get scars — especially if we go into battle. The more we go into battle, the more scars we have.

If you want to be safe and sure and stay on the sidelines, that's fine. But if you get in the battle, you're going to get scarred. Most of us want to hide our deepest wounds. We don't want people to know that we did this or we did that. It's a risk to share our wounds with others, but ministry truly happens through our transparency.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

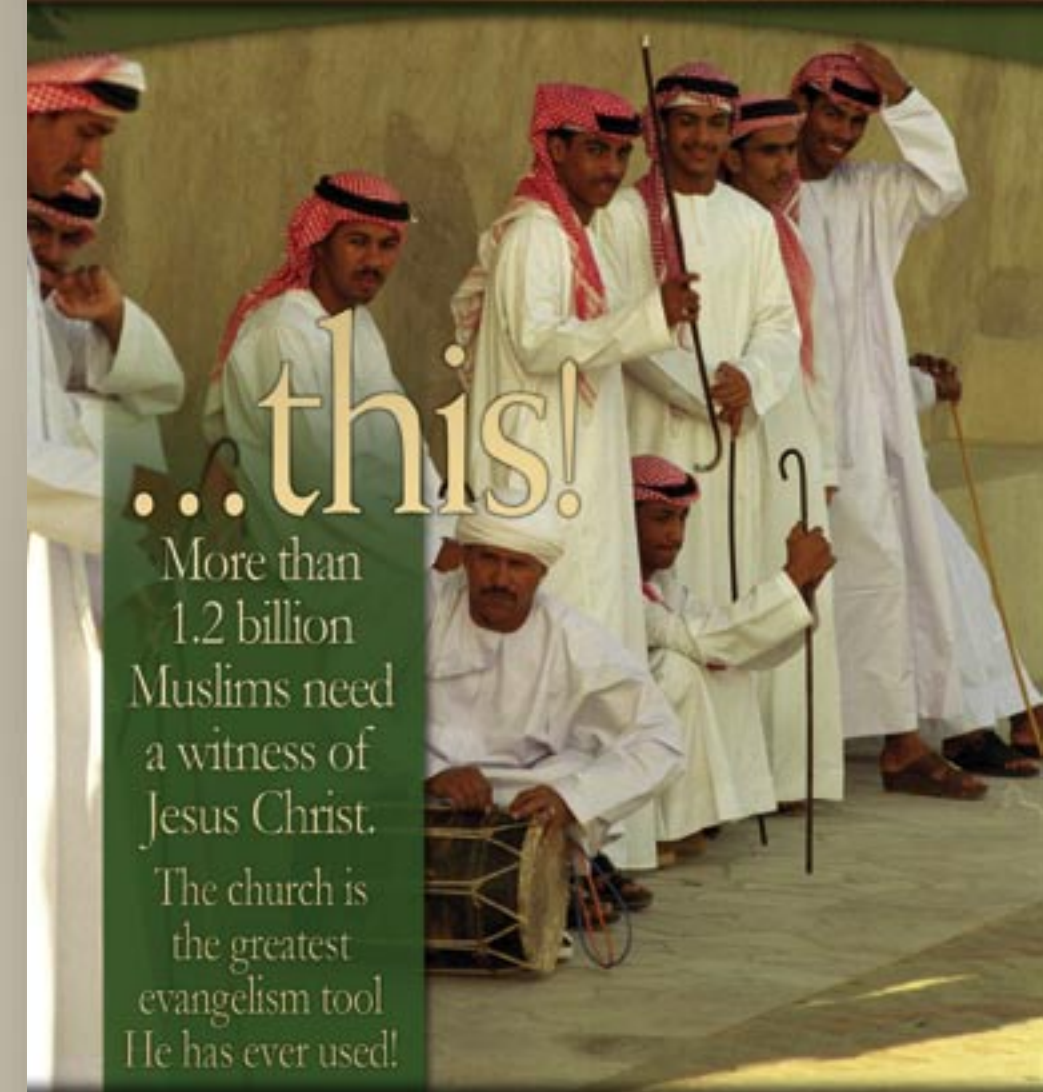
Surround yourself with people who can hold your arms up when you can't do it yourself. When you go on your life's adventure you will get wounded, so have those around you who can support you and hold you accountable if needed. It's when we get alone and by ourselves that the devil can pick us off. There is strength in numbers. **tpe**

MART GREEN and his family attend North Church in Edmond, Okla. CHAD BONHAM is a freelance journalist and independent TV producer from Broken Arrow, Okla. He is also the youth pastor as well as a worship team member at Hope Christian Ministries.

E-mail your comments to [tpe@ag.org](mailto:tpe@ag.org).

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## ABCs OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

### A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

### Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

### B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

### Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

### C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

**1-800-4PRAYER**  
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