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## FOCUS ON RETAIL

### The 8 Biggest Retail Lessons Learned from 2024

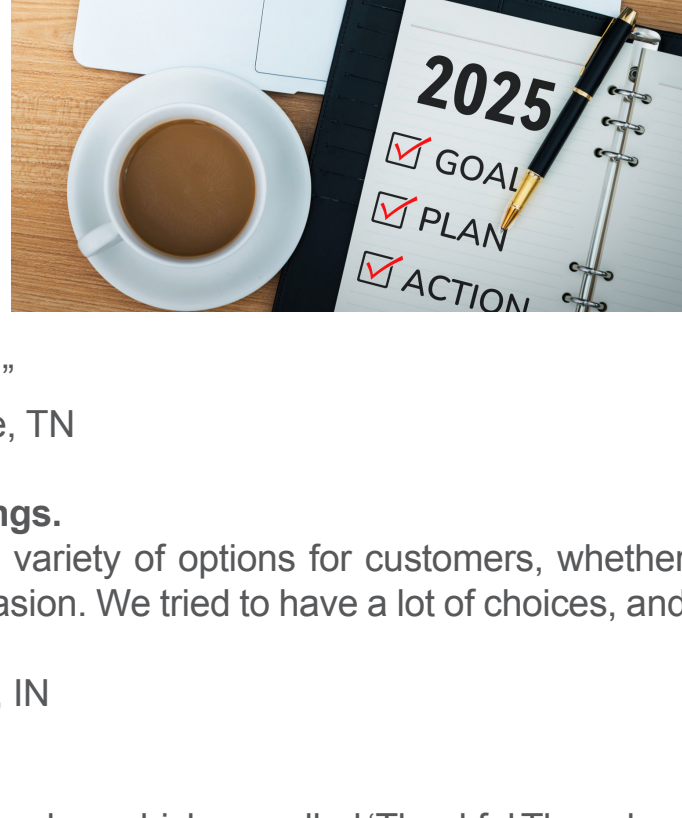
Happy New Year! Now is a good time to look back on the successes and failures of the previous year to evaluate what worked and what didn't work. These valuable insights can help you determine which initiatives you should prioritize and implement in 2025, making you a better steward of your God-given time, money and resources.

The following are 8 key takeaways from Christian retail in 2024.

#### A small change can make a big difference.

"I changed my second coupon from 20% to 25% off one item, and the number of coupons redeemed jumped way up from last year. I couldn't believe that 5% made that much difference, but it looks like it did."

-Vicki Geist, Cedar Springs Christian Store, Knoxville, TN



#### Customers appreciate a variety of product offerings.

"We decided to expand categories to create a wide variety of options for customers, whether they are looking for gifts for grief, birthday or any occasion. We tried to have a lot of choices, and customers have loved that."

-Kevin VanDuyne, Joy Christian Bookstore, Wabash, IN

#### Try something new that helps others.

"We did something new on the three Thursdays in November, which we called 'Thankful Thursday.' We chose three local ministries that are somewhat under the radar but good, Christian based and gave 15% of the sales from that day to that organization. We advertised this on social media with the hope that it could bring more awareness to the ministry. I thought that was a better way to do that instead of just sending a check to them in December, which is what we have done in the past."

-Vicki Geist, Cedar Springs Christian Store, Knoxville, TN

#### Technology can be your friend.

"Looking back on 2024, one of my biggest 'aha' moments has been working with 'Jack' (ChatGPT)—an AI tool I've nicknamed—that has been an invaluable resource. It's helped me brainstorm ideas for marketing, events and social media, while also answering many of my questions about some of the day-to-day ins and outs of the retail business. Using this tool to refine my approach and tackle challenges has been incredibly helpful in making decisions."

-Donna McCollough, Dove Christian Supply, Dothan, AL

#### Don't miss CPE!

"I learned how valuable CPE attendance is to not only see new products but also spend time with other retailers and share ideas and experiences. The new vendors at CPE were wonderful! The variety of new products really was outstanding. Being a very visual person, I appreciate being able to see and touch the products."

-Joyce Barbatti, TJ's Christian Bookstore, Cedar Falls, IA

#### Election years are hard on business.

"The biggest lesson from 2024 is divisive election years are hard on businesses. Even Christian businesses. I guess the old saying of not mixing religion and politics has some truth. Say one thing wrong/different, and social media can hurt you. Although it didn't happen to me, we were hyperaware that it could."

-William Roper, Gospel Book Store, Gretna, LA

#### People are searching for more to life.

"When I think back through the years, I have seen topical threads dominate the publishers' works for a cycle or two. Since COVID, the anxiety level has skyrocketed. This past election cycle hasn't helped. I have been encouraged that there is some hope arising. The current theme seems to be a renewal to be who we claim to be as believers. To sell out to Jesus. To understand that salvation is only found in Jesus. This thread has always been here, but too many times we have wandered along dead end paths. I see hope in a growing hunger in and out of church. Many want a faith that takes them deeper."

-Rick Lewis, Logos Bookstore of Dallas, TX

#### God is faithful.

"This past year, I saw the goodness and faithfulness of our awesome God! I still always need to be more willing and intentional about trusting Him and seeking Him first in all things!"

-Joyce Barbatti, TJ's Christian Bookstore, Cedar Falls, IA

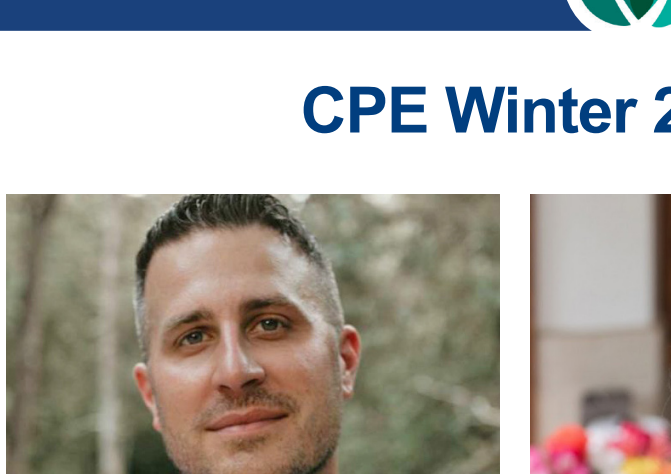


## BESTSELLER LIST

### Monthly Bestsellers List

Each month, the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) publishes a list of the top 50 bestselling titles in Christian retail. To help retailers boost sales, CRA has provided a link to this on our website. The link and portion of that list are also included in our monthly newsletter.

Below are the top 5 Christian bestsellers for December.



1. *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young (9781591451884) Thomas Nelson Publishers
2. *Jesus Calling for Christmas* by Sarah Young (9781400309184) Thomas Nelson Publishers
3. *Jesus Listens for Advent and Christmas* by Sarah Young (9781400244249) Thomas Nelson Publishers
4. *The Dragon's Prophecy* by Jonathan Cahn (9781636413990) Frontline (Charisma House)
5. *The Coming Golden Age* by David Jeremiah (9780785252382) Thomas Nelson Publishers

The ECPA Bestsellers Lists rank the bestselling books published by ECPA members from the previous month, as reported to NPD BookScan. For the full list of titles appearing on the Christian Bestsellers Lists, visit [www.christianbookexpo.com/bestseller](http://www.christianbookexpo.com/bestseller) or [www.christianretailassociation.org](http://www.christianretailassociation.org).

## CPE UPDATE

### CPE Winter 2025 Is Almost Here!



CPE Winter 2025 will be February 16-18, at Tampa's world-class golf resort and hotel, Saddlebrook Resort. To receive a discounted room rate, plus a discounted valet fee and waived resort fee, you will need to make reservations using the link on [www.cpeshow.com](http://www.cpeshow.com) before the room block closes on January 15. At this time, only two-bedroom suites are available. All other room types are sold out.

#### Sunday, February 16

Join us at 10 AM on Sunday for CPE's Praise & Worship service with keynote speaker JP Pokluda. **Jonathan "JP" Pokluda** is the lead pastor of Harris Creek Baptist Church in Waco, TX. His upcoming book, *Your Story Has a Villain* (HarperCollins), will equip readers to overcome spiritual battles and remind them of the victory already secured through Jesus.

#### Monday, February 17

On Monday, attendees can start their day with morning devotions from Moody Publisher's author Asheritah Ciucu. **Asheritah Ciucu** is a bestselling author, national speaker and host of the *Prayers of REST* podcast. A Romanian missionary kid, she's passionate about helping people around the world enjoy Jesus through creative spiritual habits.

After a busy day on the show floor, enjoy an evening of fun and laughter with Bob Smiley. Comedian **Bob Smiley** has been touring for over 25 years. He's written four books for Focus on the Family under the series he created called "The Adventures of Average Boy." His books are aimed at making kids (and their parents) laugh while encouraging them to be the best God created them to be.

#### Show Floor Hours

As CPE adds more exhibitors, we are extending the show floor hours to help more retailers qualify for reimbursement. The show floor will open at 9 AM on Monday and Tuesday and close at 6 PM on Monday and 4 PM on Tuesday.

#### Daily Dress Up Events

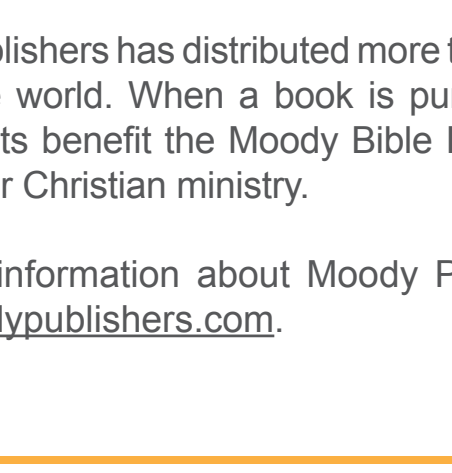
Take a break from the dreary winter weather and pack your bags for some fun under the Florida sun! Bring your Sunday best for a semi-formal dinner banquet on Sunday, February 16. Monday night say "Aloha!" to a relaxing luau-themed evening in the tropics. Hawaiian shirts, leis and flip-flops are encouraged. And last but not least is Tacky Tourist Tuesday on the show floor. Pull out your fanny packs, knee high socks and shades. The tackier, the better.

To learn more about CPE, visit [www.cpeshow.com](http://www.cpeshow.com).

[Register Today](#)

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Moody Publishers Celebrates 130 Years in Christian Publishing



**MOODY Publishers®**

Moody Publishers reflects on 130 years in publishing to God for sustaining its place in the book-selling industry. Since its founding in 1894, Moody Publishers has impacted millions of lives across generations by maintaining a commitment to publish books for all stages of the Christian life—from new believers to seasoned pastors and ministry leaders—as a trusted name in Christian publishing.

Eight years after Dwight L. Moody founded The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, he noticed an alarming lack of Christian books for young people. While preaching in Madison, Wisconsin, Moody surveyed a local bookstore and found nothing suitable, so he started his own company in the fall of 1894. The mission of Moody Publishers has always been to spread the message of hope, redemption and the Gospel. Over the years, the company has sought to resource the church with affordable, truth-filled Christian books.

"We are truly humbled as we look back on 130 years of book publishing. It all started when Dwight L. Moody wanted to provide affordable Christian books for young people—what a legacy and what a timeless vision!" said Randall Payleitner, vice president and publisher. "As our faithful team and amazing authors continue this great work, we are looking to the Lord to know how to best serve our readers in the days and years to come."

Over its 130-year history, Moody Publishers has been home to some of the most influential Christian authors, including Gary Chapman, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, Charles Ryrie, John MacArthur, Erwin Lutzer and many others. Their works have shaped and nurtured the faith of countless individuals and families, and their legacy continues to live on through the books published by Moody.

Moody Publishers has distributed more than 300 million books in 70 languages and 130 countries around the world. When a book is purchased from Moody Publishers, one hundred percent of the profits benefit the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, which exists to educate and equip students for Christian ministry.

For more information about Moody Publishers and its 130th anniversary celebration, visit [www.moodypublishers.com](http://www.moodypublishers.com).

## INDUSTRY TRENDS

### A Boost in Bible Sales



Circina BookScan recorded a 22% increase in Bible sales over a 12-month period, ending October 2024, according to the article "There's a Big Demand for Bibles" on [www.Klove.com](http://www.Klove.com).

In this article, President and CEO of Evangelical Christian Publishers Association Jeff Crosby says that this statistic reflects the trend that he has seen while tracking sales.

"I could see it building throughout the year, and sales of Bible editions have been strong even longer than 2024, dating back to the pandemic," Jeff says.

Jeff attributes this boost in Bible sales to living in an "anxious generation." At the same time, Jeff recognizes that just because someone owns a Bible does not mean that he is reading it.

In the article, Jeff goes on to say, "This year's growth has been exceptional, and I'm grateful for what it could mean in the lives of readers here in North America and around the world. But as we know, the sale of a book or a Bible doesn't necessarily mean someone is reading it, and it's in the reading that lives have a chance to be transformed."

Jeff has worked in the Christian retail industry for over 40 years and has seen products rise and fall. However, the promising sales reports and the interest from the media have given Jeff a sense of hope and gratitude.

To learn more about helping your customers find the Bible that's right for them, be sure to check out Mike Peterson's article "Equipping Readers of the Word," featured in the current edition of *CRA Today* Winter 2025. To receive your complimentary copy of *CRA Today* member's magazine, contact [service@munce.com](mailto:service@munce.com).

## WELCOME

### CRA Welcomes New Members!



As a community within the Christian retail industry, Christian Retail Association (CRA) would like to recognize and welcome our newest associate members.

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- Divine Digital
- GG Keepsakes
- Hello 2 Kids
- Iron Faith Nutrition
- Works of Heart

CRA is a non-profit ministry founded by the Munce Group to help retailers, publishers, authors and industry service providers grow their businesses. Membership benefits include discount programs, networking, training and education, industry information, best practices and a place to exchange ideas.

To learn more about becoming a CRA member, visit [www.christianretailassociation.org](http://www.christianretailassociation.org).

## CRA | Christian Retail Association

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[www.christianretailassociation.org](http://www.christianretailassociation.org)  
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