

Need You Now

Plumb (Curb Records)

Since 1997, Tiffany Arbuckle Lee, known by her stage name Plumb, has offered polished modern pop songs that lend themselves not only to Christian radio, but also movie soundtracks (“Stranded,” “God-Shaped Hole,” “Boys Don’t Cry”).

Lee’s occasionally brutal honesty (“Cut,” “Damaged”) also landed her on the playlists of countless young women and young men dealing with hard issues of life.

Now she returns to the spotlight with her first album in six years, *Need You Now*. With the help of co-writer Matt Bronlewee, Lee navigates heartbreak, hope, healing, happiness and encouragement against a backdrop of melodic pop rock.

Jars of Clay singer Dan Haseltine provides a perfect vocal complement on the inspirational “Drifting.” “One Drop” is a light, catchy song that seems destined for media crossover and provides a soothing contrast to the haunting despair of the opener, “Invisible.”

The title track, which already spent weeks at the top of Christian radio charts, is a rousing prayer for divine intervention, and Lee has said the album is named in honor of the victims of the Newtown, Conn., shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Need You Now alternates between moments of deep contemplation and pure levity and joy—one moment, Lee cries out to God; the next, she celebrates the unconditional love of her husband. Her return should earn attention and accolades from listeners hoping to communicate their faith with authenticity.

Looking From Outside the Church Clique

I felt my face prickle with heat but this time it wasn't a hot flash. It was the humiliating realization that I was a Have-Not in this particular place and time and there was nothing I could do to change that.

We all know they exist: the Haves and the Have-Nots.

First there are the Haves. Those who are accepted in a specific environment—the peeps, the gang, the Sistahs. They're quietly respected; the natural leaders who others seem to automatically fall in line behind.

Often they're the ones with the highest skill level or who have achieved the most acclaim or accomplishments within the tribe. They aren't necessarily boastful or cocky; some are actually quite humble. But they definitely belong and everyone knows it. It's a given.

Then there are the Have-Nots. They're the ones who might hang out with the group, but somehow are not the same. They're on a different level—a slightly lower level—and although the Haves may be friendly enough, and include them as part of the whole, there's an invisible barrier that separates them, and they're never really *in* the group, only *with* the group.

You know exactly what I mean. Right?

We've all been in situations where we're the Haves, and other situations where we're the Have-Nots. Naturally, we gravitate toward the former and avoid the latter if at all possible. Nobody wants to feel like a K-Mart purse in a rack full of

Pradas.

I recently came across the terrific advice: "Go where you're celebrated, not where you're tolerated."

A good idea to bolster sagging self-esteem, surely, but not something we can always do. Sometimes, the circumstances of life toss us into groups of people where we may be unknown, disrespected, unappreciated and dreadfully uncomfortable. But we must stay there for one reason or another.

I was in one of those just last week. In fact, it won't be the last time; I'll be affiliated with that same group of people superior to me for many weeks to come. After I came home feeling wretched from being repeatedly stuffed onto the bottom shelf, or worse yet, ignored completely, I realized that I was going to have to find some way to endure the situation, because it wasn't going away.

It was going to feel like being chosen last for the eighth-grade kickball team every single week for the entire school year.

So I prayed: *Lord, throw me a life preserver—some sort of tool that will help me hold my head up and shoulders back when I'm with these people. I know they're better than me at this particular activity, and my best never will be good enough from their perspective. So please help me endure. No, not just endure, but enjoy myself ... if that's even possible.*

And wouldn't you know? He sent me a message. A very important message that helped me glory in my smallness. A special reminder that Papa God delights in making small things great.

"His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble" (Luke 1:51-52, NLT).

So I'm going to return to that group this week with a new

attitude. I will be smiling. I will be gracious. Because I have a secret. I know something they don't. It's OK if I'm on the bottom rung of the ladder, because one day we "lowlies" will be exalted. And I may even get to be the kickball captain!

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Why Traditional Religion Is Threatened by Women in Ministry

Last week, J. Lee Grady asked a pointed question in his *Fire in My Bones* column: What part of Galatians 3:28 don't we understand?

Galatians 3:28 declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Lee went on to debunk "6 Gender Myths in the Church."

Some may say Lee was asking for it with the headline and even the subject matter, for that matter. His heart may have been on his sleeve as he defended the God-given rights of women to find their place in ministry. But in reality, his six points weren't all that edgy.

If you strip out the emotional triggers, Lee was merely suggesting that women are suited for more than children's ministry, interceding, mothering and following. He suggested

that women can lead worship and teach the Bible with men in the room—and they shouldn't be labeled as Jezebels if God called them to the work.

I thought in this day and age we could all agree on those simple points. But the article set off a firestorm of debate—and it got nasty as the religious spirit manifested.

Mind you, Lee did not assert that women should usurp men as senior pastors of churches or as heads of households, yet that was the point on which many of the vitriolic responses to his column centered. The comment boards became a showcase of traditional, legalistic religion—and flesh-spilling out all over my screen.

Surely, Paul the apostle—whose words about women remaining quiet in church and having no authority over a man are often trumpeted in these types of debates—would have rebuked some of the men commenting on Lee's article for seemingly disregarding the value of women in ministry altogether.

If God can use a donkey to minister to a prophet, can't he use a woman to minister to a man? But rather than arguing all the points in the Bible where God used women in powerful ministries—or even pointing to examples through modern history where God used women to preach the gospel to the masses with signs following—I'd like to address the spirit of religion that oppresses women (and men and children, too).

The nasty comments, flesh, and wrong attitudes expressed in the comments under Lee's article lead me to believe that women who are on fire for God and making an impact in ministry are a threat to some men. Perhaps, better stated, these women are a threat to the religious spirit that's influencing them to launch their oppressive word bombs. I'm by no means a feminist (I can hear that accusation in the spirit even now) but I have a hard time watching so-called men of God degrading women of God. How it must grieve the Holy Spirit!

Something else that grieves the Holy Spirit is false Jezebel accusations. Some people like to accuse women in ministry of being Jezebels. I just wrote a book on the spirit of Jezebel that will make its way to bookstore shelves in June 2013. So false Jezebel accusations hit a nerve with me. A “Jezebel” is not merely a controlling woman.

Jesus called out that woman Jezebel for teaching and seducing His servants to commit sexual immorality and serve idols (Rev. 2:20). When you accuse someone of flowing in a Jezebel spirit, you are accusing them of doing something far more sinister than operating in control and manipulation—you are accusing them of operating in the realm of immorality and idolatry.

Traditional religion works to prevent people from entering the kingdom (Matt. 23:13). As I read through the comments on Lee’s article, I wondered how many souls died and went to hell while the religious spirit was having a field day breeding strife, twisting Scripture and degrading women. Some people seemingly spent the better part of their day arguing over women in ministry. Did it change anything? Did it save any souls? No, the devil had a field day with it.

One commenter, Alan Mowbray, perhaps said it best: “If we exerted as much attention to seeking God’s heart and introducing the lost to Jesus as we do in arguing who does what in the body of Christ, would this even be an issue?” Amen.

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How to Battle a Spiritual Predator

"The fear of public disgrace never forced me to keep silent." Job 31:34 CEV

During one of my many prayer walks around my subdivision, I couldn't help but notice that one of my neighbors had a vulture infestation. ☐ That's right—a whole herd (gaggle? flock? committee?) of vultures had taken to lining up across the peak of his roof.

Now, vultures aren't cute like sparrows or doves; they're huge, hulking predators with scary, hungry eyes, dagger-like talons, and ominous, sharp beaks that could rip a body to shreds. And often do.

☐
The thing is, vultures eat dead things. ☐ They're raptorial birds that subsist almost entirely on carcasses. So what in the world are those vultures waiting around here for? ☐ They wouldn't be hanging around if there wasn't plenty to eat. ☐ They'd take off for deader pastures.

☐
The more I thought about it, I began to wonder if maybe I don't have vultures on my own roof. Oh, not the beak-and-feathers kind, but lowlife, spiritual predators. Fearmongers lurking over my shoulder because I keep them well fed with dead stuff. I discard tons of decomposing debris. . . failed relationships, half-cocked ideas that never came to fruition, incomplete projects, abandoned dreams and hopes, good spiritual intentions gasping their last breaths. Rotting, all of them.

A vulture's smorgasbord of demise, dissolution, and decay.

Yep, they're up there all right. I'm sure of it. Hovering,

waiting to humiliate me by picking at the bones of my failures. To remind me—and the rest of the world—that I blew it. Again.

But I don't want them stalking me anymore, biding their time until I falter at something else so they can swoop down and sink in their blood-smeared, vulture-y claws. I'm tired of feeling paralyzed, afraid to do anything for fear of doing it wrong.

Can you identify?

I believe that most women, at some point in their lives, are assaulted by the saturating fear of humiliation. Of being completely embarrassed. You may be there right now, wrestling with the nagging, colon-knotting worry that you won't fit in. ☐ at you'll look foolish. Or ignorant. Or different. ☐ at you'll be laughed at, shamed, or ridiculed for something over which you have no control.

And that's the bottom line, isn't it? Fear is really about losing control. About things over which we feel powerless sneaking up and whacking us over the head. ☐ Things looming in our future, taking shape in the present, or haunting us from the past. ☐ Things we might not even be aware of. ☐ Things that make us act a certain way for no apparent reason. It's true—sometimes our adult behavior is influenced by unconscious fears from past events that affect the habits, quirks, and perspectives we have today.

Ghosts from the Past

Take my hat fetish, for example. I've worn hats for decades and never really considered why my closet looks like the Cat in the Hat exploded. . . stacks of hats everywhere, clogging wall hooks and overflowing shelves. I just thought I liked hats.

Some women are shoe fanatics or fingernail buffs; I'm a hat

girl. I can no more pass up a cute hat than Lady Gaga can pass up a lingerie sale.

But something happened recently that opened my eyes to the real, vulture-induced reason for my headwear addiction. It all started so innocently. I posted a Facebook comment about my kicky new fedora, and a childhood school chum, Vicki, responded with an out-of-the-blue question: “Just curious, Deb—are you the daughter who never remembered to brush her hair? I started carrying a brush in my purse after your mom (my teacher at the time) told our health class how important it was to keep your hair neat. She mentioned a daughter that she always had to remind of this. . . . Was it you?”

All of a sudden, I was transported back in time, like a scene from a Stephen King movie, to middle school. I began reliving, in writhing agony, a humiliating memory I had apparently blocked. I was a dorky sixth grader at the time and couldn't have cared less what I looked like. ☐ There were so many better things for a rough-and-tumble tomboy to think about—hitting home runs, riding my bike, torturing my sister—it simply never occurred to me to glance in a mirror when I wasn't brushing my teeth.

On this particular day, I had quietly slipped into the back of my mother's health classroom to stick something—I don't remember what—in her purse. ☐The students' backs were facing me and I was tiptoeing while holding my breath, trying so hard not to draw attention to myself while Mama was up front teaching.

Suddenly, Mama stopped in the middle of her hygiene lecture and told everyone to turn around and look at my tousled hair as “an example of poor grooming habits.” ☐They were seventh graders—a whole year older than me—and I didn't know any of them, so I was absolutely mortified. And horror of all horrors, there were at least ten boys in that class. Gulp. I ducked my head and dashed out the door just as the first

giggles began to roll across the room.

Forty years later, sitting in my computer chair, reliving this painful ordeal, my face flamed and I wanted to crawl beneath my desk. In retrospect, as a mother myself, I realized that Mama hadn't meant to hurt me, just jolt me into listening to an admonition I'd ignored a hundred times. She was trying to mold me into a human being instead of a gorilla. My head understood. But my heart still felt that gut-searing shame like the embarrassing episode had just happened.

□

The long-repressed memory seemed to roll up the shades in my brain and beam light into a corner that's been dark most of my life. All of a sudden the angels sang that full-bodied, eight-note "Ahhhh" chord that means something important just happened.

What an epiphany! I finally got it! I've never been able to explain why I continue to wear, year after unfashionable year, those "embarrassing" hats that my kids used to beg me to hide when their friends were around. Why I just have to buy every perky bonnet I see. Why I once chose to leave a basketball game rather than remove my hat when informed that headgear was not allowed in the gym.

My hat fetish was really those nasty vultures all along—those despicable spirit-eaters hovering over my shoulder, threatening further humiliation, and doing their darndest to build a nest in my hair.

So how am I to rid myself of these fear marauders whose circling shadows make embarrassment feel inevitable?

My clue to how to defeat the spiritual vultures came from the real vultures infesting my neighbor's property. As I crossed the lawn to get a closer look at their rooftop hangout, the hideous creatures first stared me down and spread their wings to threaten me. When I stood my ground, they flew away. My

presence frightened them. Vultures aren't intimidated by lifeless carrion, but pit them against a vibrant life force and they're overwhelmed. Outclassed. Outta here.

□
Then it occurred to me: □That's it! □That's how we get rid of our spiritual vultures, too—we seek help from the biggest, most powerful life force there is. Those unseen carnivores bringing us down can't remain in His presence. □They're totally intimidated. . . overwhelmed. . .outclassed. □They're outta here.

“□The Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world” (1 John 4:4 NLT). □ at, dear sister, is the difference between an unholy spirit and the Holy Spirit. One has a BB gun and the other has an AK-47. And the Enforcer is on our side.

Spiritual warfare in a nutshell.

I have a feeling your next question is, “So, Deb, are you still wearing hats?” □The answer is yes, but not out of compulsion anymore. When I don the plucky Princess Kate number I bought in England (my, oh my, don't those Brits do hats right!), I hold my head high, smile with confidence, and never glance over my shoulder for hungry, winged predators.

Because I know who has my back. And He's packing some heat.

So. . . are there any vultures lurking around your roof? I know a great Exterminator.

*This is an excerpt from **Debora Coty's** latest book, *Fear, Faith, and a Fistful of Chocolate: Wit and Wisdom for Sidestepping Life's Worries* (Barbour Publishing). Coty is the author of 10 books, newspaper columnist, orthopedic occupational therapist and tennis addict. Follow Debora on Twitter @deboracoty.*

Defeating an Unbelievable Enemy of Your Faith

With Babylon rising, cruel bondage is a reality for many in the body of Christ. Many blood-bought believers are running what feels like an endless rat race that steals their energy—and often their dreams and visions of a better tomorrow.

I assure you there is a way of escape, a path to rest, a sure route to enter your Promised Land. But there's a behemoth standing in between you and God's best for your life. It's an enemy so insidious that it's difficult to recognize and perhaps more difficult to cast out, because its very nature is to rob the faith you need to overcome it. But nothing is too hard for God!

That enemy is called unbelief, and it's often the result of deferred hope that makes the heart sick (Prov. 13:12). This is not a new enemy. Rather, unbelief is an ancient foe that continues to oppress modern day "believers" despite the centuries-old revelation that the just shall live by faith (Heb. 10:38).

Falling on Deaf Ears

Indeed, when the Lord made promises of **deliverance** to the children of Israel in Exodus, those promises fell on deaf ears. Since faith comes by hearing, the spirit of unbelief works to deafen our ears so we can't listen to what the Spirit of God is saying to the church. And unbelief often works

through oppression.

God said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel: 'I am the Lord. I will free you from your oppression and will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt. I will redeem you with a powerful arm and great acts of judgment. I will claim you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who has freed you from your oppression in Egypt. I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your very own possession. I am the Lord!' So Moses told the people of Israel what the Lord had said, but they refused to listen anymore. They had become too discouraged by the brutality of their slavery" (Exodus 6:2-9 NLT)

Is that you? Do you tune out during church because you've heard it all before and nothing ever changes? Have you stopped your daily devotions because you are too exhausted from work to spend time with the Lord? Does your speech sound like one who is defeated rather than one who is victorious? What types of thoughts go through your head when you lay down at night? What about when you get up in the morning? Are you discouraged by the brutality of Babylon?

The Amplified Bible translation of Exodus 6:9 says, "they refused to listen to Moses because of their impatience and anguish of spirit and because of their cruel bondage." The Message says they were "beaten down in spirit by the harsh slave conditions."

Babylon (the world's system) will certainly beat you down—and enslave you—if you let it. But you don't have to let it. You can take a stand by the choice of your will to believe God's promises and shut out the work of unbelief. You can renew your mind and send unbelief running.

Shaking Off Unbelief

I used to have a spirit of unbelief. I was studying Kenneth

Hagin's classic materials on faith at the time, so it was somewhat ironic when a **deliverance minister** confronted me with the cold hard truth. Although I was studying faith, I simply was not able to apply the principles of faith with any success. I even doubted my own salvation. I was also full of fear and doubt, two other combatants to faith. Even still, I recognize unbelief trying to creep into my soul and put me in back in bondage. We all have to fight the good fight of faith—every day (1 Tim. 6:12).

I'm declaring to you right now that it's time shake off the impatience. By faith and patience we inherit the promise of God (Heb. 6:12). It's time to shake off the anguish of spirit. God has not given us a spirit of anguish. He's blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). It's time to shake off the bondages in our lives, whether that's debt, religion, or some type of sin that's hindering intimate fellowship with God.

Saints, it's time to combat the spirit of unbelief that's keeping us from our Promised Land. It's time to fight the good fight of faith with fiercer determination than ever before. I'm not talking about a prosperity gospel or a name-it-claim-it theology. I'm talking about walking in the victory Christ died to give you. I'm talking about walking free from every bondage, including unbelief, that's holding you back from your destiny. I'm talking about resisting the devil. He has to flee. Amen.

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Hope for Children Conceived by Rape

Adopted at 3 months old, Juda Myers didn't know the violent circumstances surrounding her birth until she met her birth mother, Ann, more than seven years ago. Ann had been gang-raped by eight men while walking home one night. Though her mother wanted Ann to abort the baby, she found a safe place to give birth with the help of clergy.

For 48 years, Ann prayed that she would meet Myers, and the two finally came face-to-face in 2005. For Myers, learning the circumstances of her own birth inspired her to start Choices4Life, a group devoted to supporting victims of rape and their children.

"There was no other organization attending to the specific needs of those with rape conception stories," Myers says, adding that many rape victims are shunned and insulted for wanting to keep a child conceived by rape.

"What society doesn't realize is that baby is the mother's baby," Myers says. "The rapist stole from her what was not his, and he will not steal her child, too. Society needs to know the truth and stop the prejudice against mothers and children of rape conception."

Choices4Life was founded in February 2011 with an intent to restore honor and dignity to women and children of rape conception while promoting the value of every human life and raising awareness of the multitudes living in shame from sexual abuse.

Myers tells the story of her journey to forgiveness in *Hostile*

Stand Up and Fight Back

✘ **Charisma House**
Ken Abraham

We are at war, and *New York Times* best-selling author Ken Abraham's newest release, *Stand Up and Fight Back: How to Take Authority Over Satan and Win*, packs a powerful punch against the forces of darkness.

Abraham demonstrates in no uncertain terms that we are in a daily spiritual battle against Satan and his demonic forces, and the author argues that the church should take off the dingy garments of complacency, put on the triumphant armor of God and take this fight seriously.

Due to the nature of this battle, Abraham reminds us the weapons of our warfare are spiritual rather than physical. Before we boast in our strength, he says, our fight begins and ends in the name and through the blood of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Stand Up and Fight Back unveils the truth about Satan, his agenda and his tactics, while illuminating how the body of Christ can use defensive and offensive tactics to win. Abraham specifically warns against open doors that give the enemy a foothold in any area of our lives.


This eye-opening and engaging read on spiritual warfare is an essential tool in any Christian's literary arsenal. With the enemy's incessant, rabid hunt to kill, steal and destroy, we can't afford to sit idly by while a war for the souls of men

rages on.

Hillsong United Releases 'Zion'

Since its inception as the youth worship arm of Australia's Hillsong Church in Sydney, Hillsong United has delivered worshipful lyrics with relevant melodies, eventually finding its niche alongside Passion and Planetshakers projects while evolving to meet the changing tastes of its listeners. *Zion*, the group's newest project, is further evidence of this trend, adding more electronic and synthesized elements for a modern worship masterpiece.

While past releases have leaned toward high-energy, rock-fused anthems, *Zion* is frequently melodic and introspective, as evidenced on the euro-pop track "Nothing Like Your Love," the ballad "King of Heaven" and the fragile "Mercy Mercy," which tenderly cries, "Arrest my soul from this reckless path/Release the chains in me." Still, tracks like the dance-inspired opening song, "Relentless," and the energy-pulsing "Scandal of Grace" show the group still has what it takes to energize a crowd.

A deluxe version of the album, with five extra tracks,  including "Mountain" and remix versions of "Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)" and "Stay and Wait," will be released alongside the standard version.

As a collection of memorable songs and a journey of worship, *Zion* succeeds in giving listeners more of what they love about Hillsong United. Like *Aftermath*, the group's 2011 release, it should easily find its place as one of the top albums of the

year.

Chris Tomlin's Newest Release 'Burning Lights'

Few things are likely to garner more attention in Christian music circles today than a new release from Chris Tomlin. The singer-songwriter's journey from acceptance to dominance on music charts highlights his role as a harbinger of the modern worship movement and its integration into mainstream.

Burning Lights, Tomlin's latest project, is a notable entry in his discography, providing familiar music for longtime listeners and entry points for new ones.

"Whom Shall I Fear (God of the Angel Armies)," a piano-driven, earnest praise tune, stands firmly alongside his other classics. The rock-rap of "Awake My Soul" with rap/spoken word proclamations from Lecrae and the electric pop of "God's Great Dance Floor" wade more into new territory for the artist—the latter turning into a virtual dance hall celebration.

"Crown Him (Majesty)," featuring Kari Jobe, follows the "Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" formula, blending a familiar hymn with new elements.

Other standout tracks include new versions of "Jesus, Son of God," featuring Christy Nockels, and "White Flag," already a hit on a previous Passion project.

Burning Lights is a well-rounded collection, highlighting Tomlin's versatility as an artist and heart for furthering the praise and worship emphasis of today's music world heralding

Jesus.

Power in the Blood

Sandie Freed (Chosen)

In her latest book, *Power in the Blood*, prophetess Sandie Freed delivers a power-packed testament that declares us heirs of God's spiritual inheritance through the blood of Jesus, which gives us direct access to His throne room to receive daily strategies for triumphant living.

Freed treks through the biblical record, stopping at landmark passages and highlighting the significance of blood offerings and covenants, while also uncovering our spiritual lineage as descendants of the royal bloodline of Jesus. She challenges us to shift religious paradigms that hold us back from fully grasping what reigning with Christ means in the spiritual realm—power, authority and victory over the works of the enemy.

This book transfuses readers with life-giving, fresh revelation while exposing the enemy's lies that attempt to steal the spiritual gifts God has for us and the hidden mysteries in His Word declaring our heirship of His promises.

Freed digs deep into the well of the saving, cleansing and empowering blood of Jesus to provide effective spiritual warfare tactics. She also lays out a crossover plan from the wilderness of sin and our past to the land of promise, where we claim our inheritance only through the precious blood of Jesus.