

Mandisa: Radiating Jesus

American Idol alum Mandisa Hundley expresses a newfound freedom on her new album, aptly titled *Freedom*. She says that when she started working on this new CD, she was drawn to songs that dealt with the issue of freedom. "I knew that's where God was directing me and that's what He wanted me to talk about. ... And then I realized that I could not do an album called *Freedom* and proclaim that God was able to set people free and still be held captive by a lifelong food addiction. ... I didn't want to be a hypocrite; I didn't want to tell other people that He could set them free and not believe it for myself."

She hired a personal trainer and changed the way she thought about food. She has already lost 70 pounds and is still pressing forward. She says her new album is "very encouraging to me and I know it will be encouraging to people that are fighting, feeling like they are bound by something. I feel like this is an album that will convince them that we serve a very powerful God who's able to set us free."

The Robe Special Edition


20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

Starring Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, Victor Mature, Jay Robinson and Richard Boone

Now a new generation can enjoy this classic coming-to-faith story. Academy Award-winning actor Richard Burton stars as Marcellus Gallio, a Roman centurion who was sent to Jerusalem to oversee Christ's crucifixion. Gambling with other soldiers,

Gallio wins the robe Jesus wore. But he starts having hallucinations and believes he is cursed because of the robe, which his escaped slaved has. So he sets out to find the robe to destroy it and break the curse over his life. But on his journey he finds faith and converts to Christianity. This film was nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor (Burton) and Best Cinematography and won for Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design. Bonus features include an introduction by Martin Scorsese, commentary, several featurettes, vintage celebrity intros and much more. This newly restored film, which took almost two years to complete, releases on March 17. This story of faith is the perfect way for young and old to celebrate the Easter season. Click here to preorder *The Robe*.

Norman Hutchins: Seeing God in Difficult Times

When recording artist Norman Hutchins sensed God calling  him to pray every day at 5 a.m. in early 2006, he didn't know why. But when complications from a delicate eye surgery left him completely blind that same year, he soon discovered the answer.

“The Lord said, ‘Norman, no matter how gifted and talented and anointed you may be, you are no good to Me if you don't take care of you.’”

Hutchins, 46, is referring to his battle with diabetes, a disease he was diagnosed with years ago. The singer said for six months he depended on his wife, Karen, and others to escort him to his pulpit where he preached every Sunday during

the ordeal. He says loosing his sight forced him to repent for not taking care of the body God gave him.

Chorus of the Saints

 *By Revive, Reunion Records.*

Revive have been together for more than four years and released three albums in their native Australia. In 2007 Third Day heard them perform and the music veterans became mentors to this young band. Last year Dave Hanbury (lead vocals), Tyler Hall (guitar), Mike Tenkate (drums) and Rich Thompson (bass) brought their music and ministry stateside. Musically, Revive fit in the pop-rock genre, but their lyrics also put them in the worship category. The title song and opener remind listeners of God's faithfulness. "The Truth Is" turns down the volume a bit but not the energy, as the group declares that "there is none like You." "You Know" is a standout with Third Day's Mac Powell joining in. Worship ballad "Power" sings of the awe we'll feel in heaven as we can only cry, "Power, glory, honor to you our King." At times it seems as if they are trying too hard (pushing vocals), but their talent and passion mixed with experience will have them ministering in music for years to come. [Click here to purchase this CD.](#)

DVD Resources

✘ Isaiah 61, a new media company and division of the American Association of Christian Counselors, aims to equip, educate and encourage people biblically and help them grow spiritually. In order to do this, the company offers an array of DVD studies from leading authorities on topics such as marriage, spirituality, finances and prayer. Gain insights from Beth Moore, John Ortberg, Angela Thomas, Tommy Nelson, Beverly LaHaye, Dr. Catherine Hart Weber and many others. Last month the company launched with the first teaching in its Your Spiritual Life Series and the eight-disc Extraordinary Women's Series, which includes the teachings *A Woman's Prayer Life* by Beth Moore, *A Marriage Without Regret* by Kay Arthur and *A Woman's Finances* by Mary Hart. More recently Isaiah 61 released the first in the Hot Topics! Series, *Sexuality: A Biblical Perspective*, in which pastor Tommy Nelson teaches God's perspective on sex and romance. Recently released are *Forgiveness: Understanding and Getting Beyond Our Pain & Past* with insights from Dr. David Stoop, and the *Financial Rescue* teaching from Scott and Bethany Palmer. These products can be purchased at or in Christian bookstores. Also available are free study guides for each DVD . These teachings are appropriate for individual or group study.

The Wealthiest Christians in History

Excerpts from The Hole in Our Gospel by Richard Stearns

It is important to put the American Church in perspective.

Simply stated, it is the wealthiest community of Christians in the history of Christendom. How wealthy? The total income of American churchgoers is \$5.2 trillion. (That's more than five thousand billion dollars.) It would take just a little over 1 percent of the income of American Christians to lift the poorest one billion people in the world out of extreme poverty. Said another way, American Christians, who make up about 5 percent of the Church worldwide, control about half of global Christian wealth; a lack of money is not our problem.

A few years back I had the opportunity to spend some time with former president Jimmy Carter. World Vision was collaborating with Habitat for Humanity on one of their massive "blitz build" projects in the Philippines, and I was assigned to work on the same house as President Carter. As we worked, he shared that he had just been asked to prepare a speech that would answer the question, what is the greatest challenge facing humankind in the twenty-first century? It was 1999, and the world was focused on the beginning of the new millennium. I was quite surprised at the former president's conclusion. He believed that the greatest problem of our time was *the growing gap between the richest and poorest people on earth*. Let me start with the good news. You're rich, we're rich, and the Church in America is rich. And now I am sure you are thinking that I am wrong, that you're not rich, and neither is your church. But bear with me, because wealth is always measured in relative terms. Brace yourselves for this good news! If your income is \$25,000 per year, you are wealthier than approximately 90 percent of the world's population! If you make \$50,000 per year, you are wealthier than 99 percent of the world! Does this shock you? Remember, of the 6.7 billion people on earth, almost half of them live on less than two dollars a day.

If you earn \$50,000 per year in America and you don't feel rich, it's because you are comparing yourself to people who have more than you do-those living above even the 99th percentile of global wealth. It's also because we tend to gauge whether or not we are wealthy based on the things we *don't* have. If we think we need a bigger house or apartment, a nicer car, more clothes, or the ability to go out for dinner more often, we don't feel "rich." Again, it's all relative to our expectations. When you realize that 93 percent of the world's people don't own a car, your old clunker starts to look pretty good. Our difficulty is that we see our American lifestyles as normative, when in fact they are grossly distorted compared to the rest of the world. We don't *believe* we are wealthy, so we don't see it as our responsibility to help the poor. We are deceived.

There is much at stake. The world we live in is under siege-3 billion are desperately poor, 1 billion hungry, millions are trafficked in human slavery, 10 million children die needlessly each year, wars and conflicts are wreaking havoc, pandemic diseases are spreading, ethnic hatred is flaming, and terrorism is growing. Most of our brothers and sisters in Christ in the developing world live in grinding poverty. And in the midst of this stands the Church of Jesus Christ in America, with resources, knowledge, and tools unequalled in the history of Christendom. I believe that we stand on the brink of a defining moment. We have a choice to make.

When historians look back in one hundred years, what will they write about this nation of 340,000 churches? What will they say of the Church's response to the great challenges of our time-AIDS, poverty, hunger, terrorism, war? Will they say that these authentic Christians rose up courageously and responded to the tide of human suffering, that they rushed to the front

lines to comfort the afflicted and to douse the flames of hatred? Will they write of an unprecedented outpouring of generosity to meet the urgent needs of the world's poor? Will they speak of the moral leadership and compelling vision of our leaders? Will they write that this, the beginning of the twenty-first century, was the Church's finest hour?

Or will they look back and see a Church too comfortable, insulated from the pain of the rest of the world, empty of compassion, and devoid of deeds? Will they write about a people who stood by and watched while a hundred million died of AIDS and fifty million children were orphaned, of Christians who lived in luxury and self-indulgence while millions died for lack of food and water? Will schoolchildren read in disgust about a Church that had the wealth to build great sanctuaries but lacked the will to build schools, hospitals, and clinics? In short, will we be remembered as the Church with a gaping hole in its gospel?


I Believe There Is More

 *By Don Moen, Integrity Music.*

As enjoyable as high-energy, fast-paced praise and worship music is, there is something refreshing about the simple, easy-listening music Don Moen offers on his latest release. His collection of 14 songs, including nine tracks he wrote or co-wrote, are more mellow than most of the worship music offered today. But that certainly doesn't diminish the power his music will have to help listeners enter into the presence of the Lord. Moen goes a little country on "Thank God I'm Free," an energetic song of praise. Title track "I Believe There Is More" is a song of faith declaring that even though

God has done great things so far, He is going to do still more. "O God of Abraham," with a Celtic touch, declares that God can do anything. "I'll Say Yes" is a song of complete surrender "casting aside any fear and price" to obey. Although this album isn't the rousing music that some might be used to, there is a sense of peace that comes through in Moen's straightforward yet more mellow approach. Listeners will be encouraged and renewed as they allow the music and lyrics to wash over them. [Click here to purchase this CD.](#)

Richard Stearns: Living the Whole Gospel

In 1998 Richard Stearns left his position as CEO of Lenox  to become the president of World Vision, a Christian relief organization. This decision changed his life, and he shares his journey in his new book, The Hole in Our Gospel. He has traveled more than 1 million miles and shares stories of how the gospel has revolutionized lives, but it's the whole gospel in action. He says, "Christianity is a faith that was meant to be spread. ... Our charge is to both proclaim and embody the gospel so that others can see, hear, and feel God's love in tangible ways. ... The gospel means much more than personal salvation of individuals. It means a social revolution." Stearns discovered a hole in his own Christian faith and now challenges American Christians and the church to examine their gospel and determine to live the whole gospel, one that gives us a vision for transforming the world today. Here Stearns shares thoughts about his book.

Bluetree: Worship From Ireland

✘ Although Bluetree has been together for about five years, their song “God of This City” is likely to be more familiar than the band itself. But with their new CD release on March 3, people have the chance to hear more from this worship band. Aaron Boyd (lead vocals/guitar), Andy McCann (bass), Pete Kernoghan (deejay) and Johnny Hobson (drums), all hailing from Belfast, Ireland, feel that they are called to lead worship, “to be creating songs and music that help people,” Boyd says.

But what kind of a name is Bluetree? Boyd explains that when the group was deciding on a name, they were thinking about how Christians are to be salt and light, they are called to be different. “The simple concept of having a blue tree in a forest would stand out. A blue tree would be different; a blue tree would not be the run of the mill green tree, brown bark. ... And if you’ve seen a blue tree, you’d look at it, it would be a bit different than the rest and you would take a bit more notice of that tree.”

The Coming Israel Awakening

✘ *By James W. Goll, Chosen, softcover, 272 pages, \$.*

This book starts with a bang, detailing a 2006 vision of an angel appearing before James Goll, clothed in a glowing robe

and gold sash emblazoned with the words: "Israel Awakening." And, it never lets up, delivering a combination of history lesson, prophetic revelation and a stirring call to action. Many are likely to feel embarrassed reading the author's recap of the Church's shameful history, which ultimately helped fuel Adolph Hitler's murderous elimination of six million Jews. Echoing the cries of "never again!" heard in Israel, Goll urges Christians to let this be their watchword in standing against the anti-Semitism that is rising again across the world. The Coming Israel Awakening is also excellent resource material, including an overview of Israel's history, a recap of revivals and Holy Spirit movements, and a list of referral ministries. It will also inspire readers with such details as Christianity being the world's leading faith (twice the growth rate of Islam), the mushrooming of Christianity in Africa and the explosion of conversions since Israel's rebirth in 1948. [Click here to purchase this book.](#)