

Sight and Sound

BOOKS

Light Force

By Brother Andrew and Al Janssen,
Revell, hardcover, 330 pages, \$.

In the presence of deadly force, Brother Andrew, “God’s Smuggler,” moves fearlessly throughout the Middle East with a Bible in each hand and a “light force” by his side. Historic in its telling and inspirational in its reading, *Light Force: A Stirring Account of the Church Caught in the Middle East Crossfire* is a reminder that the Holy Land may be the most overlooked mission field in the world today. By way of enlightenment, then, Brother Andrew details his fight to equip the church that is struggling to survive in this deeply divided field of war.

From Lebanon and the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to Jerusalem, Brother Andrew serves God’s purposes with divine favor and blessed determination. In this story, we begin to see the Spirit-filled wisdom of Matthew 10:23: “When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.”

J. James Estrada

True Prosperity

By James Robison, Tyndale House
Publishers, hardcover, 176 pages, \$.

Have nothing or have it all—these are the two extremes seen in the church, author and TV personality James Robison writes. In the simply titled *True Prosperity*, Robison examines the Scriptures for God's perspective on this divisive issue.

In sharing his life story, Robison reveals that he, “a boy born as the product of a forced sexual relationship and raised in poverty,” has learned that being raised in a dysfunctional family doesn't relegate a person to a lack of success for the rest of his life. Despite his beginnings, he never believed that God had overlooked him.

Using his story and the examples of many others, Robison puts prosperity in biblical context, explaining that it is not something he seeks; rather, he seeks God's will and “prosperity finds me.” Though he and his wife, Betty, always have lived below their means and have achieved a measure of financial wealth, he writes: “Possessing things is not the issue. It is when our things possess us that they become a problem.”

In *True Prosperity*, Robison has achieved what he set out to do—bring biblical balance to what has long been a hot-button issue in the church.

Christine D. Johnson

Watcher

By Marilyn Hickey, Harrison House,
softcover, 288 pages, \$.

There are certain things the enemy simply does not want the believer to know. Darkness and confusion cannot stand the clear light of truth invading its preferred and pervasive dens

of ignorance and indifference.

However, Marilyn Hickey has learned a thing or two in 30 years of ministry. Her latest book, *Watcher: Are You Ready for His Return?* inspects end-time truths and includes topics never-before specified for the Christian.

We discover Bible “love” is absent in the Quran, but God has a plan for Muslims. The heavenly Father’s call for revival in the Islamic world is unveiled by examination of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Find yourself in one of three places: the overcoming church, the lukewarm church or the tribulation church. Solve the Revelation timeline. Learn the names of the Antichrist, the counterfeit of Jesus.

Avoid being a last-days scoffer by transforming ritual into relationship. *Watcher* will keep you focused.

J. James Estrada

MUSIC

Nothing Without You

By Smokie Norful, EMI Gospel.

Smokie Norful became a household name with his megahit “I Need You Now.” Receiving airplay on gospel and mainstream radio stations alike, the song catapulted this young man to the title of Billboard’s No. 1 Gospel Artist of 2003 and saw him racking up award after award for the phenomenal debut CD.

Well, Norful is back with his sophomore project, a new collection of songs titled *Nothing Without You*. Many will

enjoy the riveting opening cut "Power." Reminiscent of the classic '70s sound, this song showcases Norful's ability to merge the old with the new, all while giving praise to God.

Making sure to provide us with some Sunday-morning church, cuts such as "Worthy" and "I Understand" beckon the listener to sing along with hands lifted. "God Is Able," one of the most moving cuts on this project, showcases Norful at his best—with an emotive vocal delivery and simply a piano and strings.

Taking us back to the old-time church, Norful also includes the classics "I Know the Lord Will Make a Way" and "Can't Nobody Do Me Like Jesus." Music great George Duke provides the CD's title track, a beautiful love song to the Lord.

Other well-known producers include brothers Cedric and Victor Caldwell, Alex Asaph Ward, Myron Butler, Tommy Sims and Percy Bady. "Continuous Grace," with its uplifting message and powerful choir vocals, is certain to be sung in choir stands everywhere. This 12-track CD closes with the poignant "Healing in His Tears."

Nothing Without You is a powerful collage of inspirational tunes and solidifies Smokie Norful's place in gospel music.

René Williams

Clean

By Shane & Shane, Inpop Records.

Shane Bernard and Shane Everett, known as Shane & Shane, follow up their last disc, the stripped-down Upstairs, with a new pop offering titled Clean. The duo, delivering a theme

focusing on redemption, new beginnings and a celebration of God's grace, use their talented vocals in acoustic-led praise on 11 memorable tracks.

The tempos range from the pop-rock sounds of "Fringes" and "Saved by Grace" to the mellower message of "Acres of Hope" and "Yearn." Along with original tunes, Shane & Shane breathe new life into Twila Paris' standard "He Is Exalted" and the familiar praise song "There Is None Like You."

"God Did" delivers an important message about looking holy versus being holy. The disc closes with the simple praise of "Your Grace Is Sufficient."

With their voices conveying the passion behind their words, Shane & Shane showcase more of the music that made their previous releases such noteworthy efforts. Clean should be a welcome listen for fans of earthy, organic worship.

DeWayne Hamby

Gloria

By various artists, Rocketown Records.

Imagine if the Rocketown Records family of artists were throwing a Christmas party complete with new music under the direction of Scott Dente and their buddy Charlie Peacock at Peacock's Art House studios. Gloria, a multi-artist holiday collection, requires a little less preparation than that actual party but nonetheless delivers the same personal feel. The project features acoustic and pop renderings of mostly original material and a few classics.

Watermark's Christy Nockels could sing "Happy Birthday" and

make it sound like a new song, so it's no surprise that her powerful rendition of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" shines as one of the highlights of this disc. Also, the extremely underrated Cindy Morgan delivers a jazz-flavored "Follow That Star." Shaun Groves and George Rowe blend their voices together on the organic sounds of "O Come, All Ye Faithful."

The bluesy folk of "Love Came Just in Time" is a departure from more traditional sounds, but Taylor Sorenson and Alatheia create a great musical moment. Christine Dente's "Christmas Kind of Feeling," on the other hand, is an instant classic that seems destined for a TV special. Guest Amy Grant also pitches in to deliver the Christmas praise "God Is With Us."

The Rocketown family has blended themselves together well to create a holiday offering that could be a yearly listening tradition for many.

DeWayne Hamby

When He Came

By Martha Munizzi,

Martha Munizzi Music.

Although previously well-known in contemporary Christian music and Christian conference circles, Martha Munizzi has recently experienced phenomenal success in the gospel community. Her previous project, *The Best Is Yet to Come*, peaked at No. 2 on Billboard's Top Gospel chart and saw the praise and worship artist's ministry expand to epic proportions.

The songwriter of "Say the Name," "Shout" and "Because of Who You Are" (recorded by Munizzi as well as Vicki Yohe) decided to hit while the iron is hot, delivering a new Christmas

project titled When He Came. Her first studio project contains a diverse collection of revamped traditional favorites and new holiday picks.

A funky rendition of “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” and the original song “White Christmas,” penned by Munizzi and fellow praise and worship artist Israel Houghton of Israel and New Breed, are two standouts. Rousing remakes of “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem” are made extra special with Munizzi’s soulful and reverent flair.

The gospel-flavored “His Name Shall Be Called” will certainly find you clapping your hands and rejoicing. One of the most stirring offerings on the 10-track CD is a medley of two Christmas favorites “Silent Night” and “Away in a Manger,” featuring Munizzi’s children on background vocals.

Other great cuts include the beautiful title tune, “When He Came,” the urban-tinged “Peace on Earth” and “My Only Wish,” a song about the greatest gift of all.

The combination of a powerful voice, touching songs and impressive production make for a great mix and a perfect gift for under the tree.

René Williams

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Safe, Healthy and Empowered

A 13-month singing tour, a two-month missions trip and work on a new album left Rebecca St. James exhausted. She thought living on her own would be a time of spiritual refreshing and renewal. Instead God was silent, and she felt lonely and disillusioned.

"I had kind of bought into that feminist mentality that you've got to do it yourself, don't rely on anyone, be independent. I felt myself closing over, shutting off, becoming cold and hard."

Her pastor challenged her to trust God and reach out for community. She realized she was not the only woman to feel this way. "The feminist movement was very beneficial ... but it was also very damaging in our attitudes towards men, in our buying into this over-independent mentality, in the area of beauty ... in the area of intimacy. ... Even our understanding of what it means to connect with other people has been hurt."

Offering a biblical approach to womanhood, St. James with Lynda Hunter Bjorklund wrote SHE (Tyndale House). They explore the truths concerning protection, intimacy, femininity, beauty, purity, freedom, mentorship, boundaries and purpose.

St. James says: "We've got to abandon every area of struggle to Him. ... [The book] kind of says: 'This is what you're feeling. We're coming along beside you. We've felt this. There's hope. ... Go to Him for your answers. In all these nine areas let's together go to God and trust Him.'"

Leigh DeVore

CHARISMATIC TOP SELLERS

1. A Divine Revelation of Hell
Mary K. Baxter (Whitaker House)

2. My Spiritual Inheritance

Juanita Bynum (Charisma House)

3. Total Forgiveness

R.T. Kendall (Charisma House)

4. Pigs in the Parlor

Frank and Ida Mae Hammond
(Impact Christian Books)

5. The Three Battlegrounds

Francis Frangipane
(Arrow Publications)

6. A Divine Revelation of Heaven

Mary K. Baxter (Whitaker House)

7. The Tongue: A Creative Force

Charles Capps (Harrison House)

8. The Battle Belongs to the Lord

Joyce Meyer (Warner Faith)

9. Heaven

Jesse Duplantis (Harrison House)

10. Prison to Praise

Merlin R. Carothers
(Merlin R. Carothers)