

Sight & Sound

BOOKS

Hearing God and Doing His Will

Are You Listening?

By Gloria Copeland, Harrison House, 288 pages, hardcover, \$.

Are You Listening? by Gloria Copeland is a voyage into the realm of faith

and discipline. Known for her Word-Faith theology, Copeland shifts her focus to proactive prosperity based on a believer's availability, willingness and obedience.

Copeland takes the reader through three Old Testament examples of living the Word through actions and closes with the ultimate example of obedience in Christ. Although well-organized, consistent repetition of her points within the three Old Testament examples creates a circular philosophy.

With a casually evangelistic tone, she gives example after example of being doers of the Word until her points mesh together in what could be summed up in two, not 10, chapters.

Still, Copeland offers strong biblical support for her points and links them together logically to create a cohesive, albeit repetitive, message. Tethered to the belief that God's people deserve wealth, real estate and financial abundance, the author asserts that if those are not manifest in our lives, we are not doing the Word but reaping poor choices previously sown.

Touching briefly on the law of progressive increase, Copeland confirms that little by little our obedience to God will prosper us financially, spiritually and emotionally. It is this prosperity that moves us from simply obtaining personal wealth to using that wealth to advance God's ultimate plan.

Are You Listening? is chock full of biblical support and positive rhetoric, offering a quick and easy read laced with powerful points. —Mary Sailors

Basic Training

Spiritually Fit to Run the Race

By Kenneth C. Ulmer, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 236 pages,

paperback, \$.

Bend, stretch, feel the burn. This society is inundated with an obsessive love for physical fitness, but Bishop Kenneth C. Ulmer gives readers a workout from the inside out in his book *Spiritually Fit to Run the Race: A Personal Training Manual for Godly Living*.

Ulmer, senior pastor of Faithful Central Missionary Baptist Church and one of the founders of the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, exhorts readers to strive for godliness by displaying

conduct that is consistent with the character of Christ.

Using the metaphor of weight training and physical exercise, Ulmer prescribes a spiritual workout plan to develop godliness in the lives of believers. The book is divided into three sections focusing on the principle, the process and the practice of godliness. Individual chapters are filled with practical “homework” assignments, activities and memorization verses to help true seekers grow in Christ.

With the Holy Spirit as a personal trainer, this book is a rich toning tool to firm up believers and a valuable aid for those who desire to live a life of faith through action.
—Tracee N. Mason

Debunking the Lies

10 Lies the Church Tells Women

By J. Lee Grady, Creation House,
240 pages, paperback, \$.

Get ready for a ride that will transport today's Christians to a new place of

influencing the world with truth. Author J. Lee Grady takes readers on that tour, and his message is sure to prompt plenty of criticism.

Grady, the editor of Charisma, argues biblically, culturally and practically for an end to gender prejudice. He prophetically cautions leaders to stop running the church like a "good ol' boys club." Women will find it refreshing that a man is finally saying this.

Giving examples from the Quakers, Methodists, Salvation Army leaders and Pentecostals, Grady challenges the church's prejudices toward women in ministry. Among the lies he debunks are: "God created women as inferior beings, designed to serve their husbands"; "women must not teach or preach to men"; "a woman should view her husband as the 'priest of the home'"; and "a man needs to 'cover' a woman in ministry activities."

Grady challenges believers to overthrow patriarchal mind-sets and to let God—not men or women—control the church. He closes each chapter with questions to help readers examine their

personal beliefs and prejudices, avoiding extremes. His challenge: "Test yourself."

Many who decide to ride along will take that test. They will ultimately thank God and the many women who have shaped Christian revival movements through the centuries.

Prepare for the ride. Grady hopes readers will allow God to guide the journey. □ –Chris Maxwell

MUSIC

'Altered-Native' Worship

Hear Our Prayer

By Bill Miller, Integrity Music.

Bill Miller, a multiple winner of Native American Music

Awards, recently recorded his first solely Christian music album. Surprisingly, it's a worship

project. Hear Our Prayer is an eclectic blend of new worship songs, a classic church cut and even a tune penned by Bob Dylan.

Miller is known for a style he calls "Altered-Native"—Native American just altered a little bit. It's a folksy, rock 'n' roll sound gracefully interrupted with everything from prayer segments to wind instruments. The opening song is a powerful worship ballad with the textured cry of "Holy, Holy, Holy" bringing listeners into a throne-room posture.

But the recording takes odd left and right turns as it progresses. "Prayers From the Forest" and "Bird Song" are flute-driven instrumentals. Spices of echoed callings, Indian drumbeats and natural sounds flavor the various songs.

If the album wasn't so infectious, it would qualify as hodgepodgy. But there's something between the blend of music and lyrics—which range from joyful praise to honest reflection—that invite repeat listening. You will want to test-drive this record before buying, but you're likely to be pleasantly surprised.

—Margaret Feinberg

Soothing Gospel

Devotion

By Aaron Neville, EMI Gospel.

Grammy Award-winner Aaron Neville celebrates his musical roots by releasing his debut gospel album, Devotion. Neville's 12-song set is a soothing mixture of gospel and inspirational music that affects the spirit and soul.

Devotion has a wide range of music that will reach both secular and Christian audiences. Neville puts his unique touch to such classics as "Mary, Don't You Weep," "Bank of the River Jordan," and the Simon and Garfunkel staple "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Devotion also features Neville on such inspirational tracks as "What Would Jesus Do" and "Singing You a Prayer," featuring his son, Ivan, who wrote the song.

Dove Award-winning group Avalon is featured on the ballad "By Heart, By Soul." And Rachel Lampa duets with Neville on the pop anthem "There Is Still a Dream," a song that ministers encouragement to the next generation. The cut was included as part of the World Catholic Youth Day held in Rome in August.

In the last 40 years, Aaron Neville's music has transcended musical and racial boundaries. On Devotion, Neville expresses his faith, message and humility to the world. □

–Twanna Powell

United in Praise

City on a Hill

By Various Artists, Essential Records.

In an effort to take individual artists out of the spotlight and redirect the

focus on Christ, Essential Records has released a collection of worship tunes from a cross-section of musicians whose purpose is to unite in praise and worship.

In a demonstration of that unity, producer Steve Hindalong (The Choir) paired diverse artists for various cuts. Jars of Clay lead singer Dan Haseltine teamed up with Leigh Nash of Sixpence None the Richer for “With Every Breath,” a beautiful expression of heartfelt worship. Other standout cuts include “God of Wonders”—a duet featuring Mac Powell of Third Day and Cliff and Danielle Young of Caedmon’s Call—and “Unified” by SonicFlood and Peter Furler of the Newsboys.

In an age when there are still many walls dividing the church,

it is refreshing to see Christian artists uniting to produce such a stellar worship CD. Believers young and old won't want to miss this release. –Luke Pastor

VIDEOS

Esther Illustrates Courage Under Fire

Esther: The Girl Who Became Queen

By Big Idea Productions, 30 minutes, VHS, \$.

The 14th installment of the VeggieTales video series is a return to the

classic Bible story. *Esther: The Girl Who Became Queen* teaches children about courage.

Needing to find a new queen after the former queen refused to make him a sandwich, King Xerxes calls all young women in the kingdom to his castle.

Esther is among those suddenly taken from their homes and is eventually chosen as the new queen. When Esther expresses her confusion about why God allowed this to happen to her, Esther's cousin, Mordecai, reminds her that God always has a plan and a purpose.

Because the king's conniving aide, Haman, doesn't like Mordecai, he wants to banish him and his entire family—including Esther. Mordecai explains to Queen Esther that God has brought her to this place to save her people. If she doesn't have the courage to speak to the king on her family's behalf, they will all be banished to the Isle of Perpetual Tickling.

Children will see that when faced with an overwhelming situation, Esther was still scared. But in the midst of her fear she did what was right. The theme song is a sweet ballad that reminds viewers that there is nothing to fear when God is on their side. As children recall the melody, their courage will be bolstered when faced with difficult situations.

—Leigh DeVore

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Cultivating a Divine Romance

Beth Moore ran to her car in tears after a Bible doctrine class that was supposed to be boring. The passion she witnessed brought Scripture to life. "I have no idea what he's got," she prayed, "but I want it. I want to love that book."

Now via videos, workbooks and books, Moore is a Bible study teacher to millions and is most frequently thanked for her vulnerability. "Isolation is a killer. You can convince yourself that you are the only one who can't seem to get it together."

Abused as a child, she relates to troubled lives. "I made plenty of poor decisions. But when I began to study God's Word, I learned how to live without cycling back into a pit."

Crossing racial and denominational lines, Moore sees her studies as long-term discipleship. Her fifth video-enhanced interactive Bible course, Jesus, The One and Only, was released by LifeWay Press this month. Filmed in Israel, the 11-week study offers an eyewitness perspective to the life of Jesus.

Her latest hardcover book, Breaking Free, is an adaptation of her study on the book of Isaiah. Her popular conferences, Living , draw 60,000 people a year. She also teaches weekly at Houston's First Baptist Church.

In every venue, her message is consistent: "The Bible is not about rules and regulations, how you don't measure up. It's about a divine romance, a relationship of grace."

—Marsha Gallardo