

Vibes

BOOKS

The Supernatural Life

By Cindy Jacobs, Regal, hardcover, 224 pages, \$.

Cindy Jacobs wants believers to realize that they can experience the supernatural power of God. In her latest book, *The Supernatural Life: Experience the Power of God in Your Everyday Life*, Jacobs shares experiences and adventures she has had with the supernatural life.

Using a simple, informal approach, Jacobs teaches about speaking in tongues, healing and miracles, laying hands on the sick, testing the spirits (but, she warns, “Don’t go overboard and think there’s a demon behind every bush”), the gift of discernment, words of knowledge, and a phrase she coined, “prophetic evangelism,” or reaching others through a word of knowledge. This book is for those who have never experienced the supernatural life firsthand or those in the Pentecostal-charismatic movement who want to return to their first love, Christ.

The anecdotal style and examples from the lives of past charismatic leaders, such as Smith Wigglesworth and Aimee Semple McPherson, help demonstrate that the supernatural life is available to all believers.

Tracee N. Mason

Losers and Winners Saints and Sinners

By Greg Laurie, Warner Faith, hardcover, 336 pages, \$.

In his latest book, the founder of Harvest Crusades weaves lessons from the lives of familiar biblical characters with modern-day vignettes to sound the call for Christians to remain faithful.

Subtitled *How to Finish Strong in the Spiritual Race*, the book shows how faithful men kept going after they stumbled. Such perseverance makes the difference between those who finish life well and dropouts who crash and burn.

In a world of relativism that is blunting the church's impact, this book is a dynamic reminder that our actions matter. As Laurie notes, too many people excuse their participation in sinful activities by shrugging, "God will forgive me."

With 22 chapters, this book is a bit long for a weekly study. But by combining multiple chapters on one character, it can be shortened for use in cell groups, home churches and Bible classes.

Ken Walker

CollegeBound

By Thomas A. Shaw, Moody Publishers,
softcover, 224 pages, \$.

For more than 20 years, Thomas A. Shaw has been involved in Christian higher education as an administrator and as a parent. Now, as an author, he hopes to pass along an informed perspective to other parents.

In his book *Collegebound: What Christian Parents Need to Know About Helping Their Kids Choose a College*, Shaw covers topics

such as determining whether college is right for your child, choosing a major and understanding the different types of schools. Perhaps the most important aspect Shaw discusses with parents is striking a balance between being either too controlling or too uninvolved in the choices. It is important to stay between these two extremes because kids need both their parents' input and to be respected as young adults who take ownership for the direction of their lives.

This book is a helpful resource for parents and teens in finding the best environment not only for career preparation, but for the development of their faith walk as well.

Deborah L. Delk

God@Work, Vol. 2

By Rich Marshall with Ken Walker,

Destiny Image, softcover, 192 pages, \$.

The world seeks evidence that Christians will bring practical solutions to problems they face. In his book God @ Work, Vol. 2, Rich Marshall details how "marketplace ministers," business people who do the work of an evangelist, are that "evidence."

Because God never stops seeking the lost, those He finds may not come from the aisles of a traditional church but might instead be reached in a bank lobby or on the call-in line of a late-night TV program. The author points out that God has found individuals who not only make profits but also become prophets in an increasingly global work place.

Marshall describes how these Monday-to-Friday ministers cannot afford to rely on anything other than solid foundational truths from the Bible in the fiercely competitive settings

where they work. He documents some amazing signs and wonders that follow these servant leaders who pastor “congregants” on the job.

J. James Estrada

Biblical Principles for Releasing Financial Provision!

By Frank Damazio, Rich Brott; City Christian Publishing, softcover, 439 pages, \$.

“Fantastic” describes this huge resource produced by pastor Frank Damazio and leadership guru Rich Brott. In this day and age of rampant materialism and self-serving doctrines that present God the Father as some divine sugar daddy, Releasing Financial Provision is a welcome relief.

The book is divided into seven “keys” for opening the heavens and obtaining the favor of God in your personal and vocational life. Biblical principles about finances bolster each key, enabling the book to read like a daily devotional, with each principle including specific Scriptures and a short teaching on the subject that is always practical and often pleasantly insightful. In addition to the 98 or so principles expounded upon throughout the book, there are at least 100 pages of Scripture references on everything financial, as well as an excellent bibliography of printed and electronic financial resources.

This book is a must-have for anyone who is serious about understanding and applying a biblical approach to finances.

Eric Wilbanks

SHE TEEN

By Rebecca St. James, Tyndale House,
softcover, 208 pages, \$.

Today's teens face countless opportunities to make wrong choices, which seemingly are becoming the norm.

With her latest book, SHE Teen, music artist Rebecca St. James comes along as a big sister, mentor and friend to tell teen girls that they can be "safe, healthy and empowered" by allowing Christ to define their identity.

Packaged as a magazine, SHE Teen offers a fresh, culturally relevant tool for girls to acknowledge their own questions, fears and concerns. It also offers practical everyday advice on relationships and self-esteem. There's even a recipe for "a fruit smoothie that will change your life"!

Although the style of this book might make you think it's made for a quick, one-time read, the truth the book conveys is not sugar-coated. Mixed with the lighter segments are tough questions. One quiz helps girls analyze what their makeup communicates (harsh? lazy? seductive?). Throughout the magazine, readers are reminded by biblical truths of how beautiful and valuable they are to God.

Today's teens respect those who speak the truth yet are vulnerable, and St. James fits that bill. As she shares her own struggles and triumphs, young women will be encouraged to choose the freedom, protection and power God's higher standard provides.

Leigh DeVore

MUSIC

Rock of Ages: Hymn & Faith

By Amy Grant, Word Entertainment.

Rock of Ages: Hymns & Faith is a follow-up to 2002's Legacy: Hymns & Faith that showcased hymns that have had an influence in artist Amy Grant's life. Certainly Grant has been the premier artist of Christian music for nearly three decades, having many awards and platinum records, so the idea of her returning to the hymns of her youth at this time in her career is understandable.

Produced by Grant's husband, Vince Gill, and her longtime producer, Brown Bannister, Rock of Ages features some beautiful hymns, great studio production and lovely vocals, but it would be stronger if it were expressed by Grant with more intimacy. The hints of country, blues and Americana used in the production perhaps could have been stronger as well, which might have made the hymns come to life more.

The title track, "Rock of Ages," is a duet with Gill, whose strong, passionate vocals are out of balance with Grant's, which sound almost weary. The compilation "Jesus Loves Me/They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love/Helping Hand" weaves together a single thought, which helps the listener reflect on older and newer texts together.

Other highlights are "Abide With Me" and "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"—which includes Grant's sisters singing harmony and her father doing a speaking part—"I Surrender All" and "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," which has an upbeat and simplistic arrangement that allows the true nature of the hymn to emerge.

Although this disc could have delved further to find common ground with a younger audience, Rock of Ages: Hymns & Faith is soothing and uplifting.

Debbie Gibboney

Reflection of Something

By Todd Agnew, Ardent Records.

The latest CD from Todd Agnew is a guitar-driven and edgy mix of blues, rock, gospel and contemporary sound.

His flexibility is highlighted on such cuts as "New Name," with its blues feel and sassy guitar sound and the slow, soft ballad "Blood on My Hands."

Agnew tackles trials of faith such as battered self-esteem and doubts. His rugged sound reveals some of his musical influences, such as Led Zeppelin and Memphis blues. On Agnew's second CD, his background as a worship leader comes through on songs such as "Unchanging One."

Reflection of Something will satisfy the most devoted of Agnew's fans and likely bring in new ones.

Tracee N. Mason

Rescue

By New Song, Integrity Music

Although NewSong is a veteran to the music industry, Rescue is the group's first worship album and live recording. Yet, this award-winning band still displays the fresh sound listeners

expect and enjoy.

Rescue's 12 tracks combine several well-known worship songs such as "How Great Thou Art" and "You Are Holy" with new songs and a new version of a NewSong classic, "Arise My Love."

"You Are Holy" is a fun, fast, call-and-response song while "Blessed Be Your Name" is soothing and mellow. The title cut is a modern, worshipful love song to Jesus that stands out as an anthem, and "I'll Rise" is inspirational and romantic.

If NewSong's 16th album is any indication, the band shows no signs of slowing down in delivering powerful music, and they have found a comfortable fit with their first worship CD.

Tracee N. Mason

Movies

Aimee Semple McPherson

By Richard Rossi Productions, \$.

The new movie Aimee Semple McPherson (currently on DVD) is as provocative as it is touching and explores the human side of one of America's towering spiritual icons.

Get past the shoestring production values by former minister turned producer Richard Rossi and you'll find a sensitive script, ample acting and a story that portrays the Pentecostal woman, who, like the rest of us, lived in a skin of real flesh.

In Sister Aimee's acutely dichotomous world, she founded the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel and the first Christian radio station and used illustrated sermons. Thousands were healed at her crusades, and millions came to Christ through her ministry.

Sister Aimee, played by screen newcomer Mimi Michaels, was friend to the famous and a provider to the poor. Yet her ministry was rife with controversy. History records arguments with her mother, church-leader shake-ups, lawsuits, court appearances, a kidnapping by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and two divorces.

A study in contrasts, she is seen as a creative genius who was vulnerable, often melancholy and most of all lonely. "A lot of leaders anointed by God with spiritual gifts feel they have to hide their despair because they would be considered unfit for leadership," Rossi says. "Healers, especially, pour out into everyone else and come to find out they are depleted."

In a life that was as amazing as plagued, the movie is fairly accurate historically. Critically, the film is middle-of-the-road. The viewer must decide its merits.

The movie traces Sister Aimee's early life as daughter of Canadian farmer James Kennedy, portrayed by Ron Howard's father, Rance, and her shrewd, strong-willed mother, Minnie, played by Teres Byrne.

Her conversion, aided by traveling evangelist and future husband Robert Semple, and her husband's death on the China mission field are treated with sensitivity. She returns,

pregnant with daughter Roberta, and soon marries Harold McPherson, a kind man who does not fully understand her call to preach and leaves her evangelistic tent.

Yet the movie best explores Sister Aimee's aching earthliness through her short third marriage to former Angelus Temple singer David Hutton, her strange 39-day disappearance and her death by an accidental overdose of barbiturates.

On May 18, 1926, three years after she opened Angelus Temple in Los Angeles, Sister Aimee walked into the surf at nearby Ocean Park for a swim and disappeared. Many thought she had drowned. But 39 days later she walked in from the desert near Douglas, Arizona.

Newspaper writers and the local district attorney, Asa Keyes, alleged she had spent at least some of that missing time in a cottage with her married audio-engineer Kenneth Ormiston. Sister Aimee insisted she was kidnapped by the KKK. Hundreds of journalists and two courts of law spent five years and more than a half-million dollars, but never proved otherwise.

In 1931, she married singer David Hutton, who may have been slightly less of a scoundrel than the movie indicates. Her second divorce in 1934 was especially painful, and the movie touches on her well-documented bouts with depression. It ends in 1944 with her unusual death from an overdose of barbiturates.

Because the movie explores both sides of her disappearance and her bipolarlike personality, controversy will likely hound it as it did her ministry. Yet, the movie as well as Sister Aimee's life adds a dynamic dimension when draped with frail

flesh.

“In a sense, we’re all wounded soldiers,” Rossi says. “She was a powerful conduit for the Holy Spirit, yet she struggled. It’s ironic that a lot of churches today would reject her because she was divorced twice. But hers is a story of grace, and it’s grace that gives all us sinners hope.”

After she won the legal battle regarding her disappearance in the movie, her father tells her, “But whether you’ve done something wrong or ... something right [Christ] is there for forgiveness.”

And that is the proper way to view Sister Aimee’s life and this movie. If you can believe that Christian legends still wear skin that longs to be touched, this movie is a must-see. Rossi says he believes depicting her humanness will attract non-Christian viewers. And he hopes church leaders, especially those in her denomination, will view the movie with objectivity.

The film will be in select theaters this fall. The DVD is now available. For a copy send a donation of \$ or more to Eternal Grace, 5030 Whitsett Ave., #1, Valley Village, CA 91607. Movie-related news can be found at .

E.C. Donnelly