

Vibes

BOOKS

Transformation

By Ed Silvoso, Regal Books,
hardcover, 256 pages, \$.

The word “revival” often sparks visions of churches swelling with converts, be it the 1801 Cane Ridge Revival that gave rise to new denominations or the more recent waves in Pensacola, Fla., and Toronto. Former businessman-turned-evangelist Ed Silvoso sees something greater at hand—a marketplace revival that will transform society. In this latter-day renewal, Christ’s disciples move beyond the confines of church buildings to address problems afflicting every nation, especially systemic poverty. Silvoso offers exciting current examples of this stirring. One is a former drug dealer turned restaurateur in Hawaii who uses his business to help others. Another is a wealthy Ugandan who organized 14,000-plus coffee farmers into co-ops so they can profit from their crops instead of being exploited by outsiders. The author also reviews five key paradigms that must change, starting with seeing the Great Commission as a call to disciple nations, not just individual converts. This book will shake up some people’s theology, but those who heed Silvoso’s teaching will be better positioned to spread the gospel to the entire world.

Ken Walker

Become a Better You

By Joel Osteen, Free Press,
hardcover, 400 pages, \$25.

Joel Osteen, the pastor of the largest church in America, has been praised and criticized alike by the media for his upbeat messages about the power of God and a positive attitude. Osteen delivers that signature “feel good” message in his latest book, *Become a Better You: 7 Keys to Improving Your Life Every Day*. With a writing flavor like that of Norman Vincent Peale, Osteen offers hope to those who want to change where they are in their lives. He encourages readers to become excellent, not merely mediocre in endeavors; to talk about the way things should be, not the way they are currently; and to surround oneself with positive people. The book is bursting with practical advice on how to build stronger relationships and enjoy life. Filled with Osteen’s personal anecdotes and stories from his counseling experiences at Lakewood Church in Houston, this book is a good read if you are looking for ways to catch the little foxes that sap the joy out of life.

TRACEE N. MASON

Legacy Now

By Phil Munsey, Charisma House,
hardcover, 240 pages, \$.

In *Legacy Now*, pastor and author Phil Munsey asks the reader to find the legacy that is in the heart. Timely and insightful, Munsey’s book presents a compelling case in which science and faith intertwine to create a much clearer picture of God’s amazing design of humanity and His just as stellar design for our lives. Munsey reasons that the faithful connections of generational conduct and familial traits that are embedded in our DNA are there to bring about, uniquely for each of us, the exact formation of Christ that God desires. Combined with outward pressures and our courage to believe, the message found in our bloodstreams—the source of life—is a blueprint for our generation and our children’s futures.

J. JAMES ESTRADA

Honor's Reward

By John Bevere, FaithWords,
hardcover, 256 pages, \$.

In Honor's Reward, best-selling author and international speaker John Bevere shares his desire to "see honor restored to the sons and daughters of God." He says that honor is an "essential key" to receiving from God. Bevere explains through Scriptures and practical examples how this virtue yields the "full reward," which can be anything from healing to financial increase. Not only is the importance of honor taught but also how to give honor to the people in authority over us, our peers, our family members, and those who are in our care. Although this is not a new message on how to treat others the way you want to be treated, studying the way of honor provides a unique angle. This is a valuable lesson that can never be overtaught.

JEVON BOLDEN

MUSIC

Connersvine

By Connersvine, INO Records.

If you don't have an intense passion for something, you will be desperate to develop one—quickly—after you hear this debut CD from Connersvine. Although some have said that Connersvine are nothing special, the group refutes this claim with masterful lyricism and a musical strength that presses, pushes and draws the listener into a love affair with God. Indianapolis Colts punter and singer Hunter Smith and worship

leader-songwriter Chris Wilson team together on great tracks such as "Hunger Love," "Sacred Mystery," "Nothing" and "Come Alive" that make you want to worship as King David did. The duo sing with beautiful, tight harmonies and gritty vocals accompanied by driving rock beats and guitar licks. Their edginess comes out in lyrics such as, "How can I ever let go / Because hanging on so tight/ Is all I ever have known / I know I've got to dive right over the edge / If I'm going to come alive. I want to come alive!" Clever writing displays itself in "Closely Far Away": "As still as the wind blows / As near as a rainbow / You're closely far away." The emotional exchange that they exude has no bottom. This is a fantastic CD.

JEVON BOLDEN

Our Heart's Hero

By Our Heart's Hero, Gotee Records.

With the modern worship movement in full effect, young newcomers to the Christian rock scene are now more empowered than ever to write current-sounding music with lyrical themes that allow them to wear their faith boldly on their sleeves. Such is the case with Our Heart's Hero and their national self-titled debut. With contemporary genre references that include Hawthorne Heights, Hawk Nelson, Run Kid Run and Switchfoot, this album is dripping with ready-made radio hits and youth-group favorites including the driving "Because of the Blood," an ode to the mercy and grace made available through Christ's sacrifice. "Save Me" is a forceful anthem with captivating rhythm changes and cries by lead singer and primary songwriter Nick Joyce for spiritual rescue. With veteran producers Brent Milligan and Ian Eskelin collectively at the helm for all 11 songs, it occasionally feels as if the band is simply pulling out all the typical tricks, and Our Heart's Hero are often just a few missteps away from sounding

completely contrived. But while fans with the most critical of ears might yearn for more creativity, the average teenage consumer will likely find plenty to love in this well-executed recording.

CHAD BONHAM

The Godkinz

By The Godkinz, Estilo Music.

If you've ever heard the downbeat of a hip-hop influenced R&B tune and automatically assumed its content would include graphic sexual lyrics and a complete disregard for Christ-centered morals, don't feel bad. Most of the time, you'd be right. But fortunately, there is hope in the form of a new generation of R&B singers such as San Diego-based trio The Godkinz. From the opening intro, these brothers of Samoan descent bring an authentic blend of modern pop music that evokes a wide array of influences including T-Pain ("Tilt Ya Hat" and "Friday"), the Katinas ("Jesus Is the One" and "See U Through"), Boyz II Men ("Many Words"), All 4 One ("Grandma Song"), Group 1 Crew ("Desire") and Tonéx ("Westcoast"). Occasional appearances by guest rapper Jaz add a refreshing female presence reminiscent of Missy Elliott or Eve. But the best part is The Godkinz' unabashed devotion to Jesus Christ, which clearly shines throughout this solid independent effort.

CHAD BONHAM

THE TWENTY-FIRST TIME

By Monk & Neagle, Reunion Records.

Ever since Steven Curtis Chapman's meteoric rise within the Christian music ranks, acoustic-driven pop artists have been rolling off the industry's creative conveyor belt at an astronomical pace. But breaking the genre's mold are relative

newcomers Monk & Neagle, a brilliant young vocal duo from Amarillo, Texas. The group's latest project, *The Twenty-First Time*, opens with "Beautiful You," a love ballad that sings our Creator's praises with a quirky, bouncy style reminiscent of Jack Johnson or John Mayer (and flawless tenor harmony vocals to boot). The title track utilizes an Americana-flavored six-eight tempo and first-person lyrics to encourage the act of serving. Other likely favorites include the tropical love song "Wonderful Angel" and the funky, mid-tempo tune "Into Orbit," which pays musical tribute to the '70s with its mix of acoustic and clean electric guitar textures layered with an array of sonic and spacey synthesizer treats. With a variety of musical and lyrical approaches, Monk & Neagle prove that the aforementioned acoustic pop movement still has plenty of room to grow—and it certainly doesn't have to be boring and predictable.

CHAD BONHAM

FICTION

ROMANCE

Par for the Course

By Ray Blackston, FaithWords,
softcover, 272 pages, \$.

Chris Hackett owns Hack's Golf Learning Center. When new student and political correspondent Molly shows up on the scene, it's a whole new game. The attractive Molly suggests that Chris capitalize on the presidential election; the strategy works to increase traffic and income for the center. But mixing politics, business and a relationship can be dangerous.

CONTEMPORARY

Truffles by the Sea

By Julie Carobini, Bethany House,
softcover, 320 pages, \$.

After a series of unfortunate events, Gaby Flores moves to a beachfront home and works to rebuild her flower shop and look for Mr. Right. But a lawsuit, eviction notice and dwindling bank account threaten to derail her plans for creating a new life, and her faith is put to the test.

SUSPENSE

The Whole Truth

By James Scott Bell, Zondervan,
softcover, 352 pages, \$.

When Steve Conroy was 5, he witnessed his 7-year-old brother's kidnapping. This incident has haunted him for years. Now a grown man, Steve is a struggling lawyer, and he has taken on criminal Johnny LaSalle's case. The information and people Johnny knows could ruin Steve forever, but he is determined to find the truth.