

Vibes

[BOOKS]

Spotlight:

God's Master Plan for Your Life

By Gloria Copeland, Putnam Praise, softcover, 304 pages, \$.

Gloria Copeland exhorts us to “connect to God’s master plan” in her latest book. Copeland weaves personal stories with many biblical examples and references to support 10 practical “keys” for finding and fulfilling one’s God-given destiny. With the heart and soul of a spiritual soccer mom coaching her kids to be everything they can be for the Lord, Copeland dives headfirst into her topic, encouraging readers to walk by faith and believe God for great things. Prioritizing time in the Word, disconnecting from sinful hindrances and developing a heart of gratitude are some of the keys to finding and staying on the path of God’s master plan. The book emphasizes the role we play in connecting with and staying connected to the master plan. This emphasis could pose an opportunity for spiritual burnout (because it’s all up to us) if not balanced with God’s sovereign ability to get us from point A to point B. Nevertheless, the author’s emphasis on the role and importance of faith (the chapter “Put Your Foot in the Water” is especially strong) for living in God’s master plan is spiritual dynamite for every believer. Packed with faith-building examples of those living “in the plan,” this book would be a great tool for unbelievers or those feeling stymied in their walk with God.

—Annemarie McLean

Interpreting the Times

By Chuck D. Pierce, Charisma House, softcover, 224 pages, \$.

In *Interpreting the Times* Chuck D. Pierce teaches that we can transition into a new dimension of God's success by faith. God is not limited by our idea of time; He knows everything about our lives from beginning to end. And as the author teaches, we must rise above man's view of time and see time from God's perspective. Pierce takes us on an amazing journey of understanding the concepts of time and of getting in step with God's perfect timing—especially in certain situations—using prayer, fasting and worship. He also teaches us how to understand spiritual warfare as well as how to identify when we might be outside God's timing and how to realign our lives. Pierce not only discusses the concept of time, he also shows us how to develop faith for our future, how to remain in God's perfect timing and how to make it through the transitions of life.

—CHERI CLAY

Light From Lucas

By Bob Vander Plaats, Tyndale House, softcover, 160 pages, \$.

Bob Vander Plaats' dream of building a basketball team with his children was destroyed when his third son was born. In the delivery room things spun out of control, and Vander Plaats and his wife felt discouragement and anger and questioned God's plan when they realized that their lives were changed forever. Their son Lucas, who now lives in a care facility, is unable to speak or care for himself. But rather than being a burden, Lucas is a blessing, and in this book Vander Plaats shares what God has been teaching him through his son. "I believe Lucas was created to reveal God's love and glory," Vander Plaats says. *Light From Lucas* is vulnerable, intensely personal and sometimes even uncomfortable, as a father shares hard-learned lessons about passion, priorities, purpose and joy. The lessons will be encouraging to anyone for whom life

hasn't worked out according to his expectations. "God doesn't promise us wealth, life without struggle, or children born without disabilities," he writes. "He simply wants us to remember that He has already given us everything." Lucas has been teaching the Vander Plaatses without saying a word.

—JONATHAN MERRITT

Saving Women From the Church

By Susan McLeod-Harrison, Barclay Press, softcover, 210 pages, \$18.

Author Susan McLeod-Harrison focuses on Jesus, who championed rather than marginalized women. Her format is simple: She describes a modern-day situation of a woman being hurt in a church setting, which, although fictional, is drawn from the experiences of real women. McLeod-Harrison contrasts this with a biblical account, also fictionalized, in which Jesus goes out of His way to affirm women. This is followed by an exercise for the reader to meditate on and receive healing from God. The strengths of this book are the Scriptures that clearly demonstrate God's affirmation of women. The author also gives a list of resources for further reading. One weakness of this book is the fictionalized Scripture, which would have read better in its actual form. Also, in one situation it appeared that a woman was being overly sensitive when a man did not want to minister with her alone, which seemed to point more to common-sense boundaries for people of the opposite sex rather than his judgment of a woman being a seductress. This book is aimed at healing the hearts of individual women, but also can be taken as constructive criticism for the church to better reflect the heart of Jesus.

—DEBORAH L. DELK

How to Be Your Best When You Feel Your Worst

By Casey Treat, Berkley Praise, hardcover, 320 pages, \$.

Casey Treat's *How to Be Your Best When You Feel Your Worst* comes with a subtitle: *5 Steps to a Great Life!* Five steps, yes, but more like landings on a much larger flight of stairs that leads to your "best" in God. Treat takes the reader up this spiritual staircase, where he does not spare some of the "worst" he has faced as he pours from his own life story. Along the way, he answers these questions: How can a serious medical condition become a key to our future? How does an enemy in front of us become a crisis handled behind us? How do we know Jesus will forgive us when we come to him in sin? The author desires that we find a course for our life's purpose and then stay on it.

—J. JAMES ESTRADA

[MUSIC]

I'll Say Yes

By The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, Integrity Music.

The six-time Grammy-winning Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir return with *I'll Say Yes*, their 26th album and first recording on the Integrity Music label. The choir incorporates its signature sound and melodic voices to deliver a dynamic musical project. *I'll Say Yes* features soulful versions of such classic songs as Darlene Zschech's "Worthy Is the Lamb," the explosive "Holy Is the Lord" and Kurt Carr's "I Never Lost My Praise." The album also includes some salsa flavor on "We Fill the Sanctuary" and the exciting, gospel-tinged "Hallelujah You're Worthy." The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir also sing out moving, heartfelt worship on such tracks as "Spirit Fall Down" and the title track, a chorus of a simple message of humility. With *I'll Say Yes*, Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir remain true to their style of worship and ministry.

—TWANNA POWELL-GREEN

For the Love of the Game

By Pillar, Flicker Records.

With the release of their fifth national studio release, Pillar might very well be on the most solid footing musically, lyrically and—most importantly—spiritually in the band's 10-year existence. That fact alone should make *For the Love of the Game* one of this decade's more significant hard-rock projects. With a semi-pervasive sports theme throughout, the title track uses athletic metaphors to nudge young believers toward a passionate pursuit of Christ. The driving, post-punk infused verses break into a half-time Nu Metal feel complete with clean instrumental precision. "Turn It Up" features a laid-back, rock-groove that kicks into an understated funk-rock rhythm. Other standout tracks include the chunky rock anthem "Reckless Youth"—a challenge for the young and young at heart to make a difference in the world—and "I Fade Away," featuring female vocalist Sarah Anthony from the band *Breaking the Silence*, a reminder that we must decrease so Christ can increase.

—CHAD BONHAM

Take It Back

By Dorinda Clark-Cole, Gospocentric/Zomba Gospel.

Over the last 25 years, Dorinda Clark-Cole has established herself as one of gospel's most distinctive and gifted vocalists. Her third solo album, *Take It Back*, is a 10-track set of triumph, hope and encouragement. It features Clark-Cole's fiery vocals with various music backdrops of neo-soul to jazz to her signature traditional style. The empowering lead single, "Take It Back," is already gaining major radio airplay. She continues the praise party with a lively remake of the classic "Got to Hold On" and "Praise Your Way Out," a song birthed out of one of her sermons. Clark-Cole also shares her heart to encourage souls with such stirring and mellow tracks as "Yesterday," "Faithful" and "Make Me Real." *Take It*

Back also includes a surprise with the breakthrough track, “Return,” featuring J. Moss and PAJAM. It showcases her jazzy vocals laced over the high-energy, edgy, hard-hitting urban rhythms. Clark-Cole delivers a solid and versatile album and she continues to maintain the integrity and style that has made her iconic in gospel music.

—TWANNA POWELL-GREEN

Thy Kingdom Come

By CeCe Winans, PureSprings Gospel.

Thy Kingdom Come is a 14-track collection of music reminiscent of some of CeCe Winans’ previous projects such as Alone in His Presence, Alabaster Box and Throne Room. The music incorporates movements of urban gospel, creative orchestration and corporate worship. Winans wrote or co-wrote eight of the tracks. Thy Kingdom Come starts with the soulful invitation to worship, “We Welcome You (Holy Father).” Then, Winans moves into the rousing praise song “Forever” and the empowering “It Ain’t Over.” The first radio single, “Waging War,” is a declarative anthem, and “Worthy” is another gem of encouragement that comes with a reggae-pop vibe showcasing Winans’ versatile style. Winans is in her element of praise and worship on such tracks as “Oh Holy Place” and “The Coast is Clear.” Thy Kingdom Come is Winans’ most empowering and versatile collection to date. It is a clear definition of her passion: God and leading people into His presence.

—TWANNA POWELL-GREEN

Empty and Beautiful

By Matt Maher, Essential Records.

Empty and Beautiful, from worship leader and songwriter Matt Maher, is a collection of praise- and faith-filled songs perfect for personal and corporate worship. Maher, a music

minister for 10 years, opens the album by acknowledging God's grace with "Your Grace Is Enough" and "Look Like a Fool." These songs set the stage for listeners to enter God's presence with gratefulness. The piano-based "As It Is in Heaven" is a lovely yet rousing take on the Lord's Prayer. The pace picks up a bit on "Shine Like the Son," which reminds believers that Jesus "made us ready" to take the good news to the world. Acoustic ballad "Lay It Down" is a passionate cry of surrender of "everything I am" and "everything I long to be." The fresh and catchy melodies envelop simple, yet profound truths of faith. This album is evidence that Maher doesn't just sing worship songs but is a true worshiper at heart.

—Leigh DeVore

[NEW ON DVD]

The Secret Things of God

Fox Home Entertainment, \$

Subtitled "Unlocking the Treasures Reserved for You" and based on the book by Henry Cloud, this DVD explores the biblical perspective of the ideas outlined in Rhonda Byrne's *The Secret*. As a Christian and a psychologist, Cloud helps viewers understand how they can experience peace, joy, hope and purpose through their relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Ten Commandments

Promenade Pictures/Genius Products, \$

This animated version of the classic Bible story of Moses features the vocal talents of Ben Kingsley, Christian Slater, Elliott Gould and others. It includes a music video of "I Am Willing" performed by Jeremy Camp, a look at the making of the film, interviews and more.

The Final Season

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, \$

The high school baseball team in Norway, Iowa, has one of the best records in the country. But their 20th championship is threatened when officials decide to merge the school with a neighboring school—and fire their legendary coach. The new coach has to work hard to rally the team, and even the town, to finish their final season. This film is rated PG for some language and thematic elements.

[FICTION]

[SUSPENSE]

Thread of Deceit

By Catherine Palmer, Steeple Hill, softcover, 288 pages, \$.

Sam Hawke's inner-city youth center needs help. When reporter Ana Burns starts asking questions for a story, Sam worries that her article might cause the outreach to lose support. In the midst of her research, Ana is drawn to Flora, a troubled little girl. What Flora reveals to Ana causes Sam and Ana to have to fight to protect not only Flora but also the center.

[CONTEMPORARY]

Summer Snow

By Nicole Baart, Tyndale House, softcover, 350 pages, \$.

Julia is ready to build her life after dropping out of college. But her plans are disrupted when her estranged mother shows up after a 10-year absence. There is a lot of anger and bitterness between the two, and restoration seems impossible. But Julia's half-brother, Simon, captures everyone's hearts and seems able to close the divide between mother and daughter.

[ROMANCE]

The Forbidden

By Beverly Lewis, Bethany House, softcover, 352 pages, \$.

A church split in Amish country threatens the love between Caleb Yoder and Nellie Mae Fisher. Nellie, now of the New Order, is still in love with Caleb, from the Older Order. But Caleb's father forbids the courtship, and Caleb risks his inheritance if he continues to pursue Nellie Mae. Can this couple follow their hearts yet satisfy what is expected of them?