

# Vibes

## Conquering the Religious Spirit

By Tommi Femrite, Bethany House, softcover, 144 pages, \$.

We all have experienced or witnessed the religious spirit in our churches and homes, and Tommi Femrite is finally calling it out by name. In *Conquering the Religious Spirit*, Femrite takes on the spiritual malady, which manifests itself in hypocrisy, pride, legalism and rigid tradition that binds and restricts the body of Christ. "Religion keeps us reliant on a particular set of rules and rituals rather than on a relationship with God," she says. Femrite first encountered the religious spirit while attending a conference when God convicted her of having it. Stunned, she prayed: "Lord, I don't want this thing. I have to get rid of it!" After returning home and finishing a three-day fast, Femrite was delivered and now helps others find freedom. Shrewd theologians will note that Femrite often wanders into biblical quicksand by asserting that the religious spirit is a principality, a specific demonic being, although she offers little to no scriptural evidence. However, many will find this book a practical guide and motivational tool to defeat religious urges and realize the depth of God's anointing on our lives. "Having conquered the religious spirit," she says, "you will be changed, and others will be blessed."

—Jonathan Merritt

## BOOKS

### Don't Miss Your Moment

By Judy Jacobs, Charisma House, softcover, 224 pages, \$.

In *Don't Miss Your Moment*, Judy Jacobs is at it again, rousing Christians to take their rightful place in Christ, defeat the devil and fulfill God's plan for their lives. A God moment, she explains, is when "something changes in God's favor." Some, such as accepting Jesus as your Savior or choosing a spouse, are foundational. But sometimes a moment will "sneak up on you and grab you" or "you will have to sneak up on it

and grab it yourself.” The importance of those moments, she says, might not be evident at the time; you just have to be obedient to Christ. She writes: “Your whole life is going to be a series of God moments that build on each other. You belong to Him, so expect it.” Remain steady, never give up and develop a passion for His presence, where you can be changed into the person He wants you to be, she writes. For those who don’t feel qualified, she encourages, “The best candidate for God’s grace is somebody who is not qualified in his or her own strength at all—and who knows it.” Jacobs doesn’t want anyone to miss out on what God wants to do through them. Readers will feel a boost in their spirits as they read the biblical truths and examples Jacobs presents. Believers will have a renewed expectation for God to move in their lives and give them the faith to respond.

—LEIGH DEVORE

### **Seeing Through the Lies**

By Vonda Skelton, Regal Books, softcover, 204 pages, \$.

Writer and speaker Vonda Skelton talks with the authority of a woman who has experienced life and can discuss it with refreshing frankness. A wife, mother and grandmother, she has written a book that acts as corrective lenses on today’s culture, especially as it pertains to views on life for women. Skelton delivers balanced Christian perspectives on key issues such as body image, aging, proper expectations in marriage, the value of motherhood and materialism. The cherry on top is her self-deprecating humor—readers should not be surprised to find themselves bursting into laughter over some of her past antics and episodes. This book is designed to be used alone or in a group study with questions and meditations for each chapter. The appendix is filled with great resources for further study. The solid message is wrapped in an appealing style that makes it a great read for women.

—DEBORAH L. DELK

### **True Freedom**

By Steven Fry, Chosen, softcover, 256 pages, \$.

In True Freedom: What Christian Submission and Authority Look Like,

readers will discover that Steven Fry, a pastor and recording artist, doesn't believe in watered-down Christianity. An exploration of authority, responsibility and security, his book could be considered somewhat unconventional when compared to many Christian self-help books. Fry addresses the core of problems, not just the surface symptoms. The author draws upon his experiences in ministry to define the mystery of spiritual authority and submission. He contends that the source of much unhappiness stems from the desire to act independently of God. Furthermore, Fry believes that society is not suffering so much from a "love deficit" as from a failure to submit to God's authority. He also explains when it is a good thing to question authority and outlines the proper balance between authority and submission. True Freedom is a map for personal growth and reflection that will guide believers on the road less traveled. Chapters with insight into the topics of marriage and leadership will likely appeal to a wide range of readers.

—JULIE DANIEL

## **MUSIC**

### **On the Blue**

By Joel Augé, Integrity Music.

On the Blue is fantastic praise and worship dressed up like modern rock from Canadian artist Joel Augé (pronounced "Ozhay"). Augé gives listeners two distinct sets of songs on this album. The first is more akin to the modern rock of the talented Phil Wickham, while the second is soaring, artsy, alternative-pop reminiscent of David Mead or the late Jeff Buckley. And that's where this album comes into its own—the second half. There, listeners hear the title track—a wonderful folk-pop number about Peter walking on water ("Even if my brain shuts down / I still believe you would never let me drown," which sounds a bit stilted until heard within the context of the song). "I Am Here to Praise" is Buckley-inspired, as is "Call On Me," a melancholy and meditative ballad that is painfully beautiful and the best song here. While Augé's lyrics are at times a bit too standard, his music is inspired. Indeed, On the Blue proves Augé is not only immensely talented but also one of today's best praise and worship rockers.

—CAMERON CONANT

## **Born to Worship**

By Sarah Kelly, Gotee Records.

Sarah Kelly's voice makes her stand out, but it's her lyrics that will usher listeners into the presence of God. Opener "Brand New Day" is a lively description of God and what He has done. The more mellow "Born to Worship" offers the rousing chorus "I will put my hope in You / I come before You and lay down my crown / You are the King of my life / You lift my head and I'm blameless before you now / Sing Hallelujah." "Behold and Adore (Not Quite Home Yet)" is especially moving, with Kelly and a choir singing the chorus: "Behold and adore / The King of kings, Lord of lords / Behold and adore / The King of kings, Lord of lords." On the title track, Kelly rocks it out: "Giving glory to the risen King who took three nails then set me free." The song that best captures Kelly's voice is her rendition of "Amazing Grace." This entire collection offers heartfelt songs appropriate for church and also perfect for private worship. Born to Worship showcases Kelly's unique voice but even more so her love and passion for God.

—LEIGH DEVORE

## **I Have a Hope**

By Tommy Walker, Maranatha! Music.

Tommy Walker has served as a worship leader for 15 years and has written many songs for the body of Christ. I Have a Hope offers new songs that will help usher the church into His presence. The opener and title track is the perfect way to set the tone of praise and worship, with a toe-tapping melody declaring the hope we have in Jesus. "Do It Lord" is a faith-filled anthem of what God can do: "I see forgiveness overtaking hatred / Pride and prejudice now giving way to love / I see depression replaced with joy and gladness / And Satan's lies now bowing to the Truth." The simple "I Believe, I Believe" is a cheerful proclamation of the joy and peace found in the Lord. "Pass It On" is a lively declaration that we will give God glory, honor and blessing, and we will pass on the greatness of His name. Walker offers songs perfect for corporate worship, with melodies and lyrics that will resonate with worshipers long after the service is over.

—LEIGH DEVORE

## **Stand Out**

By Tye Tribbett and Greater Anointing, Columbia Records.

Tye Tribbett and Greater Anointing's *Victory Live!* 2006 release established them as one of gospel music's newest trailblazers. They garnered much critical and commercial acclaim with several Grammy nominations and two Stellar awards. How does a group follow up a CD like that? *Stand Out* is the answer. Recorded live, the album starts off with an explosive title track and an uncompromising message of integrity and holiness. The album continues with the rock-infused "Prodigal Son," techno-flavored "Hold On" and the smooth groove "Look Up," featuring the soulful vocals of Kierra "Kiki" Sheard. As unpredictable as Tribbett's style is, he and Greater Anointing transition seamlessly in their vocals and music. But the heart of *Stand Out* is the soulful praise and worship tracks such as "Bless the Lord (Son of Man)," "I Need You," "All Hail the King," "Let Us Worship" and "So Amazing." They continue with a mix of eclectic music, moving into traditional gospel with the Broadway-influenced "I Made It Through" and "He Has Made Me Glad," featuring Kim Burrell. *Stand Out* is setting a standard redefining gospel music without watering down the message.

—TWANNA POWELL-GREEN

## **Fearless now**

By Sheri Carr, Varietal Records.

Sheri Carr has the voice of a pop singer, but on much of this debut album, she's more interested in playing modern rock. Somehow it works. The songs on *Fearless Now* are interesting enough for the Coldplay generation, yet palatable enough for fans of more traditional praise and worship music. The title track is a rocking number that could've gone candy-pop but instead takes an edgier, more intriguing turn. Similarly, "Into Your Arms" would've made a nice pop-country tune, but Carr's instinct to keep it an enigmatic blend of modern rock and other influences might have been an even better choice. Although Coldplay-sounding keyboards and guitar riffs routinely find their way into these songs, *Fearless Now* is no Coldplay rip-off. There are a few slower ballads toward the end of the album that break the mold of other similar-sounding songs. "Serving You" is a pristine, almost Celtic number in which Carr's voice is at its best. Carr has a great voice, and the songs

here are at times lyrically poignant. But the strength of this album lies in its ability to remain musically accessible to almost any listener.

—CAMERON CONANT

## **NEW ON DVD**

Moondance Alexander

Fox Home Entertainment \$

Moondance Alexander, 12, doesn't seem to fit in with other kids. Her life takes on new meaning when she finds a runaway Pinto pony. Moondance is convinced Checkers has what it takes to compete. While caring for and training Checkers, Moondance learns that perseverance and hard work can pay off. This film is rated G.

## **It's Probably Just My Thyroid**

Word Distribution \$

Comedian, author and speaker Anita Renfroe is back with her fifth comedy DVD. As always, Renfroe offers her take on life and music, including "Before I Eat," the parody of Carrie Underwood's "Before He Cheats." Renfroe is a master at helping her audiences laugh at the regular things in life.

## **Lessons From the Sock Drawer**

Big Idea \$

Big Idea offers 15 short videos to illustrate the importance of having a happy heart. Children will enjoy the fresh packaging of VeggieTales favorites, including "Larry's Lagoon," "Omelet" and "The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill." Families can enjoy more than 75 minutes of vegetable fun, plus DVD bonus features.

## **FICTION**

### **HISTORICAL**

Washington's Lady

By Nancy Moser, Bethany House, softcover, 352 pages, \$.

Martha Dandridge Custis was a wealthy widow and mother of two small children when war hero George Washington started

courting her. Catch a glimpse of their romance and what Martha's life was like during the wonderful times, the hardships, her husband's six-year absence and her role as first lady.

## **CONTEMPORARY**

### **A Mile in My Flip-Flops**

By Melody Carlson, WaterBrook Press, softcover, 336 pages, \$. Gretchen Hanover thinks the perfect antidote for her canceled wedding is to flip a house for profit. But the house is in worse shape than she realized, and her dad wants his carpenter friend, Noah Campbell, to help. Noah is attractive and kind, but Gretchen is leery of him. Will she allow God to mend her broken heart, and can she trust His plans?

## **SUSPENSE**

### **Delicacy**

By C.L. Kelly, Zondervan, softcover, 320 pages, \$. Nick and Cassie Dixon volunteer at a culinary program that trains the homeless. But this ministry is located on a prime piece of property, and someone will do anything to get it—even poisoning, kidnapping and committing arson. There has to be a way to satisfy this person's hunger for revenge. But are the Dixons willing to risk their lives to figure it out?