

# WHEN GOD DRAWS NEAR

Exploring Worship  
from Seven Summits

Paul E. Engle

Mountains are massive and imposing—intended to make us feel small but hopeful. Dr. Engle leads us on a mountain-climbing expedition that shows us how God calls us to worship on his holy mountain. From the garden to the New Jerusalem, we are shown the centrality of God in worship and how this can enhance our present earthly worship.

—**Dominic A. Aquila**, President, New Geneva Theological Seminary

Bible readers are mountain climbers, because the biblical authors and poets often invite us to meet the Lord in high places. Engle takes us to a series of summits and uses lively prose to recreate these high-elevation revelations. What is more, he demonstrates how these mountaintop experiences motivate and direct our worshipful response.

—**John A. Beck**, Adjunct Faculty, Jerusalem University College;  
Author, *Along the Road* and *The Holy Land for Christian Travelers*

Dr. Paul Engle provides a much-needed resource to the church in his book *When God Draws Near*. The book clearly unfolds not only who the covenant God is but also how he wants his people to worship him in his presence. I wish that this book had been available to me when I started out as a pastor forty years ago.

—**Bruce Cresswell**, Associate Pastor of Senior Adults and Visitation,  
Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, North Carolina

Engle focuses the heart of biblical worship on the presence of God dwelling with his people. . . . His final two chapters, on the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion above, are especially moving and motivating for the church today as we participate in heavenly worship through Christ by faith. . . . A great resource for teachers and learners in the educational ministry of the local church.

—**Mark Dalbey**, President and Associate Professor of Applied  
Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary

Worship has been Paul Engle's lifelong pursuit—in his own spiritual life as well as through his teaching, preaching, and writing. . . . Each of [these] seven summits . . . offers a unique high vantage point from

which we can view worship. Engle's own experiences climbing these mountains brings immediacy to his wise insights.

—**Lee Eclov**, Senior Pastor, Village Church of Lincolnshire, Lake Forest, Illinois; Author, *Feels Like Home*

This insightful and helpful book can serve as a handbook for worshippers . . . to teach them what it means to gather for worship and the impact that worship can have on their lives. . . . Paul Engle takes readers on a biblical journey of mountaintop worship that enables them to see what God is doing in them and among them as they worship—as they meet the God of the universe and experience his presence.

—**Scott M. Gibson**, Professor of Preaching and David E. Garland Chair of Preaching, Baylor University's Truett Seminary

A timeless and refreshing mountain-climbing guide that provides an illuminating perspective on what worship is. . . . Summons us to delight in the vistas that worship creates by pondering what worship is.

—**Darwin K. Glassford**, Executive Pastor, Harderwyk Ministries, Holland, Michigan

Does your heart long for deep, meaningful worship? Do you wish that God himself had given us a blueprint for worship? *When God Draws Near* shows how he has done just that! Herein Dr. Paul E. Engle provides a biblical theology of worship from Genesis to Revelation, taking the reader from Eden to the heavenly Jerusalem. If you desire God-centered, soul-satisfying worship, this is your book!

—**Timothy K. Hoke**, Acting Vice Chancellor, African Bible University

Theologically rich, engaging to read, and filled with unexpected implications, Paul's book will energize us as we weekly climb Mount Zion in the heavenly Jerusalem to join the myriad of angels and those who have gone before us in praising our ascended King Jesus.

—**Robert D. Jones**, Associate Professor of Biblical Counseling, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Author, *Pursuing Peace and Uprooting Anger*

If our chief purpose is to “glorify God and enjoy him forever,” then no other activity is as important to the believer’s well-being as worship. . . . Paul Engle describes the biblical and theological terrain that shapes this spiritual landscape. Thoughtful and engaging, this book will transform your understanding of what it means to approach God.

—**John Koessler**, Faculty Emeritus, Moody Bible Institute; Author,  
*Practicing the Present*

Interesting biblical information . . . enriched by the personal experiences the author gained while traveling in the Middle East and elsewhere. The author adds layer upon layer of insight into the images and theology of worship, filling the word *worship* with meaning and motivating the reader to delight in our calling to be worshippers. I heartily recommend the book.

—**Craig Brian Larson**, Editor, The Preacher’s Toolbox series;  
Blogger, *Knowing God and His Ways*

Dr. Paul Engle is a master teacher. I have been the beneficiary of his teaching ministry many times. Paul provides compelling insights about the subject he treasures the most: the worship of our great God. I am grateful that he has chosen to make the profoundly insightful discoveries he has acquired through his extensive travels and studies accessible in book form.

—**Bernie Lawrence**, Senior Associate Pastor, Christ Covenant  
Church, Matthews, North Carolina

Today’s church is both divided and confused about worship. Our focus is too often on satisfying human needs rather than on offering praise to our eternal God. Paul Engle uses the stories of seven mountains in Scripture to remind us . . . what worship is all about.

—**Douglas J. Moo**, Wessner Chair of Biblical Studies, Wheaton  
College; Chair, Committee on Bible Translation

Engle is a captivating tour guide who leads his readers through hiking expeditions to seven mountains . . . proving foundational to a biblical

understanding of worship. Engle is also a riveting storyteller who weaves his firsthand accounts of climbing these mountains together with significant truths about worship. The result is an utterly fascinating and interesting read.

—**Rory Noland**, Director, Heart of the Artist Ministries; Author,  
*Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven*

Dr. Engle confronts the global crisis of man-centered worship and its tendency to dominate the evangelical church. . . . This book insightfully takes us on an exciting journey of redemptive-history “mountain-tops” in order to reclaim God-centered, biblical worship and bring us *Coram Deo!*

—**Bob Penhearow**, Founder, Senior Lecturer, Carey International  
University of Theology; Editor, *Systematics for God’s Glory*

An imaginative journey through the Bible that is organized around visits to seven of its best-known mountains as a way of showing the true nature of worship. Because worship is central to Christian life, a book like this, in which the author has dug deeply into Scripture, is most welcome.

—**David F. Wells**, Distinguished Senior Research Professor, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

What an intriguing and readable book on worship geography! Whether or not your worship this Lord’s Day felt like a mountaintop experience, Paul Engle uses the mountains of the Bible to explain what happens when Christians gather for worship—and how we might do it better.

—**Michael Wittmer**, Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology and Director of the Center for Christian Worldview, Cornerstone University

WHEN  
GOD  
DRAWS  
NEAR

## Also by Paul E. Engle

*The Baker Funeral Handbook*

*The Baker Wedding Handbook*

*Baker's Worship Handbook*

*Discovering the Fullness of Worship*

*God's Answers for Life's Needs*

*The Governor Drove Us Up the Wall: A Guide to Nehemiah*

*Guarding and Growing: A Study in 2 Peter*

*Worship Planbook: A Manual for Worship Leaders*

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Paul E. Engle



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To my wife, Margie,  
for reasons that would fill a million pages . . .



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## PREFACE

Not long ago, I spent an entire week in Seattle, Washington, without once seeing the sun. Undaunted by the drizzle, fog, and unremitting thick gray clouds, I kept sneaking glances toward the southeast horizon, hoping to catch a glimpse of the nearby snowcapped Mount Rainier—the topographically prominent stratovolcano that usually dominates the landscape. But to my disappointment, the summit remained totally obscured for the entire week.

When at last I returned to the airport, I consoled myself with the thought that there would be future business trips to the Pacific Northwest and perhaps a future sighting of Mount Rainier. Exhausted from the long, sun-deprived week and longing to get home, I buckled up in my window seat. As the plane climbed upward, I peered out the window at the dark clouds that had surrounded me all week long.

Until, all of a sudden, there it was! We had broken through the clouds. The eastern horizon lit up with a luminescent pink and yellow glow. Projecting through and above the clouds, the snow-covered Mount Rainier pointed up 14,411 feet toward its Creator. Below its peak was a surrounding blanket of billowing clouds that extended for miles and captured the radiance of the morning sunrise. The majestic mountain had been there all week long; I just hadn't seen it.

My experience can serve as a paradigm for what happens in

the case of all too many people who attend corporate worship services each Sunday. Clouds and fog can obscure what is happening in the invisible, spiritual realm when believers enter a service. This book is written to awaken Christians to biblical realities that take place in worship assemblies but that often go unnoticed.

In the following pages, we will break through the clouds in order to survey the horizon from several mountaintops—not Mount Rainier, but seven summits from the Bible. Over the course of the book, we'll travel to Mount Sinai, then Mount Zion in Jerusalem, then Mount Carmel, then Mount Gerizim in Samaria, then Mount Hermon in northern Israel, and then the Mount of Olives. Finally, we will make the ultimate climb to the heavenly Mount Zion. Together we'll discover, from the recorded events that took place on each of these sites, God's design and purpose for worship. By the time you arrive at the last chapter, you will have journeyed from Genesis and creation all the way to Revelation and consummation.

For decades, I have had the privilege of teaching pastors and church leaders on the subject of worship in the United States as well as in many other countries. I owe much to thousands of pastors and students whose feedback has helped me to further refine the insights the Lord has taught me through my study of Scripture. I have ingested countless books on the theology of worship. The teaching and writing that I have done on this subject have been enriched by several trips to Israel, where I have explored the biblical summits and archaeological sites I describe here.

In one of his books on worship, A. W. Tozer wrote, "This book is a small attempt to fan the flame of holy desire toward God. I hope you will catch the passion and press forward to delight in the conscious, manifest presence of God."<sup>1</sup> This reflects the beat

1. A. W. Tozer, *Experiencing the Presence of God*, comp. and ed. James L. Snyder (2010; repr., Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2014), 26.

of my heart for this book also. I have provided diagrams, charts, and maps for illustration throughout. If you wish to use this book in a class or a small group setting, each chapter concludes with questions for discussion and reflection.

The experience of Sunday corporate-worship assemblies is “the most outward, Godward hour in our weeks. . . . It’s a time when the invisible is made visible: the scattered church comes together; the signs of the kingdom are present in bread and wine and in the waters of baptism. The gathered church is a foretaste of the new heaven and the new earth.”<sup>2</sup> My prayer is that the journey we take in this book will elevate our perspectives and open our spiritual eyes to new realities so that we come to joyfully anticipate Sunday worship as the highlight of each week.

Maranatha! Let’s begin.

Paul E. Engle

2. Mike Cospser, *Recapturing the Wonder: Transcendent Faith in a Disenchanted World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2017), 29.



**Part 1**

GETTING  
READY FOR  
THE CLIMB



# 1

## UMBRELLA NEEDED

### Beginnings of Edenic Worship

*The Presence of God in our midst—bringing a sense of godly fear and reverence—this is largely missing today.*

*You cannot induce it by soft organ music and light streaming through beautifully designed windows.*

—A. W. Tozer, *Whatever Happened to Worship?*

A young boy sat next to his mother in a Sunday morning church service. He was restless and bored stiff. His mom had insisted that he leave his Nintendo at home lest he be distracted or, worse yet, irritate the people sitting behind him. Suddenly the boy's wandering eyes spotted a bronze plaque on the side wall of the church that showed letters, stars, and the outline of a flag. "What's that?" he asked his mother, and she whispered in reply, "Oh, those are the names of people from our church who died in the service." There was a long pause, as the boy was obviously upset with that answer. Panicking, he nudged his mother again. "Mom, Mom—did they die in the first or the second service?"

I recognize that story is not likely to cause you to roll in

the aisles with laughter. It might even elicit a groan. But I tell it because it makes a point.

To all too many people, a worship service is boring—something to be endured until they exit the church building and life goes back to normal. Perhaps this is part of the reason why there has been much experimentation in corporate worship in North America during the past couple of decades. In an attempt to connect with people, many churches have made seismic changes in how they conduct Sunday morning worship. Perhaps more changes have been made in the structure, style, and format of worship services in the last twenty years than in the past two hundred years combined.

A few years ago, the wife of a well-known megachurch pastor and popular author offered a controversial view of the goal of worship. A YouTube video, which is now removed and unavailable, showed her making the following statement before an overflow crowd of worshippers in their arena-like meeting place: “When you come to church, when you worship him, you’re not doing it for God really. You’re doing it for yourself!”

I suspect that many would take exception to this human-centered view of worship and might blink in incredulity. “Did I hear her correctly?”

## Why Bother?

Why should you take the time and exert the energy to explore the subject of worship? Is it really that important to devote a whole book to this subject? Allow me to highlight several reasons why I believe that the central gathering of the church in worship is indispensable to a healthy Christian life.

- *You and I have been summoned.* Sunday worship fulfills Scripture’s clear command that we meet together on the

first day of each week. Our Lord actively looks for our worship. “True worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks” (John 4:23). Amazing. The Father *seeks* your worship and mine. Let us draw near.

- *The experience of corporate worship shapes and reflects our view of God.* It’s the setting in which our appetite for God and our understanding of his acts and attributes are stimulated and stretched.
- *Sunday worship is the best way to prepare for what will engage us for eternity.* William Nicholls wisely asserts that “worship is the supreme and only indispensable activity of the Christian Church. It alone will endure . . . into heaven, when all other activities of the Church will have passed away.”<sup>1</sup>

Many churches engage in worthwhile activities such as counseling ministries, food banks for the hungry, marriage-preparation training, evangelistic outreaches, and many others you could likely name from your own church. Yet in the new heaven and earth, these programs and ministries will be unnecessary and will fade away. The one activity that will not disappear is worship. That’s how important it is to get it correct, here and now, in preparation for what’s coming. Our focus on worship in this life will reap eternal dividends.

I have long been captivated by a claim that author and Cambridge scholar C. S. Lewis made: “If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”<sup>2</sup> Or, as Ecclesiastes 3:11 expresses it, “He has also set eternity in the

1. William Nicholls, *Jacob’s Ladder: The Meaning of Worship* (repr., Richmond: John Knox, 1963), 94.

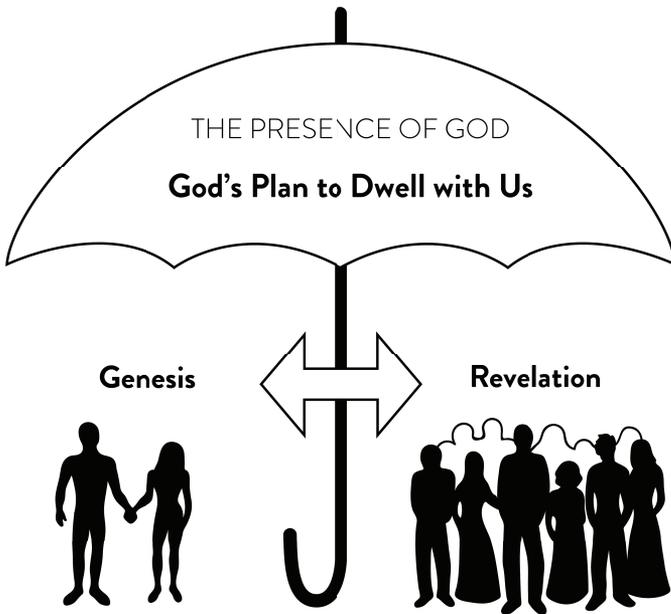
2. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 106.

human heart.” You and I long for a way to connect with the eternal world. To explore the dimension<sup>3</sup> of worship is to satisfy that longing.

## Overarching Umbrella

Far too many people approach worship without an umbrella, and that’s exactly what I hope to provide in this book.

What do I mean? I’m referring to an overarching theme or metanarrative that ties Scripture together—that extends from eternity past to eternity future—arching from Genesis to Revelation. And what is that big-picture umbrella that helps us make



**Fig. 1.1. Umbrella: God's Plan to Dwell with Us**

3. When I apply the word *dimension* to worship, I use it to refer to the invisible atmosphere, sphere, or reality that we enter when we gather with other believers in the name of Christ on the first day of the week.

sense of worship? It's this dominant theme: "the presence of God" (or, in Latin, *Coram Deo*)—God's plan to dwell with his people.

You may be thinking, What's the big deal here? Isn't "presence of God" just another one of those obvious evangelical clichés? Isn't it just another buzzword that we hear in prayers, sing in the lyrics of Christian songs, and read on PowerPoint slides? No—a thousand times no. We need to dig deeper.

The theme of divine presence is a bright thread that is woven through the entire Bible. It's a beautiful melody that plays from Genesis to Revelation for those who have ears tuned to hear. Like mountain peaks rising above the mist, the stories from Genesis to Revelation provide us with elevated views of the divine presence.

The place to begin an examination of worship is not the book of Acts, as some would suppose, but rather the book of Genesis and the earliest experience of worship. Our setting is the garden of Eden.

## **Worship before the Fall in the Edenic Garden**

In eternity past, out of darkness and emptiness, a personal God chose to speak and to bring the world into ordered being. God created Adam and Eve in his image and gave them the capacity to know and worship him. Just as plants in the garden needed sunlight in order to flourish, so humans would not flourish without spending time in the light of God's presence. God situated Adam and Eve in a perfect garden that was a sacred place or temple filled with his presence. Some scholars have concluded that the garden was located on a mountain. "The elevated location of the garden of Eden is indicated by the fact that a single river flows out of Eden, before dividing to become four rivers."<sup>4</sup> The prophet Ezekiel

4. T. Desmond Alexander, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 62; see also Genesis 2:10–14.

reinforces this idea by referring to “Eden, the garden of God” on “the holy mount of God” (28:13–14). The Greek Old Testament describes the garden’s geographical area with the word *paradeisos*—a term used to describe an enclosed garden or walled park.

My wife and I have always enjoyed being together, walking and talking—especially at the end of a long day. Our neighborhood is blessed with an abundance of brilliant-colored Knock Out roses, crepe myrtle trees, camellia bushes, and *Clematis* vines that climb up mailbox posts, trellises, gas lantern posts, and everything vertical. We sometimes imagine what Adam and Eve experienced in their tropical paradise as they walked and talked with their transcendent creator God. Worship for them was natural and immediate. Communion was pure and open. Original worship, prior to the fall, was not hindered by the barrier of sin.

What was God’s plan for Adam and Eve? “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it’” (Gen. 1:28). From the start, God planned to expand the original garden of Eden beyond its borders. His plan was that the whole earth would become a dwelling place for his descendants. But something went horribly wrong. The expansion of Edenic perfection never happened.

## Effects of the Fall on Worship

The story is a familiar one. God commanded Adam to fast from one tree in order that he might feast at the other trees and enjoy communion with his Creator.<sup>5</sup> But Adam and Eve deliberately disobeyed God—with dire consequences. The fellowship between God and his creatures was ruptured. “Then the man and

5. See Jonathan Gibson, “Worship: On Earth as It Is in Heaven,” in *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present*, ed. Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2018), 4. A helpful discussion of worship in Eden can be found from pages 2–8.

his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden” (Gen. 3:8). Instead of choosing to obey and worship God, Adam and Eve chose to hide from his presence. From that moment on, their worship of God was no longer pure and undefiled.

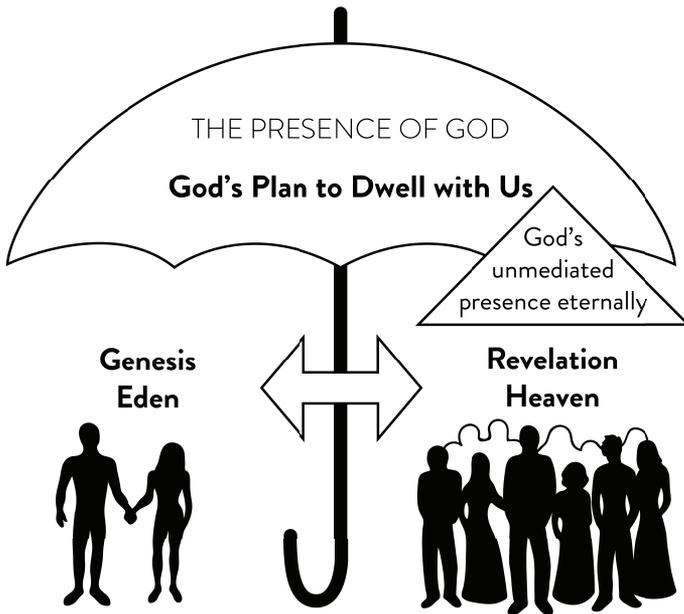
How did things change after the fall? In lots of ways. For starters, God pronounced a triple curse on his creation (see Gen. 3:14–19):

- *The curse of the ground.* The growth of thorns and thistles would necessitate hard work on Adam’s part in order for him to produce food for his family. Thus, Adam’s mission to expand the borders of Eden geographically was made more difficult. His environment became his enemy. From here on out, cultivation of the land would be toilsome for him—and for us. Sore backs and blistered hands are a continual reminder to farmers and gardeners that we live on a fallen planet.
- *The curse of generation.* Labor pains would accompany the birth process for Eve and for subsequent generations. The mission to fill the earth would be difficult.
- *The curse of separation.* Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden and from its immediacy of worship. Author Greg Beale explains that “God’s presence in his dwelling place satiates our longings for relationship, satisfaction and significance, and the opening chapters of Genesis show how God intended those longings to be properly satisfied—in Eden.”<sup>6</sup> But now things would move in a new direction.

6. G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 17.

## God's Ultimate Plan to Restore the Temple of Eden

Adam and Eve had succumbed to the Serpent's temptation and eaten the forbidden fruit, so God not only confronted the couple but also addressed the serpent, saying, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15). In this *protoevangelium*—the first hint of the gospel of redemption—God pointed to his plan to send Christ, who would break down the barriers that hinder sinful humans from entering the presence of a holy God in worship. This promised future Redeemer would be called "Immanuel" (which means 'God with us')" (Matt. 1:23).



**Fig. 1.2. Umbrella: God's Plan to Restore His Unmediated Presence**

Though all human efforts to achieve utopia have ended in failure, the gospel brings hope. When we come to the book of Revelation, we discover that one day God will remove the curse and eternally restore his unmediated presence. He will usher us into the heavenly city/garden that will mirror and reflect the garden of Eden. Read this wonderful promise: “I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among . . . his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’” (Rev. 21:3).

Notice the clear parallels between Genesis 1–3 and Revelation 21–22. God’s dwelling presence bookends the story of the Bible.

<b>Garden of Eden Worship (small plot in Middle East)</b>	<b>Heavenly Jerusalem Worship (all the new earth)</b>
Creation of the sun and moon (Gen. 1:14–18)	Removal of the unnecessary sun and moon (Rev. 21:23)
Creation of day and night (Gen. 1:3–5)	End of nighttime (Rev. 21:25; 22:5)
River watering the garden (Gen. 2:10)	River of life flowing from the throne (Rev. 21:6, 22:1, 17)
Tree of life (Gen. 2:9)	Tree of life (Rev. 22:2)
Precious stones (Ezek. 28:13–14)	Precious stones (Rev. 21:18–21)
Cherubim guarding the entrance to the Garden (Gen. 3:24)	Cherubim surrounding the throne and worshipping God (Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16)
Experience of God’s immediate presence for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8)	Enhanced experience of God’s eternal presence for all the redeemed sons of Adam and daughters of Eve (Rev. 21:3)

God created us to dwell with him—to satisfy ourselves with his divine presence, which will one day fill the entire new earth and heaven. In our present state, however, we are given only small, incomplete, imperfect glimpses of this future reality when we gather for worship on the first day of each week.

Pollster George Barna asked people whether they feel a real and personal connection with God when they attend services. He reported that over a third of church-attending Americans never experience God’s presence in worship services—they don’t connect.<sup>7</sup> Let me raise some questions for you to ponder: How would you explain this disconnect? How can worship services be planned to make Christians more aware of the divine presence? How can we avoid anything in our worship that would distract people from its God-centered focus?

## Unicorn in Narnia

C. S. Lewis understood the biblical vision of worship, and in his classic series of fantasy novels, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, he artfully used his imagination to help us to picture the fulfillment of the trajectory of God’s promise to dwell with us his people. In the final book in the series, *The Last Battle*, Lewis describes how the Unicorn enters a deeper country, at the creation of a new Narnia, and sums up what everyone around him is feeling. He cries out, “I have come home at last! This is my real country!

7. See “What People Experience in Churches,” Barna, January 8, 2012, <https://www.barna.com/research/what-people-experience-in-churches/>.

A similar poll by the Pew Research Center found that 37% of adults under age 30 do *not* feel a sense of God’s presence in worship services. However, a higher percentage of women, older adults, and non-college-educated people reported that they *do* sense God’s presence in services. See “Why Americans Go (and Don’t Go) to Religious Services,” Pew Research Center, August 1, 2018, <http://www.pewforum.org/2018/08/01/why-americans-go-to-religious-services/>.

I belong here. This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now.”<sup>8</sup>

For Lewis, the hope of our Christianity is about returning home to where we really belong. It’s about finally achieving our dream of returning to the garden. In our present worship, we enjoy a small foretaste of what awaits.

At age sixty-seven, Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone and holder of thirty patents, was asked to deliver the graduation address at Sidwell Friends School in Washington. The graduates were surprised to hear the brilliant Scottish-born scientist confess that he struggled with inattentiveness. He had recently taken a walk around his family’s long-held property in Nova Scotia. He was intimately familiar with the terrain—or so he thought. With stunned disbelief, however, he discovered a moss-covered valley that led to the sea. It had been there all along! Bell told the graduates, “We are all too much inclined to walk through life with our eyes shut. There are things all round us and right at our very feet that we have never seen, because we have never really looked.”<sup>9</sup> A similar phenomenon may occur in our worship services today. Some of us have attended church for years. We’ve sung the songs, read the Scriptures, mouthed the responses, and yet missed much of what’s occurring in the invisible dimension. Open our eyes, Lord.

It is my prayer that what you read here will open within you new dimensions of appreciation for worship.

8. C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 760.

9. Quoted in Amy E. Herman, *Visual Intelligence: Sharpen Your Perception, Change Your Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016), 14–15.

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. From your experience or observation, explain why some people are bored with corporate worship services. What are some solutions to this?
2. Why is it worthwhile to spend time focusing on worship and growing in our understanding of it?
3. What are some effects that the human fall into sin, in Genesis 3, had on worship?
4. Why do you think some people have a longing to get back to the garden? Can you think of some echoes of Eden that occur down through history, even to today? Describe God's plan to deal with this Edenic garden longing that people feel.
5. How would you describe some of the parallels between Genesis 1–3 and Revelation 21–22?
6. The pollster George Barna reports that a significant percentage of church attenders never experience God's presence in worship services. What do you think accounts for this? Is the root cause related to the planning and content of services, or does the problem simply rest with individual church attenders? Is it possible to be a church attender without being a worshipper?
7. What insight does C. S. Lewis provide in *The Last Battle* that helps us to understand worship?