



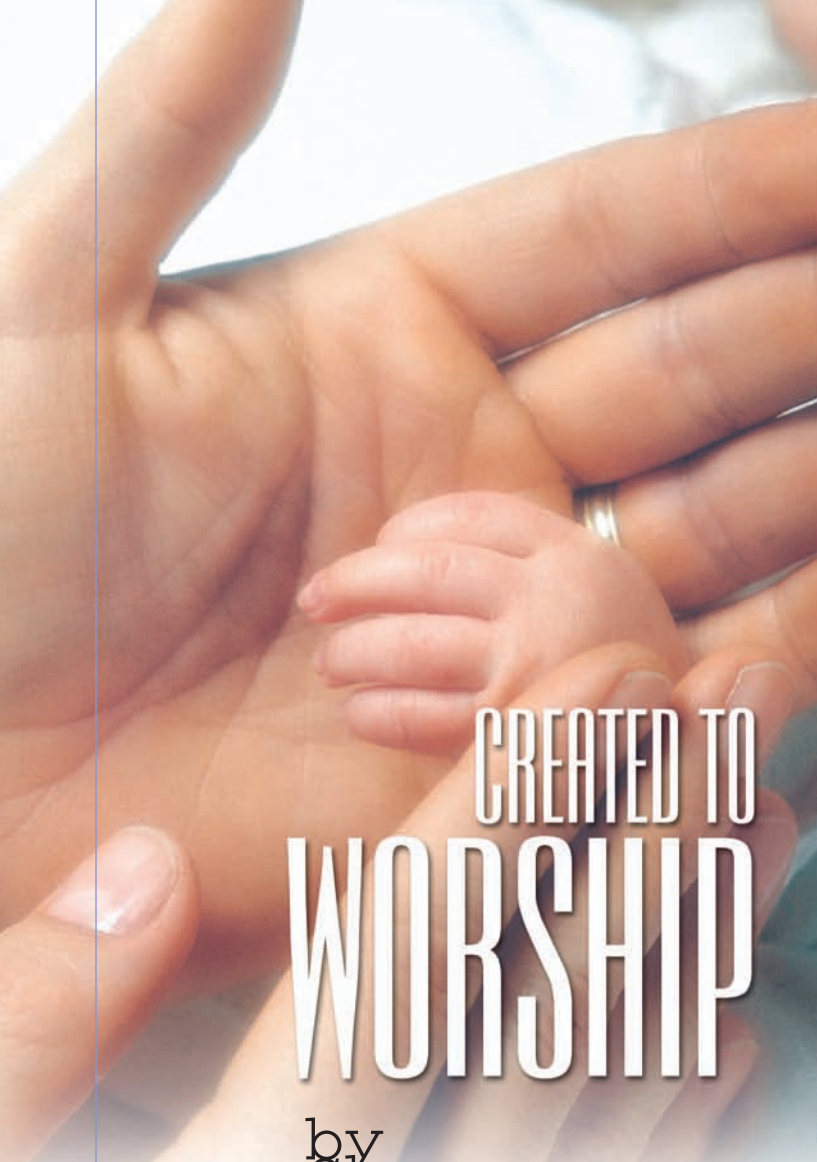
WHITE WING  
*Messenger*

*Connecting Christian Believers*

*November 2003*

All Thy works with joy  
surround Thee, earth  
and heav'n reflect Thy  
ways; stars and angels  
sing around Thee,  
center of unbroken  
praise; field and forest,  
vale and mountain,  
bloss' ming meadow,  
flashing sea, chanting  
bird and flowing  
fountain call us to  
rejoice in Thee.

*Joy!*



# CREATED TO WORSHIP

by  
Shaun  
McKinley

■ IT WAS AN AWESOME SERVICE. The presence of God seemed to permeate every corner of the room. Sadly enough, at that time, it was one of those rare moments when everyone in the little church was brought to quiet reverence before the Lord. God was moving, and there was no doubt that the lives of those present were being changed.

My attention, however, was drawn to a young girl seated at the back of the room. Her name was Carlee, and she was no older than four or five. Although I was sure she was uncertain of what was going on around her, she was lost in the same embrace that we adults were. Tears flowed down her face as she lifted her hands toward heaven. Her focus, her attention, her everything was being offered to the One that had created her to do just what she was doing.

As revival began in that church, and our worship services began to become more powerful in the presence of God, I often found my attention turning briefly to Carlee. And every time I saw her, she was involved in the richness of worship—whether lifting her hands, singing, or praying tearfully with others.

I never cease to be amazed at the depths of worship I see entered into by children. It's hard to believe anything can be more precious to the heart of God than a child praising Him with all his

heart. God longs to pour out His love and power on our children, and to have them experience true worship.

**Worship is natural to children**, an experience birthed into them that can only be taken away by being inhibited by their surroundings or by adults. In the story of Jesus driving the money changers out of the temple, we read that the children spontaneously began an outburst of shouting and worshipping, saying “. . . Praise God for the Son of David . . .” (Matthew 21:15 NLT). Although the religious leaders of the day were indignant and wished to silence the children, Christ would not allow them. His reply was a reminder of what David had written long before: “You have taught children and nursing infants to give you praise . . .” (Psalm 8:2 NLT).

The founder of the modern Sunday school program, Dr. Benson, is often quoted saying, “It is natural for a child to turn to God as it is for a morning glory to turn to the sun.” Although worship is natural to children, it is not inherent. We must take an active role in modeling worship, providing opportunities for our children to worship, and encouraging them to pursue experiences with their Creator.

**Children must be allowed** to express their rightful role as a worshiper. Children are usually eager to do as they feel the Lord leading them and asking them to do. Far too often, we want to limit God's work in the worship lives of our children. We want to predetermine “how much of God” they're ready for, and often discover, when it comes to children drawing closer to God, we want to be in control. It's at these times we need to be reminded God has given His children the heart to pursue a worship experience with Him, and allow them to follow His leading.

Children are hungry for a genuine movement of God. They're willing to open their hearts to be touched. Given the opportunity to be exposed to more of the living God, children will seek more of God with an unquenchable thirst. Children are able to trust God and to praise Him without any doubt or fear. As adults, we should pursue a relationship with God, free from barriers and fears, and we should pursue times of worship and embrace just like Carlee experienced.

Some of the greatest joys that parents or children's ministers can experience are being in the presence of an awesome movement of God, seeing children receiving God's love, and then to see them pray and minister to others. We can experience more of God, and so can our children. We can have times of worship and maintain a joy those times bring—times when our children are being who God created them to be and doing what God has asked them to do.

Shaun McKinley  
Cleveland, Tennessee

