Why are so many lives aimless and unfulfilled? Because every one of God’s children continues to live in shame from the fall, when intimate companionship with the Father was broken and the glory of his presence was lost. Yet, as Jack Hayford explains, believers can regain their intended position as kingdom people. How does that happen? Through worship. In his most comprehensive and significant work to date, Hayford explores the various elements of worship and shows how to attain the liberty that comes from welcoming God’s glory. Christians worldwide are heeding the call to worship. With this timely and substantive direction, each one will learn to reign once again in kingdom authority.

My Personal Review:
When the biggest words on a book’s jacket spell the author’s name, you know he or she is either "up and coming" or a respected veteran voice, the second being the case with Jack Hayford, president of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel --- a prominent Pentecostal denomination --- and author of some 40 books and 600 hymns and worship songs, including "Majesty."

In MANIFEST PRESENCE: Expecting a Visitation of God’s Grace Through Worship, Hayford takes on the broad subject of Christian worship, both corporate and individual, his premise being that "(1) God is waiting for a human invitation to manifest Himself, and (2) worship is the means for inviting Him to do so." As we worship, God releases his power in us and through us, though "the Church at large tends to be resistant to worshiping God with the expectation of His visiting with power."

This is a book for serious Christians or seekers. Occasional anecdotes lighten the text, but it is largely substantive teaching material that requires careful reading. I suggest digesting a self-contained chapter a day rather
than attempting a straight-through read. Eighteen chapters --- most hooked to a specific biblical text --- are presented under three part-sections: "The Call to Worship," "The Power of Worship," and "The Pursuit of Worship," which covers the spiritual as well as the physical postures of worship. One needs to get past the table of contents and into the text to determine which chapters relate primarily to personal worship and which to church worship, some chapters being addressed to pastors and worship leaders.

One recurring theme is that "worship confronts carnal pride" and moves us beyond what "others might think" of our robust but imperfect singing, our raised hands, our bent knees.

A second topic, covered in each of the three parts, is worship and song. In an early chapter, "Worshipping Him Who Is Worthy," Hayford wishes that more contemporary worship songs focused on Jesus, and he critically distinguishes between worship music and concert music. A particularly delightful "power of worship" chapter, titled "With Voices Loud and High," discusses the role and power of song. "When we worship God in song, the power of darkness --- in every area of our lives and in every circumstance in our world --- is challenged." Then music comes up again in the "pursuit of worship" section, where Hayford notes: "From my observation, there is usually not more than one song a year that is introduced into the life of the church that really has ongoing durability." And yet he urges a congregation "to have a prayerful and studied inflow of new songs." After all, Scripture repeats "Sing unto the Lord a new song" eight times.

Another interesting chapter discusses the spiritual power of two words that invite God's rule in our lives: grace and amen. "Amen is no ordinary word to be bandied about...Neither does it deserve to be intoned passively at the conclusion of prayers," Hayford says. "'Amen' is the establishing of the living Word of God in the arena of human enterprise and experience for the glory of Jesus Christ."

--- Reviewed by Evelyn Bence

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