

By Paul S. Williams



'I Was Made for This'

Ellen grew up in a broken home where she had no sense of life's purpose beyond a desire to succeed. Ellen became a professional with a reputation as a "hard driver," but her soul was empty. Ellen kept herself busy, and most days she was able to keep the ache and longing off in the distance.

But then came 9/11, and like many New Yorkers, Ellen was forced to look beyond day-to-day business and find a deeper thread running through her life. To her dismay, the only thread she could find was her frantic and lonely longing for meaning. A longing her six-figure income couldn't begin to answer. Ellen wanted to be loved with no strings attached.

Early in life Ellen had concluded life's answers would not be found at church. But when the pain is deep enough, a lost soul will look anywhere. So when Ellen's friend invited her to the worship service of a brand-new church, Ellen took a deep breath and said yes. That Sunday, Ellen got out of bed, and walked into the Sunday service with her friend.

Ellen's first response was to wipe the sleep from her eyes. It was not what she expected. The music was incredible. It drew her toward the God she wasn't even sure existed. "Everything just felt right," she said, "like I was made for this." A woman gave

the Communion meditation inviting all to the banquet table, and the minister spoke straight to the emptiness in her soul. Ellen was still skeptical, but she returned. Slowly the face of the One she worshiped came into focus through the eyes of those who sang and participated with her.

Today, there are still dark moments in Ellen's life. But she is no longer alone on the journey. She has companions, with similar stories, and a common life of worship.

Ellen wanted to be loved with no strings attached. But this was not what she expected.

I recently asked Ellen what element of that first Sunday touched her most. She answered without hesitation, "The worship—that sense I was cre-

ated to do this—to worship somebody or something." She paused. "And one other thing," she said. "The woman who invited me to the banquet table."

When the worship styles are tallied and the verdict is in, I believe that's what most of us are looking for on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning. We long for that sense that we were, in fact, "created to do this"—created to worship, and invited to the banquet table. And if we leave the church service with that deep sense of awe and peace, I don't think we really care whether it was a five-string banjo or a five-manual organ that got us there.

Seen & Heard

Compiled by S. J. Dahlman

"The culture of death begins not in a love of death but in a culture of pseudo-life. . . .

Even in a culture of death, people strive for life. People who are only living together expect each other to be faithful; people who have slept around want to be married; people who have been divorced want a marriage that will last; homosexual people want to have children; women who have aborted their children regret the loss. Things are not as bad as they might be, because peo-

ple strive for life, though in cases like these they strive partly in vain."

—David Mills, *Touchstone*, January-February 2003

The United States is evolving into a **Big Brother society** as technology advances and surveillance increases, the American Civil Liberties Union said in a January report, "Bigger Monster, Weaker Chains: The Growth of an American Surveillance Society." It contends that a growing "surveillance monster" makes it almost impos-

sible for people to walk the streets in major cities without being filmed. "If we do not act to reverse the current trend, data surveillance—like video surveillance—will allow corporations or the government to constantly monitor what individual Americans do every day," the report said.

—Associated Press

"Christian Bookstore, 6 Miles—Behind Dominoes—Prepare to Meet God."

—A sign near Johnson City, Tennessee (submitted by Rick Rusaw, Longmont, Colorado)