

# God is bigger than we can imagine

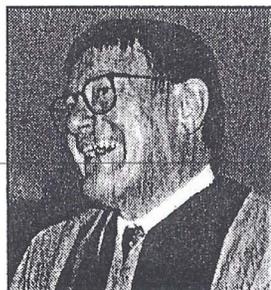
**H**ow do we imagine God? Where do we look for the most important evidences that show us who God is? And when our search is underway, how do we know that what we are finding in our journey is the truth and not the confusion of our own imagination projecting words and thoughts which we then wrongly call God?

In the story that C.S. Lewis wrote, *The Horse and His Boy*, the lad Shasta meets up with Aslan, the Son of the Emperor from beyond the sea. In the dark mist of a mountain trail he asks the large voice of Aslan this question as he tries to know who the voice is: "Are you a giant?" Aslan answers: "You may call me a giant but I am not like the creatures you call giants."

**THE TRUTH IS** that all words we use to describe what we are thinking about when we think about God are words from our experiences or the experiences of others and none of these is able to contain the full mystery of who God is. God is beyond all words like giant or mother or father or any other word of greatness.

This fact humbles us and is impressed upon us in the Book of Exodus. Moses is encountered by the living God at the burning bush and is given a vast task to do. (Exodus 3) He then asks who God is so that he can validate the amazing mandate that has been given to him in favor of the captive people of Israel: "Who shall I say sent me?"

God speaks to Moses the words that will become for the people of the Bible the most important single name for God.



**From Your Minister**  
*Earl F. Palmer*

He makes himself known. Do we want to know who God is? Then we must listen to God speaking for himself and the greatest speech of all is more radical than the voice at the burning bush; it is that moment in history when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth (John 1).

Jesus Christ is the living word of God. How do we then discover more than the name of God, the very character of God? It happens as we watch the person and listen to the teacher Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and Lord. What Jesus says and what Jesus does shows us who God is. This is the most important of all discoveries for us and there is in it both a

God speaks this answer to Moses: "I am who I am." This means that Moses was to identify the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob as "He Is," Yaweh. This moment in Moses' life gives to us the Holy Name for God, a name that is used some 1,800 times in the Old Testament: "He is."

**WHAT DOES** this mean? It means that God speaks for himself and that

warning for us and also an exciting promise to us.

It means that we do not define who God is on the basis of the inner experiences of our own uniqueness or even mystical experiences. When we think or imagine these large thoughts we have not thereby "thought God," but instead we have shown the powerful possibilities of the human mind.

As remarkable and impressive as these thoughts are, they are still not ultimate or complete because God speaks for himself in his Son Jesus Christ. The Old Testament by anticipation prepares us for that fulfillment of hope, and the New Testament in witness points to Jesus Christ who is the fulfillment of that hope. The Holy Spirit confirms that living speech to us today.

**IF THE WARNING** to us is clear that we must not as Christians create a false God from the celebration of some part of the whole of our life or our life experiences, then the promise is clear too. We do not need to discover a new name for God as if God were hiding until some religious movement can find the hidden God who we are now to set free from an older captivity.

God, who has never been captive to our language, is the one who finds us just as the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son was quite able to find both sons and quite able to grant the grace of celebration to each. We, as the sons and daughters, are the ones who need to be set free and re-imagined, not the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God has spoken in Jesus Christ and now it is our time to listen.