



Grand Chaplain's Corner

By RW Grand Chaplain Pat Thompson

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God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14a).

This text tells of "Moses at the Burning Bush." Moses is in the witness protection program after killing an Egyptian in a fit of anger. He was then 40 years old, and now he's married with a child and spends another 40 years in Midian before he's stopped in his sandals by none other than a talking bush. His life was never the same again.

One might be intrigued by the response of Yahweh when Moses inquires just who it is he is talking to. Perhaps a better translation is "I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE." The suggestion is that the LORD's identity is fluid—that it will change over time as we come to experience the holy in our midst even as we age and learn. I believe that if any of us embrace the same things about God today as we did, say ten years ago, that we are not paying attention. Our understanding of the Divine Reality must change as we *experience* God's presence, and that is quite different from our knowledge *about* God!

The LORD's instructions to Moses that he remove his sandals is predicated on the observation that the ground on which he stands is "holy ground" (v.5). It is a decidedly *holy moment*, so of course, he stands on *holy ground*. It is a given, I suppose. I submit that you and I have stood in a similar place in times past and that perhaps we did not know it at the time. More to the point, we stand on sacred soil (or carpet or tile or wood floor) much of the time, and we do not know it!

Few of us have heard a voice emanating from a fiery bush...or maybe we have. The moment might not have been so dramatic, but most of us have "heard" the Divine Voice speaking to our hearts at critical junctures of our lives. Sometimes we were keenly aware of something outside ourselves at such a moment, and dutifully, we removed our shoes in deference to the holy experience. At other times, we may have *thought* we "heard" and chose instead to ignore our senses, chalking it all up to misinterpretation or wishful thinking.

May God grant to each of us our own *burning bush moment*—perhaps you are still waiting for yours. May you be found receptive when you hear the voice saying, "I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE," for our hearts are never so open as when we finally sense the presence of the High and Holy One and instinctively remove our shoes without being told.

Faithfully and fraternally,

Pat