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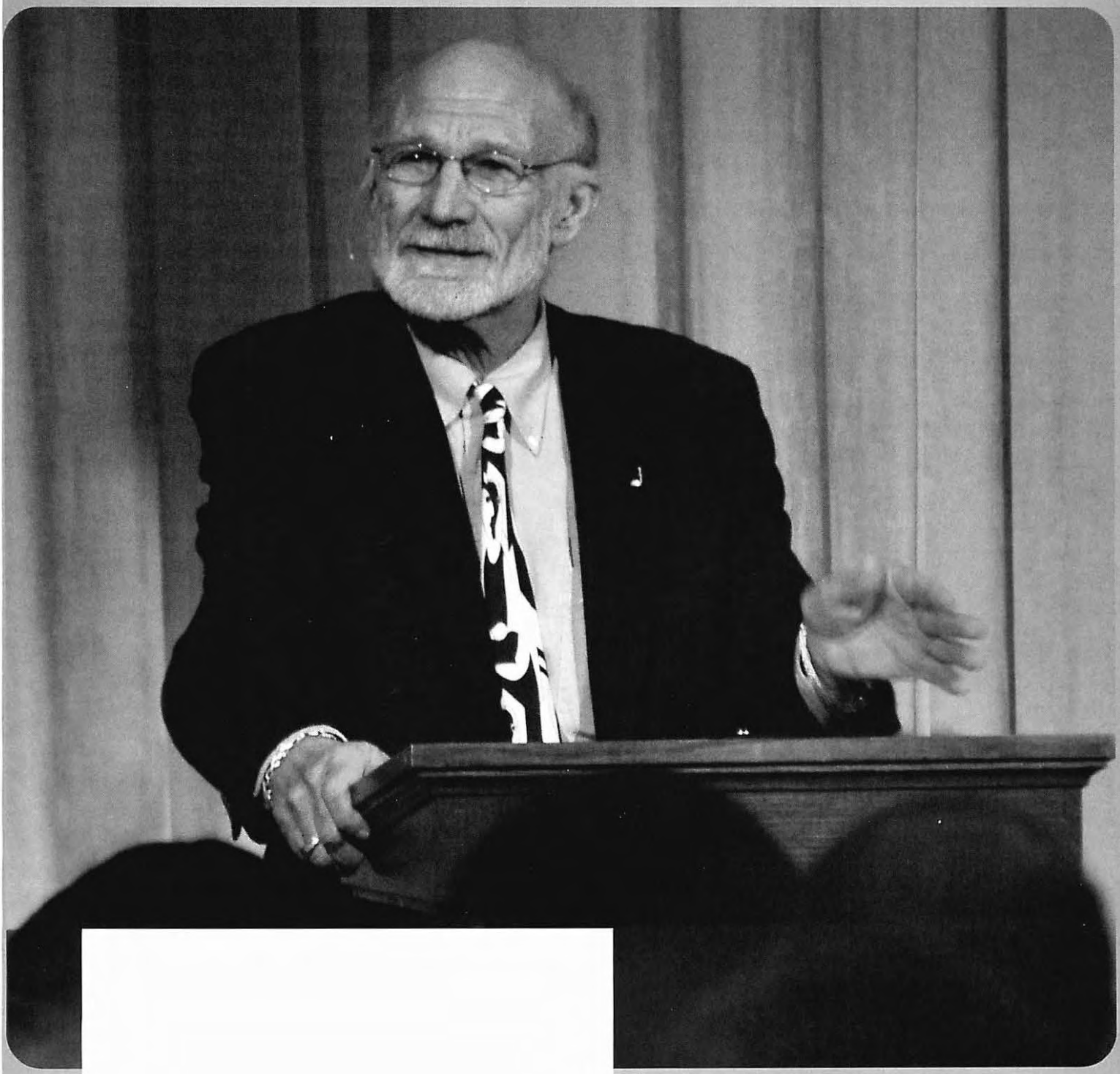

Stanley Hauerwas on Naming God

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on the cover | Stanley Hauerwas speaks in Dallas. [See page 6]
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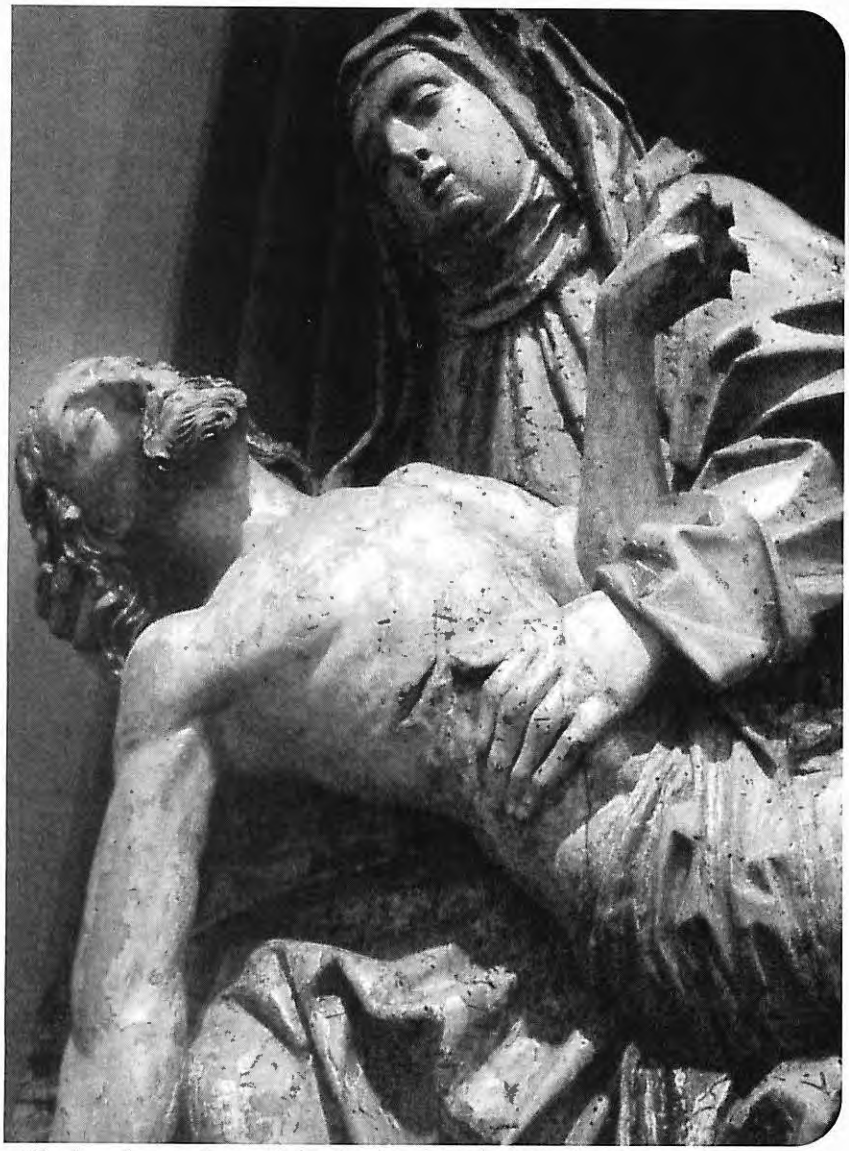
THE LIVING CHURCH

this week | March 28, 2010



Wood sculpture from 1500, displayed in the Royal Museum, Budapest.
Greg Kremer photo

"He humbled himself and became obedient unto death." (Phil. 2:8)

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THE LIVING CHURCH magazine is published by the Living Church Foundation, Inc. The historic mission of the Living Church Foundation is to promote and support Catholic Anglicanism within the Episcopal Church.

Letters Discuss Consents on Glasspool

The Diocese of Los Angeles has announced that the Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool, bishop-elect, has received consents from a majority of standing committees. The diocese elected Canon Glasspool on Dec. 5 as one of two suffragan bishops.

The canon must also receive consents from a majority of bishops. The office of the Presiding Bishop tracks bishops' consents. By tradition, the office does not reveal bishops' votes until sufficient consents arrive or the deadline for receiving consents has passed. May 5 is the deadline for consents to Glasspool's election.

Some bishops and standing committees have issued public statements about their decisions.

The Rt. Rev. Herman "Holly" Hollerith IV, Bishop of Southern Virginia, wrote of his decision to deny consent.

"I believe she would make a wonderful bishop and that she is an excellent match for the Diocese of Los Angeles. Her election there was logical and appropriate," he wrote to the clergy of his diocese on Feb. 4.

"Nevertheless, it is clear to me that the ordination of an openly Gay woman to the episcopate will — at this time — have a serious negative impact on our relationship with the wider Anglican Communion, and that it may very well strain — to the breaking point — those bonds of affection which we have come to value with others, even with those who may agree with us."

The Rt. Rev. Nathan D. Baxter, Bishop of Central Pennsylvania, wrote a detailed 1,400-word letter explaining his decision to grant consent.

"After prayerful discernment and various contexts of consultation, I have determined that the House of Bishops would be enriched and be represented more holistically as a symbol of unity to the Church ... if Mary Glasspool were a member of that House," Baxter wrote.

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr., Bishop of Ohio, wrote that he was granting consent because Glasspool's election was consistent with the canons of the Episcopal Church, including the prohibition of discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.

Hollingsworth wrote: "Whenever it is that a majority of Standing Committees and Bishops with Jurisdiction consent to the ordination of another partnered gay or lesbian Christian as bishop (and I believe it is a matter of when), I will consider it as neither innovative nor prophetic, but an act of fidelity — to our understanding of what God is calling us to be, to all those whom God has called into The Episcopal Church, to those with whom God has called us into relationship around the world, and of course to God. It is my conviction that God will receive it as the same."

The Rt. Rev. Gary L. Lillibridge, Bishop of West Texas, issued a statement with his bishop suffragan, the Rt. Rev. David M. Reed, on Dec. 8, but only Lillibridge has a vote in the process.

"We are mindful of the statement of this summer's General Convention that acknowledged that 'members of The Episcopal Church, as of the Anglican Communion, based on careful study of the Holy Scriptures, and in light of tradition and reason, are not of one mind, and Christians of good conscience disagree about some of these matters' (resolution D025)," the two bishops wrote. "We reiterate our belief that The Episcopal Church should exercise the restraint called for by the Anglican Communion and, likewise, will not consent to this election."

The standing committee of Northern Indiana declined consent. In a Jan. 28 letter to the Rt. Rev. Jon Bruno, Bishop of Los Angeles, the

standing committee said it was not of one mind on sexuality questions, and explained its decision to deny consent.

"Our Standing Committee shares a deep concern over the myriad implications of a church cut off from the broader Body of Christ, even as we consider our church's role in prophetic witness to the world for the inclusion of all people," wrote the Rev. Dr. James Warnock, president of the standing committee. "We believe that Canon Glasspool's ordination to the episcopate would exacerbate an already tenuous relationship with our Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners."

Douglas LeBlanc

Dallas Affirms Anglican Covenant

Delegates to a special convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas voted March 6 to adopt and enter into the Anglican Covenant.

The move makes the 30,000-member North Texas diocese among the first dioceses (Central Florida is another) to affirm the Covenant's call for mutual accountability among worldwide Anglicans.

Delegates also voted 185–101 to dissociate the diocese from General Convention actions last summer that have led to more public blessings of same-sex couples.

The votes followed a call by the chairman of the Anglican Consultative Council to renounce the notion that the gospel "is all about us."

"The hour is getting late," said the Rt. Rev. James Tengatenga, Bishop of Southern Malawi, quoting lyrics from Bob Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower."

"Time for our games is running out," the bishop added. "In fact, I believe it has run out already. It is

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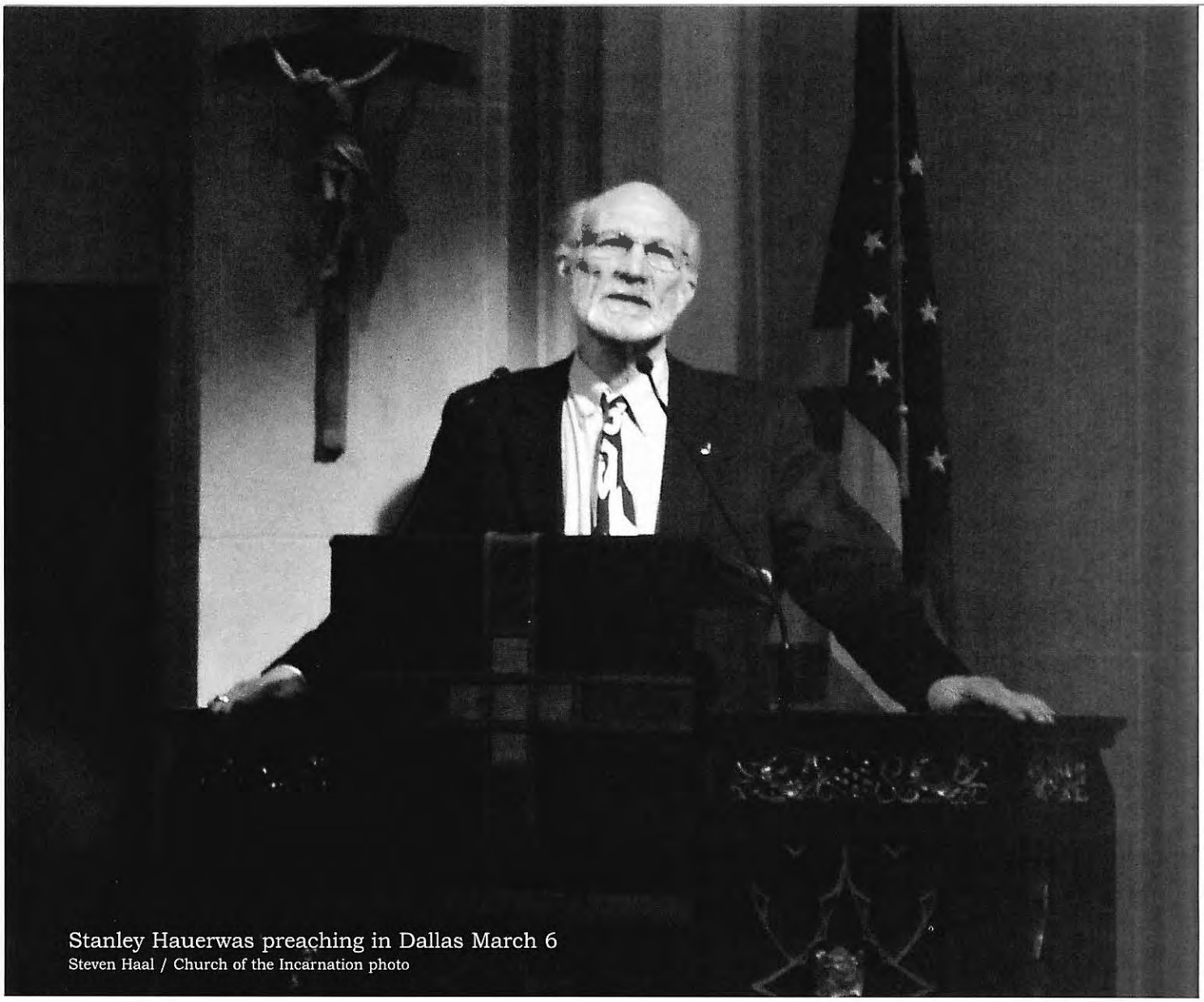

Stanley Hauerwas preaching in Dallas March 6
Steven Haal / Church of the Incarnation photo

Naming God

A SERMON

By Stanley Hauerwas

"God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead, having before raised Israel from Egypt" is the hallmark sentence of Robert Jenson's *Systematic Theology*. This elegantly simple but dauntingly deep sentence took Jenson a lifetime of theological reflection to write. To write such a sentence requires that the grammar of our faith discipline our presumption that we know what we say when we say *God*. For it turns out that we are most likely to take God's name in vain when we assume we know what we say when we say *God*.

One of the ironies of the recent spate of books defending atheism is the

confidence the "new atheists" seem to have in knowing which God it is they are sure does not exist. They have forgotten that one of the crimes of which Romans accused Christians, a crime which often meant their death, was that Christians were atheist. The Romans were tolerant. All they wanted was for the Christians to acknowledge there were many gods, but Christians were determined atheists. Christians were atheist because they assumed the primary problem was not atheism but idolatry. Idolatry, moreover, has everything to do with knowing God's name.

Augustine in *The City of God* even argues that the reason the Roman Empire had fallen on hard times was because the Romans worshiped corrupt gods. He assumed rightly that there is a direct correlation between the worship of God, the character of our lives, and politics. Augustine argues, therefore, that Rome fell because the people of Rome lived immoral lives by emulating the immorality of their gods. Needless to say, Augustine's account of idolatry was not well received by the Romans.

So depending on which god or gods the new atheists think they are denying, they might discover that Christians are not unsympathetic with their atheism. For example, it should not be surprising that in a culture which inscribes its money with "In God We Trust" atheists might be led to think it is interesting — and perhaps even useful — to deny God exists. It does not seem to occur to atheists, however, that the vague god which some seem to confuse with trust in our money cannot be the same God who raised Jesus from the dead, having before raised Israel from Egypt.

This is but a reminder that the word *god* can be very misleading, particularly for those who worship the One who raised Jesus from the dead and Israel from Egypt. For the word *god* can invite us to confuse the One who raised Jesus from the dead with the general designation *god* used to describe the assumption that something had to start it all.

Those who assume *god* is the designation we use for naming the assumption that something had to start it all also think that such an assumption implies there has to be more to life than birth, sex, and death. Many who believe in such a "more" often agree with the new atheists that there is little evidence that such a "more" exists, but they nonetheless refuse to deny its possibility. Moreover, they assume that such a "more" has many names, for to think otherwise is to risk intolerance.

I Am Who I Am

Our text for today [Ex. 3:1–15] makes clear, however, that naming God matters. God asks Moses to bring his people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of captivity in Egypt. God, who seems to have been reading Jenson's *Systematic Theology*, tells Moses that he should tell the Israelites that Moses has been sent to the people of Israel by the God of their ancestors, that is, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But Moses, who knows the Egyptians well, knows that escaping from Egypt is going to be a risky business. Moses knows that those whom he is asked to rescue will want some assurance that Moses is authorized to undertake the dangerous business of escaping from Egypt. At the very least those that he has been asked to lead will want to know the name of the One that he serves. So Moses asks God for some identification, to which God responds — "Tell them 'I am who I am' has sent Moses to them."

"I am who I am," or as some have translated, "I will be present to whom I will be present," was not, I suspect, a reply that pleased Moses. But it has been an unending delight for Christian theologians and philosophers to reflect on the metaphysics of God's existence. Aquinas, for example, thought that God's response rightly suggests that only in God are existence and essence inseparable. Put in more colloquial terms, this means only God can act without loss. For Christians it is, therefore, never a question about God's existence, but rather what it means for all that is not God to exist.

"I am who I am" may be a helpful metaphysical response, but it is not a name. At best, as philosophers like to say, "I am who I am" is a grammatical remark that suggests God is known by what God does. "I am who I am," therefore, is but another way to say you know all you need to know if you know that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is as if God is saying to Moses: "Tell them not to worry. Just as I have been there for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so I will be there for you." In effect God is saying: you can trust me but you cannot possess me.

We, like the people of Israel, would like to think we get to name God. By naming God we hope to get the kind of God we need, that is, a god after our own likeness. We can make the "more" that must have started it all after our own image. But God refuses to let the people of Israel — or us — assume that we can name

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the One who will raise Israel from Egypt. Only God can name God. That, moreover, is what God does. God also said to Moses:"Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God is Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations."

To know God's name is to know God. As Karl Barth observes: "'I am that I am' can scarcely mean anything else than just 'I am He whose proper name no one can repeat' is significant enough; but the revealed name itself by its wording is to recall also and precisely the hiddenness of the revealed God."

The burning bush that is not consumed wonderfully displays Barth's point that the very revelation of God, God's unrelenting desire to have us know him, means we must acknowledge that we cannot know God. Moses could not help but be drawn to the fiery bush. How could the bush be on fire yet not be consumed? He drew near, but the Lord called to Moses, named Moses, out of the burning bush, telling him he was on holy ground. He was to remove his sandals and come no closer. Moses did as he was told, hiding his face, fearing to look on God.

For if God is God how could we hope to stand before God? How could we hope to see God face to face and live? The burning bush was not consumed, but we cannot imagine that confronted by this God we could see God and live. Israel knew that there was no greater gift than to be given God's name, but that gift was a frightening reality that threatened to consume her. Israel could not possess God because God possesses Israel.

But we are Christians. We believe we have been given God's name and that we must say it. Paul in his letter to the Philippians tells us:

> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.
>
> Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (2:5–11).

The fire that burned but did not consume the bush is Jesus Christ. Just as the fire did not consume the bush, so our God has come to us by becoming one of us. Yet the humanity of the one he became was not replaced or destroyed. Rather our God is incarnate. Our God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There has never been a time that God has not been Trinity. The God that came to Moses in the burning bush, the God who called Moses to deliver his people, the God who gave Moses his name, is Trinity. Only this God can be very God and very man.

We believe we can make his name known because the God we worship is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.

The God we worship is not a vague "more" that exists to make our lives meaningful. The God we worship is not "the biggest thing around." The God we worship is not "something had to start it." The God we worship is not a God that ensures that we will somehow get out of life alive. The God we worship, as our passage from Luke [13:1-9] makes clear, is not a God whose ways correspond to our presumptions about how God should be God. That God has come near to us in Christ does not mean that God is less than God. God is God and we are not.

Yet we believe that the God we worship has made his name known. We believe we have been given the happy task of making his name known. We believe we can make his name known because the God we worship is nearer to us than we are to ourselves — a frightening reality that gives us life. We believe that in this meal of bread and wine, just as Jesus is fully God and fully man, this bread and this wine will, through the work of the Spirit, become for us the body and blood of Christ.

To come to this meal in which bread and wine become for us the body and blood of Christ is to stand before the burning bush. But we are not told to come no closer. Rather we are invited to eat this body and drink this blood and by so doing we are consumed by what we consume, becoming for the world God's burning bush. By being consumed by the Divine Life we are made God's witnesses so that the world may know the fire, the name, Jesus Christ.

God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead, having before raised Israel from Egypt. There is no God but this God. Blessed be his name.

Stanley Hauerwas, Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke Divinity School, preached this sermon at Church of the Incarnation, Dallas, Texas, on March 6.

Doing Justice to Just War Thinking

By Jordan Hylden

Just War as Christian Discipleship

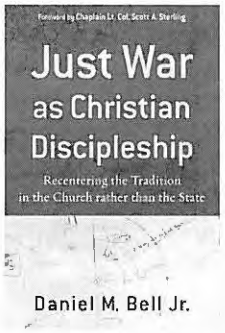
Recentering the Tradition in the Church Rather than the State

By **Daniel M. Bell, Jr.** Brazos. $21.99. Pp. 267. ISBN 1587432250.

Christians have thought hard about the problem of war for centuries, not always well and not always as much as they should have, but nevertheless enough to have built up a large tradition of reflection on the issue. Unfortunately, says Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary's Daniel Bell, too few Christians today are familiar with their own body of teaching on just war. And the sad result is predictable: many of us tend to talk about war in a way that simply mirrors our nationalism and partisan polarization, so that an onlooker might be forgiven for thinking that at bottom our convictions depend more on our loyalties to America, the G.O.P., or the Democratic Party, rather than to Christ and his Church.

Others of us might make serious appeal to just war categories, but even these conversations tend to swing around to issues of public policy, so that "just war" becomes a matter of ticking items off an ethical checklist for decision-makers in Washington. What's missing in all of this, Bell argues, is a serious appraisal of what it would take to be a just war *people*, along with what it would mean to think about war not simply as a public policy issue or as a necessary evil but as an outgrowth of faithful Christian discipleship. Changing how we think and act, Bell argues, if today's Church is to renew its witness to a world of war, will require us to put aside patterns of thought rooted in partisanship and the modern nation-state and listen once again to the Christian just war tradition.

The first thing to be said about *Christian* just war, according to Bell, is that if it somehow involves accepting some kind of lesser evil for the sake of a greater good, it's not deserving of the name. Neither Jesus, Paul, nor any other New Testament figure authorizes us to sin all the more so that grace may abound, and Bell, following a solid tradition of Christian ethical thought, as such refuses to countenance any kind of consequentalist logic. Unfortunately, many 20th-century Protestant ethicists from Reinhold Niebuhr to Joseph Fletcher subscribed to just this kind of consequentalism, and it continues to animate a great deal of thought about war still today.



Daniel M. Bell Jr.

Niebuhr, classically, thought that Jesus represented an "impossible possibility," a nonviolent ethic of peace that could never work in the real world, which meant that Christian thought about war had to forget about following Jesus and instead focus on how best to manage the interplay of power against power in a violent world. Bell dismisses this kind of thinking in the sharpest possible terms. What it amounts to, he argues, is kicking God upstairs so that we can carry on as if God hasn't made a difference in the world. If we truly believe, however, that God sanctifies and equips the Church for witness and holy living, then this kind of thought simply isn't an option. In fact, for Bell, it's precisely the kind of logic used by the people who nailed Jesus to the cross. Somehow, if just war is truly to be *Christian*, it instead has to be part of taking up the cross and following Jesus as one of his faithful disciples.

Of course, on the surface of it, it's not very easy to see how taking up the cross and following Jesus would lead a Christian disciple to take up a gun and kill someone. Bell admits that this is a very serious objection, with solid scriptural support and the nonviolent witness of the early Church on its side. Although he does not directly engage with their work, it is just this kind of reasoning that led ethicists such as John Howard Yoder and Stanley Hauerwas (the latter of whom was Bell's dissertation adviser at Duke) to support pacifism: they thought that since Jesus was nonviolent, so also must be his disciples. The underlying motivation for Yoder and Hauerwas, however, was never pacifism per se but instead following Jesus as the norm for Christian ethics. And since Bell agrees that following Jesus no matter what the cost is indeed what Christians are called to do (unlike the "impossible possibility" logic of Niebuhr), it becomes absolutely necessary for him to understand just war as a mode of taking up the cross, as counterintuitive as this may seem.

For support, Bell turns to Augustine, who understood just war as an act of neighbor-love, a sort of "kind harshness" undertaken out of concern for the common good that aims at restraining wickedness and restoring justice and peace. Just wars, seen this way, are acts of love in that they genuinely are ordered toward the good of others (including our enemies), instead of being ordered toward self-defense, self-aggrandizement, or revenge. This depends on a larger Augustinian vision of politics (which itself depends on Romans 13), in which God grants continuing authority to the state to "take up the sword" to restrain evil and establish an earthly peace. Bell does not so much argue for this position as he assumes it: other writers, he explains, have already argued the case satisfactorily, and his focus instead is explicating

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what it means to follow Jesus in loving our neighbors and enemies in the field of warfare.

Bell does not, of course, mean to say that the state can do anything it wants to restrain evil and establish peace; again, he strongly cautions us against accepting any kind of "lesser evil for the sake of a greater good" logic. Working out how warfare might be conducted in love is, in essence, the entire object of just war theory, and Bell spends the greatest part of his book working through the seven classical criteria of just war: legitimate authority, just cause, right intent, last resort, reasonable chance of success, discrimination in combat, and proportionality. Crucially, Bell distinguishes between what he calls "Just War as Public Policy" and "Just War as Christian Discipleship," wherein the former is centered in the goals of the secular nation-state and focused on public policy decisions, and the latter is centered in the mission of the Christian Church and focused on being a faithful and just people.

Quite often, Bell claims, Christian just war contrasts sharply with secular just war. Just cause, to take what perhaps is the clearest example of this, is regarded quite differently by the Christian tradition. While modern, secular just war understands just cause to be grounded in self-defense (and as such has difficulty articulating a rationale for humanitarian intervention), Christian just war is rooted in neighbor-love and rejects self-defense altogether. It amounts, Bell argues, to very different visions of justice: a "justice for me" based on self-interest, and an other-directed "justice for all" ordered toward the common good. Although this shift would not, Bell explains, rule out fighting wars in defense of American citizens (since they, too, are neighbors we are called to love), it would change the discussion about war quite dramatically, since the central question would no longer be American "interests" (e.g., hitting back at the Taliban) but instead the common human good (say, committing troops to prevent genocide in Rwanda or Sudan).

Another crucial difference, for Bell, has to do with reasonable chance of success. This criterion refers to the moral imperative to draw back from wars that one cannot reasonably expect to fight justly and win. Some secular just war theorists, such as Michael Walzer, have argued that in cases of "supreme emergency," when an entire way of life is at stake, a nation may override this criterion and use tactics otherwise regarded as unjust. But for Bell, this amounts to making the nation into an idol of ultimate value, on whose behalf even justice may be sacrificed.

The Church, by contrast, is principally concerned with faithfulness rather than survival (for which it trusts the promises of God). This leads, as such, to what Bell calls the moral imperative of surrender: if a war cannot be fought justly, then it simply ought not be fought. One

The Church is principally concerned with faithfulness rather than survival.

example of this criterion's bite, although Bell does not make the point directly, would be the way it arguably should lead us to consider the possession of nuclear weapons highly suspect, since as weapons ordered toward the mass killing of civilians they seemingly cannot be used under the criteria of proportionality and noncombatant discrimination. Even if, the argument would run, unilateral divestiture of nuclear arms during the Cold War might have required American surrender to the Soviet Union, it would nevertheless have been the just thing to do.

Perhaps most important of all, from Bell's perspective, is the need for Christians to be formed into just and virtuous people if they are to have the character that it takes to fight wars justly. Although Bell takes great care to explain each of the just war criteria, he accords just as much if not more emphasis to the Church's call to become a just people. Although the point may sound obvious — after all, no amount of just war theorizing by scholars will matter one whit in times of crisis if American voters and leaders don't care about fighting justly — it actually is not, given the focus of most just war thought on public policy and the demanding sacrifices that a commitment to just war would involve. To fight wars justly as Christian disciples, Bell contends, we first must be formed in virtue by a just community — and the name of that community is Church, since only God can give us the character, strength, and faith that we need to take up our crosses and fight justly.

Bell's treatment of just war does not answer every question, of course. Which wars do we fight? How might we find ways other than war to bring about peace and justice? And how might U.S. soldiers be trained to both fight and genuinely love their enemies at the same time? No doubt, Bell would be highly sympathetic to such questions, and what he has given us treats his chosen topic fairly and well. The book's dedication is to the bishops of Bell's own United Methodist Church, and is meant by Bell to be read widely by Christian pastors and lay leaders. At bottom, the book is an urgent call for Christians to learn their own church's just war tradition, most particularly pastors charged with forming their congregations into just war people. Every pastor faced with leading a parish through times filled with wars and rumors of wars — and what pastor is not? — would do well to read it.

Jordan Hylden, a candidate for holy orders in the Diocese of North Dakota, is a graduate student at Duke Divinity School.

catholic voices
Victims of Our Own Success

By Steven R. Ford

It doesn't take a degree in statistical analysis to see that the Episcopal Church is in serious trouble as an institution. A decade ago, my Arizona hometown of Tempe had three Episcopal parishes. Now, two of those parishes are small missions. And as one travels around the great country of the United States, it is striking to see how many Episcopalians on Sundays worship in mostly empty buildings.

TEC's statistical website, curiously styled "Growth and Development," makes for some pretty depressing reading. For instance, between 1992 and 2004 the population of Nevada doubled, while the average Sunday attendance of our coterminous Episcopal diocese declined almost 20 percent. Spokane's ASA went down 22 percent in a population that increased by a fifth. And Rochester's ASA plummeted by a whopping 25 percent. All this in a period of 12 years! What on earth is going on?

It's long been suggested that our problem is with evangelism — that we're not very good at inviting and welcoming folks into our fold. But wait. Even among our vastly diminished numbers, something close to half of us have come into the Episcopal Church from some other tradition or from none. That's been the case for quite awhile. Member for member, we just might be the most effective evangelists that Christendom has ever produced. So it clearly isn't that.

It's common, in conservative circles at least, to blame our plummeting numbers and influence on our having corporately taken the "wrong" side in the so-called Culture Wars. Few, after all, would argue with straight faces that our collective wagon hasn't long been hitched to specific social agendas. So does our spectacular decline, coupled with the spectacular growth of conservative Christian groups, mean that society at large is repudiating what we've done? To many pundits, it does.

"But not so fast," writes Oliver Thomas in a recent issue of *USA Today*. "Just look at what these mainline Protestants have championed: racial justice, equality for women, ... reproductive choice and so forth. American law and society," he points out, "have embraced nearly every one of their issues down the line. We have largely become the inclusive, pluralistic society that these more liberal Protestant Christians envisioned."

Culture War, indeed — and what a passion-driven war it's been. Many of us were passionately energized by the long struggle for racial justice, and now an African American family lives in the White House. Multitudes in our church were long impassioned by the quest for gender equality, and now a woman is Presiding Bishop. And reproductive choice, now expanded into open sexuality generally, has long since been transformed from a goal for which we strive into a basic civil right. But impassioned soldiers, once their war has been won, tend to wander away from their units and get on with their everyday lives.

Tertullian once observed that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," and Christianity certainly grows and flourishes where it's a countercultural enterprise. But what happens to a church which succeeds in winning over its culture? It stumbles around, apparently, in a quest for new social causes. But the farther these new causes are from the church's original vision, the less passionate its members are about them. Many of them wander away. At the same time, fewer passionate souls are drawn to it.

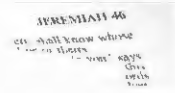
What happens to a church which succeeds in winning over its culture?

One of the basic laws of sociology is this: once it has fulfilled its mission, no human organization ever dies a natural death. Instead, it becomes preoccupied with staying in business. Could this be what we're seeing as congregations try to wrestle more and more money from fewer and fewer members? Or as national church leaders spend ever increasing time in court trying to hold onto property and funds? Maybe, just maybe, it is.

We've largely won the war we've been fighting for so long — a war that has enflamed our passions and shaped our identity. But impassioned soldiers, once victory has been won, generally wander away from their units and get on with their everyday lives. And they no longer do much recruiting.

It just might be that we, as a church, have become victims of our own success.

The Rev. Steven R. Ford is pastoral associate, Church of St. James the Apostle, Tempe, Ariz.



Note of Ultimate Triumph

"In the Lord all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory" (Isaiah 45:25)

BCP: Isaiah 45:21-25 or Isaiah 52:13–53:12; Psalm 22:1-21 or 22:1-11; Phil. 2:5-11; Luke (22:39-71) 23:1-49 (50-56)
RCL: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Phil. 2:5-11; Luke 22:14–23:56 or Luke 23:1-49

Where thy victorious feet,
  Great God, should tread,
In honor this green tapestry is spread;
And as all future things
  are past to thee,
The triumph here proceeds the victory.

Giambattista Marino's poem "Palm Sunday" encapsulates the tension that drives the liturgy for this Sunday. Outside in the morning sun, we read the great story of Jesus' tickertape parade. We wave our green branches, acclaim him as King, and pray to "follow him in the way that leads to eternal life." It's rather Easter-y, at the head of this week of blood-red passion. Soon, though, we follow his cross into the Church, to hear the story of that path, the one that leads up Calvary's hill. The lights grow dim, our hymns change to a minor key, our shouts give way to silent grief.

Some liturgical scholars treat the palm procession as an embarrassment, a concession to sentimental tradition, to be laid aside quickly once the real aim of the day comes into view. The children's joyful shouts, the royal hosannas, sound fickle and naive beside that other cry from the crowd, "Crucify him."

But those children say more than they know. The passion story is not really a tragedy, not a timeless tale of the world's misery and injustice. It's a pitched battle between God in the flesh and all the forces of evil. It's the contest all of time has waited to see. And the final outcome is clear enough.

The note of ultimate triumph is unmistakable in this Sunday's texts. Isaiah proclaims that every knee shall bow before him on the great day when his just purposes are accomplished, that "all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory." Psalm 22, the great passion hymn that springs from the lips of Jesus movingly evokes his suffering and grief, but God does not ignore the cry of the afflicted. He will be vindicated, and the world will know of his saving deeds. Paul's impassioned song of Christ's humility also ends on a note of victory. God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the highest name.

Even Luke's sad tale is shot through with notes of hope. To the man beside him he promises, "today you will be with me in Paradise." You will share the fruits of this victory just as soon as it's won.

We wave the palms because this sad story isn't really sad. It's good news for sinners like us, it's the source of our hope, our peace, our true and lasting joy.

Look It Up

Read Luke 4:13 and 22:3. Who is Jesus' real opponent in the Passion story?

Think About It

Should this Sunday's cross be veiled?

Next Sunday **Easter Day (Year C), April 4, 2010**

BCP: Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 51:9-11; Psalm 118:14-29 or 118:14-17, 22-24; Col. 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43; Luke 24:1-10
RCL: Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; 1 Cor. 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12

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Inspired by Fr. Wattson

It seems impossible for me to put down the Jan. 17 issue of THE LIVING CHURCH concerning Fr. Paul Wattson. His vision and dream has inspired me ever since I made my first retreat at Graymoor in January of 1970.

The article by Dr. Patrick J. Hayes bears much study and reflection. He notes: "Fr. Couturier changed the tenor of the [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity], however, away from reunion of all others with Rome ... toward future unity *par cum pari* — literally, on equal footing." I might add these words: on a level playing field.

Pope Benedict's "personal ordinariates for those Anglicans entering a new relationship with the Roman Catholic Church" (entitled *Anglicanorum Coetibus*) is assimilation and not a partnership or covenant between two Communions on equal footing.

I have come to believe that the partnership agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Episcopal Church and the proposed partnership with the Episcopal Church and the Moravians are both *par cum pari*. Might this be the time when a full communion agreement and partnership between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion could finally occur, resting "on the store-house of supernatural graces stocked by so much fervent prayer," *par cum pari?*

The Rev. John J. Negrotto
Jersey City, N.J.

Listen and Speak

Right on, Dr. Daniel Speed Thompson [TLC, Jan. 24]. Edward Schillebeeckx's name is honored among theologians and carefully noted among proofreaders. Following his death, THE LIVING CHURCH is among the first to affirm the ongoing value of his work.

In 1967, I had an opportunity to interview Fr. Schillebeeckx in Toronto. He spoke at the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church, along with Bernard Lonergan, S.J., Karl Rahner, S.J., Rabbi Abraham Heschel and others. He was, I think, the first prominent Roman Catholic priest I had seen at a North American public event wearing a business suit and necktie.

He had something to say about the interaction of Church and world, and the need for the Church to listen as well as to speak. Even then, more than 40 years ago, he suggested that every generation looks to the gospels for answers to different questions; the questions themselves are shaped by the times.

A.E.P. (Ed) Wall
Orland Park, Ill.

Dallas Affirms Anglican Covenant

(Continued from page 5)

time to focus on Jesus. ... It is not about you but about Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The diocese's adoption of the Covenant — irrespective of what the Episcopal Church might decide someday on the matter — carried heavily by voice vote.

The convention earlier adopted, 176–147, a motion to affirm diocesan membership not just in the Anglican Communion but also in the Episcopal Church — a signal that the Rt. Rev. James Stanton's commitment to keep the diocese in the church enjoys majority support.

The convention coincided with the 17th anniversary of the 63-year-old Stanton's consecration as bishop. The diocese continues to grow in spite of several non-rancorous parish secessions the bishop negotiated successfully.

Delegates voted expressly not to embrace provisions of Resolution D025 that refer to holy love uniting many same-sex partners and the church's openness to the possibility of these partners' call to ministry. The resolution likewise dissociates the diocese from D025's declaration that "Christians of good conscience [may] disagree about some of these matters."

A second part of the resolution dissociates the diocese from General Convention's Resolution C056, which calls for "an open process for the consideration of theological and liturgical resources of the blessing of same gender relationships" and urges a generous pastoral response toward gay and lesbian communicants in secular jurisdictions that allow gay marriage and civil unions.

The Rev. David Houk, rector of St. John's Church, Dallas, said the resolution was meant to strengthen "our central message" as Anglicans. The Rev. Edward Monk, rector of St. John's Church, Corsicana, said, "We want to reinforce what we believe," so as "to keep ourselves on mission."

Fred Ellis of St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Dallas, objected that General Convention had not called specifically for blessing same-sex unions such as Ellis and his partner enjoyed years ago at the beginning of their relationship — "being able to stand at the altar of the church" and make "public profession of what [we as] partners felt for each other."

The Rev. Phil Snyder, a Dallas deacon, countered that the Rt. Rev. John Chane, Bishop of Washington, was using the General Convention resolution "as the rationale to allow not just same-sex blessings but also marriage."

The blessing conferred on Ellis and his partner was not sanctioned by the diocese, Bishop Stanton said.

Bishop Tengatenga's sermon deplored the modern tendency to make the gospel "our [own] truth, our little clique's version of it."

"Is the truth we have been charged with not bigger than that?" he asked. "Is the Jesus who has given us the task not the same Immanuel? ... Sometimes I get the feeling that we are too obsessed with protecting and preserving our version of Anglicanism that we lose sight of the task of proclaiming the Good News. ... I believe the gospel is bigger than Anglicanism or any other denomination whatsoever."

William Murchison

Deaths

The Rev. **David M. Paisley**, founding vicar of Prince of Peace Church, Woodland Hills, CA, died Feb.28 at Kaiser Hospital in Woodland Hills, on his 93rd birthday.

He was born in East Liverpool, OH, and studied at Ohio State University and Episcopal Theological School. He was ordained deacon in 1952 and was assistant for a year at Grace, Port Huron, MI. Following his ordination to the priesthood in 1953, he served a number of churches in Hawaii before moving to the Diocese of Los Angeles to become vicar of St. Martin in-the-Fields, Twentynine Palms, 1956-59. He founded the Woodland Hills congregation in 1959, oversaw the purchase of a five-acre parcel of land and was instrumental in the construction of the buildings on the church's campus. Fr. Paisley left Prince of Peace in 1972 to serve congregations in Pearl Harbor and Kalakeua, HI, until his retirement in 1979. He returned to southern California and was a supply priest for congregations in Fillmore and Thousand Oaks. Survivors include his wife of 67 years, Mary Katherine (Kay); their children, Peter Paisley and Susie Blasman; and seven grandchildren.

John T. Frary, a priest of the Episcopal Church who became a Roman Catholic after retirement, died in Greeley, CO, Feb. 24. He was 88.

A native of Denver, he retired from the Navy in 1966 after two decades of service, then worked for the U.S. Civil Service, retiring in 1974. He graduated from Rhode Island College in 1980. After a decade of work for General Dynamics, he was ordained deacon in 1983, moved to Colorado in 1986, and was ordained priest in 1988 while at St. Mark's, Craig, where he was vicar. He was vicar of St. Paul's, Dixon, WY, from 1996 to 1999, when he retired from active ministry. He became a Roman Catholic in 2002. He is survived by a son, John, of Littleton, CO; two daughters, Naomi Premer of Evans, CO, and Sidney Johnson of Reston, VA; seven grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

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