

MM Blue Sheet

January 30, 2014

SUMMER FLEET IN WINTER



Morgan's Moment....

I was dreaming of winter on Puget Sound...
and my lonely little boats
waiting for summer...then....

"Look at your mailbox!"

Jean's worried words
pointing from my office window.

I knew it wasn't going to be good...
a rural mailbox
has no chance.

And I noted that she said...

"your mailbox"

before she headed downstairs.

Another crashed mailbox
creates...you know...
a gut reaction.

Some driver veered off pavement
to commit a hit-and-run
crime against civility.

Will he return to repair...?
will he have lingering guilt..?
not a chance.

So it's **my** mailbox issue to resolve...
to chuckle instead of stew
to repair both it and me.

I'll replace the shattered post
declare myself fixed
and get on with winter dreaming.

— Art Morgan

BOOK CORNER

JESUS FOR THE NON-RELIGIOUS -

Discovering the Divine at the Heart of the Human

- By John Shelby Spong

Spong is described as a "controversial retired Episcopal Bishop" because he writes in a clear and scholarly way about questions many church-goers and non-church-goers ask themselves but never hear discussed.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT A CHURCH FOR ATHEISTS?

One of the gym guys and I were bantering. Guy-talk often consists of nonsensical exchanges and comments. A good banterer leaves everyone laughing. Sometimes you can steer bantering into some real conversation.

This morning the fellow slipped me a clue that he was about to have surgery on his knee. I wondered whether he had any pain. Without a missed beat he answered, "I never have pain because if I do I turn it over to God and it's gone."

"Whatever works," I answered. I try not to pursue God-talk in the gym.

Sometimes people will try to say something pleasant about God because they know I am in the "God business." I'm not sure what they mean when they say "God." I'm not sure I know what anyone means. And I don't know that I could say what I mean. I've always been suspicious of people who were chummy with God.

Which brings me to another question: **"What do you think about 'Sunday Assembly,' a church for atheists?"**

I guess I don't think it's such a big deal. Displacing, replacing or eliminating gods has been going on for as long as there have been people. More than a half century ago this question was faced by front line scholars and theologians. In those days people were worrying about Thomas Altizer and John Hamilton and others who talked about "Christian atheism."

We struggled to understand what Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the famed Christian who wrote *"Letters and Papers from Prison"* just before he was executed by the Nazi's as WWII was ending. He shocked complacent believers with statements like:

"There is no longer any need for God as a working hypothesis...Nor is there any need for such a God in religion or philosophy" (p. 218 *Letters from Prison*)

These and other voices from the past should be added to this current discussion. Non-belief takes as much a leap of faith as belief.

I have had people bring their conviction about atheism to me. One question I always wanted to hear answered was what kind of God they no longer believed in. Most of the time I told them that I didn't believe in that kind of God either.

There have been atheists in all of my congregations. There must have been more "closet atheists" I never knew about. They usually had stories about how the God they used to believe in failed them. I had a staunch preacher-friend who was bereft when his daughter died and his core religious belief failed to save her. He felt betrayed by God. I felt that he was betrayed by his ideas about God.

My gym friend seemed sure that his God took his pain away. He saw no problem in the fact that God didn't take away his need for an operation. But what do I know? Sometimes the mind and subconscious can perform miracles.

But for a lot of thoughtful people, that God does not exist. If some of them value fellowship and singing and personal relationships, just like in church, well...bless them!

Every church should have a club for secret atheists and heretics. Oh yes, and agnostics. I'd invite them in as well. I'll bet it would be quite a group. Anyway, don't worry about atheists. They are all over the place, even in church. God bless us all.

— Art Morgan January 30, 2014

Moment Ministries — 35th Year — a-morgan@peak.org