

**MORGAN'S MOMENT...**

*"He raised an eyebrow when I mentioned your name as I was reading him your blue sheet."*

Interesting to hear of a blue sheet being read at the bedside of a man during his last hours.

He hadn't been responding or talking for a while until the raised eyebrow.

It was a sign to them that a visit from me might be welcomed.

One never knows about such times... as family waits an ending what to do or say.

So I sat with my friend and spoke my name and saw a sedated attempt to respond.

He had been a friend for years... but who knows whether I was known or not?

But when the speaking of your name raises an eyebrow it's an invitation not to be refused.  
• Art Morgan

**BOOK CORNER**

Several Unitarians on my list suggested Forrest Church's *"Love and Death • My Journey Through the Valley of the Shadow."* Timely, I guess, in mid-Lent on the death march toward Jerusalem. Especially timely for me with a number of recent deaths among friends and a relative. Forrest Church has a terminal disease (from which he died) and writes this book in the midst of it.

He makes the point that all of life is lived with awareness of pending death. He says that *"religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die."* He says that no one knows about life

after death, *"But about this we surely know: there is love after death...When we ourselves die, the love we have given to others is the one thing that will never die."*

I see that the Book Corner has turned the corner so I'll add a couple of other books worthy of attention. You know of Rick Steves the travel guru. He has a book that talks about what travel has done to his thinking after all these years. It's called *"Travel as a Political Act."*

If you've watched his PBS travel documentaries you know that he is aware of the history of places he visits. The reader will be drawn into a new way of international thinking. He doesn't hide the fact that he is shaped by the fact that he is a *"historian, Christian, husband, parent, carnivore, musician, capitalist, minimalist, member of NORMI and a workaholic. I've picked up my progressive politics largely from the people I've met overseas."*

For instance, his thinking about taxes. He once asked a Swiss how they can be so docile about paying such high taxes. The man answered:

*"What's it worth to live in a society where there is no homelessness, no hunger, and where everybody enjoys equal access to quality health care and education?"*

Like traveling, this book by a traveler can be a life broadening experience.

Since we've crossed from preaching to meddling, I'll mention a third book, *"A Political Reading of the Life of Jesus,"* by George Baldwin. He left a professor-ship and all his worldly goods to go to Central America. He says that the Bible reads differently when read from "below the poverty line." His biblical comments may sound radical, except to those who have kept up on modern biblical scholarship. Worth reading.

**AVAILABLE**

I can send my one page commentaries on any of my readings by attachment. Let me know.

I can also send the "Night on Broadway" series of three as one attachment. Some didn't get one of the pages. (Three pages) It's been one of our most widely circulated pages in some time.

**LOCAL EVENTS**

March **THURSDAY NIGHT MOMENT POTLUCK** March 18

**EASTER**

**EASTER SUNDAY CELEBRATION AND BRUNCH**  
**APRIL 4 • • • 10:00 AM**

Art Morgan and Paul Pritchard, Colleagues and Collaborators

## WHEN OLD GROWTH DIES

I feel like I'm writing an obituary page these recent weeks. I guess it's a page that is rarely blank. Older folks get tired of going to memorial services, but we tend to read about who dies. It's hard not to notice birth dates and compare.

We grow to admire towering examples of life survivors. We have a couple of pretty large and old trees on our property here. Bigger ones are on our Puget Sound property. We estimate their ages and hope they survive the storms of time. But reality has the last word. They too shall fall some day.

One of my jobs as a keeper of names is to occasionally remove those who have run out of years. They are gone in the click of a computer key. It's a hard moment sometimes, there is a sigh; but often it is a moment of triumphant remembrance with some hallelujah in it.

Like the recent news of Karl Irvin's death. Talk about old growth, so long standing tall amidst those who knew him. He wrote some of us who were on his "For Thinkers" list that sometimes came as "Special Readers," at the first of the year proclaiming himself as "beginning my 90<sup>th</sup> year."

Karl often wrote encouraging notes to his friends. I wonder how many have received such notes over the years. What most might be surprised at was his vital and active mind. He was a reader who sent out comments on books on his list. They were books far beyond what the average person reads. He gave out 84 books he had finished in 2009! He also read periodicals like the Christian Science Monitor, copying articles like "*Horizons • Frontiers of Science and Technology*" that he forwarded to friends. He would send 6 pages of quoted material with his own comments scribbled along the side.

Then he asked us for our responses. You had to be careful what you wrote because it was likely to be quoted in his next letter.

We had a large fir removed from our property this summer. The first thing we noticed was what a hole it left in the sky. Yes, it let more light in, but we lost its protecting shade. Karl has been on my lists for almost a half a century. We've shared our heresies, some I suppose he couldn't talk about in his role as a Regional Minister (Bishop). A great spirit and friend I always thought of as I sent out my writings. I'll continue sending to Christina, his wife, and Larry, his son. And I'll join them and so many others who remember his presence as love that outlives death.

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Just this morning I received word of the death of a local friend, not quite 90, I don't think but also one who stood tall, at least in my life. He was Wayne Stover known by some as the Stover in the appliance business of Stover, Evey and Jackson. We used to call him "the Maytag man" because he spent lots of hours out fixing people's washers. He was known for taking everyday conversation into philosophy and theology. First you'd be talking about that clogged filter in your washer, and then you'd be talking about Kierkegaard or something. He was the best lay theologian I knew and far better than most of the preachers in town.

For one thing, Wayne was a reader. If you met him in a crowd he'd be friendly enough and very interested in what you were saying. But he wasn't really interested in small talk. He liked ideas.

He has been on my list for the almost 40 years we've been in Corvallis. Wife, Ramona, said that he always read the blue sheet. When we met he remembered more what I had written than I did. In a world so full of small talk it's lifting to meet someone who would rather talk about ideas.

He was a Presbyterian, but ecumenical in practice. He used to come hear me preach when I was doing that sort of thing, and for the last 30 years I never knew when he might show up for Easter at Inavale Farm, or Christmas Eve at the Old World Deli and Pub. A pleasant man who quietly practiced applied Christianity around our town.

••• Art Morgan, March 15, 2010