

mm — Mid-Summer Mailing from Salish Sea 2015*

Morgan's Moment...

This is for Loren Arnett...
friend and colleague
for over 55 years.

A small print notice
in a small circulation paper reports
Loren is in hospice care.

This page may pass the word
to other long time clergy
who read my words.

I hope he doesn't need to be reminded
how highly respected he is
among more people than he knows.

He was surprised to see so many of us
when Seattle University established
the Arnett Ecumenical Scholarship.

It always makes me feel good
when people get such accolades
while they are still alive.

Loren was a fan of "Moments"
before most readers today
were even born.

He is one who has encouraged me...
as he has others for a life-time...
so I want to say thanks while I can.

His is a life that will live
well beyond his many years...
I wanted to give him this Moment.

Art Morgan

BOOK CORNER.

"The Heart of Everything That Is — The untold story of Red Cloud, an American Legend," by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin.

Red Cloud is the only Indian Chief to defeat the American Army over the many years of European immigration into the American continent. It is an often brutal and gruesome history of desperate occupants of traditional land attempting to defend land Red Cloud believed the Great Spirit had given to the Indians to use.

It is another tragic saga in which people claim divine intentions for their actions. The God of the Europeans was not of a same mind as the Great Spirit.

Although the book is not religious, it raises deep theological questions about how, whether or if any people are favored by God. And what kind of God it might be to take land from one people to give to another? A powerful book! For better or worse it is our history.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

We've had waiting times. There was that new great-grandson. And I was afraid our well-spring wouldn't pass a test. There was a surgery outcome and my brother's tumor biopsy.

We track more than a few, awaiting reports. Some are destined not to be good. I watch the sun rise and fall, and the tides go out and come in. Hot weather and cool. I can't do a thing about any of them. Pray, maybe? Try to change a moon rise or a sunset with prayer? No good at all. Yet, in desperate times we pray. I wonder why.

My pastoral years of waiting outside intensive care units with families and through other times have taught me that although I cannot change outcomes, presence and caring matters. Maybe that is praying.

My theology has always been formed by the natural world more than scholarship. In fact, primitive and even early biblical theology had roots in wonder about nature. Read the beginning of Genesis or psalms like 140. Are they to be read as reports from God about how things came to be, or are they human wonder about life we observe that raises the possibility of God? The parables of Jesus are full of observations from nature. Birds, seeds, rain, sun, weather, trees, soil and more. Are we to understand those parables as divine explanations or as metaphors leading to the mystery of life? I get lots of chances to trace theological thought to its source.

So I watch little crabs fighting one another for territory, or food, or mating rights, or whatever. I read of the same behavior throughout human history. I watch human creatures attacking and defending religions and territory. It seems primitive. Millions are driven from their space seeking places of refuge. This same DNA was somehow planted on this planet some 4 billion years ago. Big thoughts are stirred by little crabs. Where is there any sign of God in all of this? I try to notice the crabs.

In conclusion we anticipate our annual Beach Neighbors mid-summer party, something we started many years ago for Jean's birthday. Sure enough, this Saturday is Jean's birthday. There will be a nice crowd. It will be happy, I think. Jean will be happy and so will I. That's what's going on at our place on the Salish Sea*.

Art Morgan, July 17, 2015

*Salish Sea is the original Indian name for Puget Sound