

Morgan's Moment...

Another Christmas Eve
at the Old World Deli and Pub
and yet another baby.

I've faced the drama for 50 years....
wondering whether
a baby will show up.

Once 28 years ago
the red headed baby
was our first grandson.

This year the baby...
his (and Alia's)...
our first great grandchild.

It's a special baby
whose presence is a wonder
of biblical proportions.

Even Luke's imagination
didn't include grandparents
much less great grandparents.

But we'll be there
in the shadows brightened
by flickering candles.

Every once in a while
it's OK I think
to write oneself into the story.

Art Morgan

**A CANDLELIGHT AND CAROLS
CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE DELI
6:30 TO 7:00 — COME EARLY
FOR CAROLS (AND A SEAT!)**

An improvised pageant of the
Christmas story

A Downtown Corvallis Tradition since
1983

TIME MAN OF THE YEAR – THE PROTESTER

Surprising to see such a headline. But thinking of it I realized that for much of this year we have been cheering from afar those in other parts of the world who were protesting. Our government even encouraged it.

I sense that there is more discomfort with protesters closer to home. Have you ever marched or stood with protesters? It can be uncomfortable. You don't find too many applauding.

In some countries it can get you shot. In our own country police have to be specially trained to deal with protests legally and as non-violently as possible. Most don't understand issues being protested. It is common to dismiss protesters as radicals.

A couple of weeks ago I sent you a poem for Thanksgiving by my granddad. He was a protester for women's suffrage (right to vote) and peace and labor justice. He wrote this in 1935:

Dost thou despise

The Radical?

Of rabid speech and shaggy locks

And flaming eyes,

Thou safe and sane Conservative?

And dost thou smile, the while

In thy vast pride

And comfort-calloused hide?

And yet a man

Who calmly can

Behold, unmoved

The awful, useless,

Self-inflicted tragedies

Of his own time and race

And not be swept, betimes

From off his feet,

Who never flames with fury

And does not long

To blast the wretched wrong,

Is scarce a man,

And often not fit to wash the feet

Of him who shouts and pleads

Upon the street.

Arthur D. Weage

Some asked for more about my Granddad. Briefly, he was an Oberlin educated Congregational minister, ending in Seattle. He left the ministry to become a carpenter but never lost his Christian roots and recognition of Jesus' identification with biblical prophets for peace and economic justice. He put his feelings and thoughts into poetry that appeared in Seattle papers for many years, and into a few booklets shared with family. A quiet and gentle man with convictions.

IS GOD BIASED?

Another study, this time by the Public Religion Research Institute. The subject was economic and social inequality. I read about it in Christian Century this week.

There is a lot of talk about the 1% super wealthy and the 99% rest of us. The same magazine contained the report that 17% of Americans now live below the poverty line. Some way below.

The past decade especially, has seen the gap between the most prosperous and least prosperous widen radically.

So the question: *“Would society be better if wealth were distributed more equally?”*

Nine groups were asked. The percentage of each group that said “Yes” came out as follows:

	YES
Black Protestant	79%
Catholic	61%
Unaffiliated	61%
White Mainline	55%
White Evangelical	53%
Democrat	78%
Independent	60%
Tea Party	37%
Republican	35%

Like all such surveys, nothing is as it appears. Political philosophy or place on the economic pyramid tends to trump Christian conviction.

My question has to do with where the Christian ideals found in both the Old and New Testaments fit in here? Do they think God favors a social-economic system that feeds some and leaves others hungry?

Dominic Crossan’s recent book on the Lord’s Prayer understands God as the “householder” for the whole human family. Daily bread is shared.

Archbishop Tutu has a little book that takes bits from his sermons throughout the Apartheid struggle in South Africa. He bases his stand, not on politics or race, but on his understanding of the core biblical message. He says,

“The prophets told us God had a special soft spot for the down-trodden and would always act in their behalf against the top dogs, the powerful the cruel, the hard-hearted...The Son companied not with presidents and archbishops but with prostitutes and sinners and claimed that we would be judged by how we treated the hungry, the thirsty, the naked—and staggeringly, declared that what we did or did not do to them we did or did not do for him.”

Archbishop Tutu adds:

“So when you are holy and the people of God, you are always going to be biased in favor of the weak, the poor and the hungry.” (p. 128)

I note that just yesterday both houses of Congress in a bi-partisan vote had no problem passing a massive military budget. Another bill that threatens more cuts that strike first at the most vulnerable, health care, human services and schools, while protecting a tax structure that shelters the well-to-do, is demanded by a divided Congress. If you are biased as the God of the prophets and Jesus were biased, it’s a no-brainer. If not....?

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Art Morgan December 15, 2011