

Morgan's Moment...

"The mighty Gitchi Manitou
sent angel choirs..."
so say lyrics of a 1643 carol
"Twas the Moon of Wintertime."

A footnote interprets:

"Gitchi Manitou = "Great God"
Shepherds become hunters...
the manger a broken bark lodge
the babe wrapped in rabbit skin.

Hunter braves are there
chiefs kneel and bear gifts
of fox and beaver pelt.

"O children of the forest free
The angel song is true
The holy child of earth and heaven
Is born today for you."

I suspect the carol aims to win
native people to the white man's God.
but for this Christmas I say

***May the mighty Gitchi Manitou
Be with you this Christmas!***

— Art Morgan



We had a recent weekend in the Portland area that included a nice country club birthday party as well as a wedding I did the next day. Which explains why we are dressed up for this picture—although Jean says she's dressed up when wearing her best jeans.

I've sent two of my grandad's poems recently. I have found them thoughtful and contemporary although written 70 years ago. They capture some of the spirit of Jesus that sometimes gets brushed over in the glamour of our glitzy Christmases.

He rarely gave a gift that wasn't a book. And for every Christmas he read a poem to the gathered family. Often they spoke of peace, especially at Christmas as in these few lines from

"The Conquering Song"

Ay, songs of hate and love, of peace and pain,
Now sweep and rend the human heart almost in twain,
And sweep and rend the heart within,
But mightier and deeper than them all,
Is a song that springs from the heart of things,
And out of the darkness sings —

"Love never falleth," alone it availeth,
The minds of men will be sane again,
Their eyes will sometime see,
Swords win no victory,
And that the Lord of love and life
Conquers by sacrifice, not by strife.

Arthur D. Weage

It's a poem he might read this Christmas week as troops pull out of a 9 year war in Iraq, a war he surely would have protested. He would welcome them home gladly, then remind us.

BOOKS

"The Meaning of It All" Richard Feynman
Feynman was a physicist whose books tend to be readable and humorous, laced with philosophy, and in this book, theology. All entering students at the University of Washington are expected to read it this year. There's good reason.

"God Is not a Christian—And other Provocations" Desmond Tutu. This Nobel Peace Prize winner and Archbishop of the Episcopal Church in South Africa was a vibrant preacher. If you have heard him you will hear him again as you read words spoken during the Apartheid struggle. For preachers who have forgotten their prophetic voice, or for those who wonder whether there is a moral basis in the universe, Tutu's words will remind you.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE DELI

For those who have never been, expect a very informal, unrehearsed event that recruits children to stand in for alleged participants in the story of Jesus' birth.

The "program" is from 6:30 to 7:00. Christmas songs and carols begin about 6. Be there then for a good seat.

TEXTING

I've come a long way in the past decade, but I don't "text" in the modern way. But I was "texting" before the present generation was born. In fact, it is what preachers do. It's the craft of studying the sources and meanings of biblical texts. We used to have volumes of reference books. Now people have the internet. Anyone can know more than most preachers dare tell them just by Googling. You can get 7,830,000 references for "birth of Jesus." It's interesting, mind-expanding and inspirational....occasionally. But don't let it spoil your Christmas.

