



### *Morgan's Moment...*

*"Are you coming or going...?"*

Sorry...

I can't tell...

but we're happy  
in our own garage.

Is it happier  
to arrive home...  
or to leave?

Is it happier  
for a year to end  
or for a new one  
to begin?

Is there a happy time  
in between  
remembering what is past  
and anticipating what is ahead?

And how can one be happy  
when what is past  
has unbearable loss  
and the future  
uncertain?

*"Rejoice always...  
pray constantly...  
be thankful  
in all circumstances..."* (1 Thes. 5:16...)

The certainty of life  
Is that we will meet  
circumstances.

— Art Morgan

### NOTICE

Yes, Moment Ministries is an incorporated non-profit organization.

We do not solicit donations, but from time to time people contribute toward our minimal expenses. We thank you.

Our hope is that generosity will instead go toward the numerous more immediate needs that are all around us.

**LOVE WINS: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person who Ever Lived, by Rob Bell**

Using one of Rob Bell's responses, I say, "Really?" I'm talking about his title.

Pause here to read it again. (Another Bell trick)

Bell is an Evangelical. I'm not sure what that's supposed to mean, but its one slice of the pie called "Christian." So you don't say that someone is a plain "Christian," but that one is an "evangelical Christian." That's a key code word these days.

I'm telling you all this because the primary campaigns are hot with talk about reaching the "evangelical Christian" voter. That is a different brand of Christian than a "moderate" or "liberal" or heaven forbid, a "progressive" Christian.

Which type of Christian is a Mormon? Evangelicals, at least some, are reluctantly willing to treat a Mormon as one of their own.

Many on my list are "undeclared" and have long ago given up involvement with any of these varieties. But all have to stay informed about such things.

Back to Rob Bell, an evangelical. A big time evangelical, who attracts 10,000 to his Sunday church services. Preachers think "show-biz," "prosperity gospel," "fundamentalist," "dogma." And a bit of jealousy about a preacher with 10,000 on a Sunday, twice as many as most prospering preachers will draw in a year.

So I read the book anyway.

As I read what he says about heaven and hell and the old preaching about Jesus being the only way, about the unconverted going to hell, about a God who only loves Christians...here is Rob Bell asking, "Really?"

In my narrow-minded view, evangelicals like answers better than questions. Bell muddies that view because he has questions, and can't accept the old answers. He wants to take a second look at what the Bible really says, and he finds plenty of room for an inclusive form of Christianity based on a great love for the whole world of people, religions and groups.

The New York Times reviewer declares that this is *"the way that evangelicals are likely to do church in the next 20 years."*

A final word from Bell

*"He [Jesus] is for all people, and yet he refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one culture. That includes any Christian culture. Any denomination. Any church. Any theological system [Any party]... But we cannot claim him to be ours any more than he's anyone else's."*

If love wins, Bell is on top of a rising movement that may sweep right past floundering churches of a liberal tradition. In fact, it may already have.

### **THREE BABIES FOR CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD WORLD DELI AND PUB**

We usually pick our Christmas Eve baby out of the crowd. On some occasions one is pre-selected. That's the way it was this year.

Our grandson, Aram, who was baby Jesus 28 years ago, and Alia, had a baby girl last June. Someone said, "There's your baby Jesus," and so it was.

They made a great holy family.

But two other babies appeared, each born about the same time as Mikaela. One was the child of a fellow whose father told me that he had been baby Jesus 23 years ago. They came from Eugene, hoping, I think.

The other baby was the grandchild of Ken and Lori Monday. I came by train from California to be with the family for Ken's memorial service just last spring. It would have been Ken's first grandchild. Again, maybe they were also hoping.

You all probably know that the story is open to alteration. Luke didn't know everything. He left out grandparents, for instance, not to mention great-grandparents. And he didn't foresee Christmas Eve pageants with more than one possible baby Jesus.

So I announced a change to the story. This night we would have three babies with their mothers. I asked for two chairs to seat the moms and invited them up front. They sat there, the infants interacting with conversation I could not understand, but which seemed to satisfy them. They touched hands and smiled. Paul was singing "Sweet Little Jesus Boy," but attention was where it should be...on the babies.

I blessed each one, sprinkling tiny golden stars on their heads, and think I kissed each one.

We never did that before. It probably won't become a tradition. But if a situation like that appears I now have a version of the Christmas story that can handle it. A few grandparents, and others, were smiling through misty eyes.

### **A NEW YEAR'S WORD TO OUR 7 GRANDS: On Rose Bowl Day, January 2, and Lauren's birthday**

Lauren is in Pasadena working for the U of Oregon Alumni Association which is her job. Naturally she's a Duck. We watched her play Women's Lacrosse, sometimes in the rain. We watched her graduate a few years ago, then Kyle and Sabrina. All loyal Ducks. I'm a UW Husky, but I cheer sometimes for the Ducks. When I went to seminary in Berkeley, UC Bears were across the street. We cheered for the Bears a lot for three years. Patrick is now in a PhD program there.

Patrick's family home is Madison, WI where both of his parents have been/are professors at the U of Wisconsin. He has Badger loyalties. He graduated from Carleton College where he starred in Ultimate Frisbee. We cheered for him in several major championship tournaments. I forget his colors. Is he Badger, Bear or whatever Carleton was, or all three?

Andrew and wife Erin grew up in Corvallis, Oregon State Beaver country, but both attended and graduated from Lewis and Clark in Portland. I have cheered for Andrew and saw him catch a pass in their last football game several years ago.

Now Erin is at OHSU studying medicine and Andrew is studying (where?) to advance his physical therapy career. No team loyalties are required I don't think.

Max is in Linn Benton Community College with OSU connections, but I suspect he is a secret Duck.

Aram is at Southern Oregon University that has sports teams but we're not in Ashland so haven't become emotionally connected there, though proud of him. Alia and Mikaela cheer for him too.

I have cheered Jean through Cal State University Los Angeles where she earned her education degree, but never cheered for the Diablo's. She did her MA at OSU where both daughters Karen and Linda have BA's.

Our home in LA was 5 miles from the USC campus where we saw some great games. Yes, we cheered for the Trojans. Also for the UCLA Bruins with family and friendship associations. And also for Stanford women's volleyball and basketball. We've had years of association with Palo Alto.

So, I feel for friends and relatives who bleed loyalty and joy and pain for each win or loss. If you live long enough you'll see that while your root tribal connections never disappear, school colors run together after a while. You'll even find yourself rooting for traditional foes, especially if you have as many grandchildren scattered around as we do. Whatever your colors, we root for you.

Have a useful and happy year. Get back to school, back to work, back to life!

That's the word from Grandpa at the beginning of 2012.

