

MM Winter Blue Sheet #3 February 2015

Morgan's Moment...

He put down the baton
took off his glasses...
wiped tears from his eyes.
Applause from a standing audience
as he led choirs and orchestra
through their bows.
A solemn triumphant memorial
to the Jewish Holocaust
in our city's largest hall.
Opening and closing
with a sobering call
from the ram's horn shofar.
Images of Dachau and Auschwitz
projected visual reminders
to go with choral lyrics.
The children's choir down aisles
emerging from darkness
placing dozens of lights.
They disappeared in silence
leaving only flickering lights...
maybe six million?
A cantor sang Hebrew words
and Rabbi Abraham Heschel's
quotation was before us
*"This is the task...
in the darkest night
be certain of the dawn."*
Children sang again last words...
*"You should love your neighbor
as yourself."*
That's when the director
wiped tears from his eyes
as did many of us as well.
— Art Morgan

BOOK CORNER

As a personal memorial moment for Marcus Borg I re-read *"The First Christmas — What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Birth"* written jointly with Dominic Crossan.

It is typically clear, scholarly, candid and profound.

Preaching pastors tend to read such books in preparation for Advent. The subject and questions and meaning simply can't be dealt with in so brief a period.

I'm thinking that it would be a terrific pre-Easter book. It should not be read if you are already sure of what you believe about this subject.

WHY AN "A" IN HISTORY DOESN'T PROVE ANYTHING

I am not proud to report that I received my first "A" toward the end of my third year in high school...in history...U.S. history.

Nor am I happy to report that my grade point average at that time was less than a "C."

It was an embarrassing moment when report cards were passed out during my home room class. My home room teacher noted the "A." He called me forward and asked me to go to the history teacher and get a note verifying the grade. He had reason for doubt.

I presented myself and my report card to the history teacher named Max Starcewich. He was a former University of Washington All-American football tackle. I felt very small asking him to verify my grade in history. He said simply, "Of course. You earned an 'A.'"

Earning an "A" in U.S. history doesn't mean you know all there is to know about American history. There was a lot less history to know 60 years ago.

This week I thought of how little I knew then — and know now — about American history.

This is Black History month. There wasn't even a Black History day when I was in high school. Not even a page in my history book. The Emancipation Proclamation and Civil War had some space, but not much. Jim Crow was practiced in my life-time.

Black history is part of my history. The great migration was happening all around me. My world was full of color. My classmates were often from somewhere else. The deportation of Japanese who disappeared from our city was not reported in my history book. The story of the tribal culture displaced by the building of the Grand Coulee Dam was never mentioned.

Moving to Los Angeles placed me in sound and sight of the infamous Watt's riots. My city feared black neighbors so vacancies were filled with brown people. Hispanics. The church parsonage had neighbors on one side that spoke only Spanish. The neighbors beyond them were Greek.

This is U.S. history as it is...dozens of ethnic and racial people from somewhere else. It's not possible to fit this into a high school course.

What touched me off?

I just happened to turn on a PBS Black History Month program...part of a February series. I have read all the stories and history I can find but there was a lot here I had never known.

I found myself saying, "That's American history...so it's my history."

It's a history of a blended people. It is increasingly unusual to find a family without some blend. It used to be rare for people to marry with other denominations or heaven forbid, other religions, races or nationalities. Now it happens all the time. The Apostle Paul spoke of a bond that transcends all divisions.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female--for all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

I would Americanize these words to say

"There is neither Jew nor Greek nor Catholic nor Muslim nor Buddhist, neither male nor female nor gay nor straight, neither black nor brown nor red nor pink, neither Hispanic nor Asian nor Arab nor European, but 'One nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.'"

History will tell how we've done. I'm not so sure.

That "A" in history doesn't prove a thing.

— Art Morgan, Black History Month 2015