

MM e-mail Blue Sheet — Our 33rd Year

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Morgan's Moment...

We hear a trumpet playing...
 along our river walk
 at early dawn.
Sometimes up-river...
 hidden heavy brush
 down on the river bank.
Sometimes down-river...
 under the bridge
 behind the abutment.
He faces the river and the dawn...
 playing notes without a tune
 with improving clarity.
Our paths cross sometimes
 so we can say a word
 as he passes silently by.
He wears a colorful flowing cape
 and pantaloons trousers
 his trumpet in hand.
He is but one of the dawn-greeters
 we meet and sometimes greet
 in our morning river walk.
Greeting the dawn is sacred time
 to be shared in silence
 without intruding.
 Art Morgan

BOOK CORNER

"Tear Down This Myth," by Will Bunch is a book suggested to me as a follow up to my inquiry about Ronald Reagan's time in LA in a Christian Church pastored by a friend and colleague. Myron Cole. The book offers an interesting report of things actually said and done by Ronald Reagan, compared with what his legend claims for him. It is particularly interesting to know such things in a time when every politician is claiming to be the second coming of Ronald Reagan. How much is true Reagan and how much a myth?

The book did, however, claim that Reagan's roots were in a "tea-totaling, fundamentalist Disciples of Christ" denomination. That does not match the church he belonged to in Los Angeles by any means, nor mine.

What a Time!

So much is happening in such a brief period of time, especially in the Middle East. Some of it will make the history books.

I was forwarded a report from the wife of an Episcopal priest with a parish in Cairo. I didn't know there were Episcopalians in Cairo. They evacuated, but only for a few days. Her report sounded like familiar news, but with greater personal detail. I suspect my Episcopalian folks who get this page will know of Paul-Gordon and Lynne Chandler.

Word from friend Dave Bell at White Swan Log Church in the Yakima area. A wind fire not reported locally swept through the town. Dave and the Methodist clergy along with a few others have been helping the folks deal with their losses.

An email report from Fred Plumer who heads up ProgressiveChristianity.org tells of the "Big Tent" gathering I had considered attending in Arizona because they included a category of religious groups called "undescribable." I didn't go. He thinks the Big Tent was not as big as it claims.

An email from Madison, Wisconsin where my cousins, Tom and Terry are pictured with a banner "in solidarity" with advocates for retaining collective bargaining rights. This is a national issue with great implications. Is Madison America's Cairo?

Still working on "The Grand Design," by noted physicist, Stephen Hawking. Here's the controversial quote that stirs some folks up:

Why is there something instead of nothing. Why do we exist? Why this particular set of laws and not some other? Some would answer that there is a God who chose to create the universe...

We claim, however, that it is possible to answer all these questions purely within the realm of science, and without invoking any divine beings. (pp. 171 – 172)

Does this say that there is no "God"?

A phone call to Paul to talk about our March Moment. Our last Moment before Easter.

We settled on **THURSDAY MARCH 17**

GRATEFUL TO BE ALIVE

“I’m grateful to be alive.”

A couple of weeks ago I got word that my youngest brother was in a Portland Hospital. He lives in Long Beach, Washington. It turned out that a visit to his doctor turned into an ambulance ride to Portland. When I called to find out what was happening he said that he was to have a heart procedure in the morning.

Triple bypass heart surgery is more than a procedure, although in these days it is less a threat than it used to be. Easier to say when it’s happening to someone else. We expected maybe an angioplasty procedure, so were a bit shocked at what had actually transpired. A call to the nursing station in intensive care gave me word that my brother had done well, was sleeping and had been talking. I let him sleep.

I have three younger brothers, Kirby being the youngest, all of us well-past three score and ten. Each has had a crisis of one sort or another. All have continued our active lives, but not without memories of some difficult days. Kirby is now home and gradually walking himself into shape to return to golf and his usual life. He was already in good shape for his age and had good nutrition habits. His heart condition was blamed by his doctor on genetics, although there’s no history in our ancestors as far as I know. As a brother it raised a flag. We all have shared one genetic malady. We don’t need another.

The reason I’m writing about all this is because of his great line in his e-mail report:

“I’m grateful to be alive!”

Mortality comes to mind at such times. Is this “it?” When the threat is fended off for the time and we wake up from the surgery, or whatever, one finds being alive a very good feeling in spite of some lingering pain and necessities of healing.

“I’m grateful...” he said.

It has been said that gratitude is the highest form of prayer. Does gratitude have to be directed to God or other divinity? I suspect Kirby would spread the gratitude around to the various ones who diagnosed him, transported him, treated him, and helped him through this time.

Kirby is a pragmatic guy. He’ll take whatever help he gets. If it makes you feel better to pray for him, do it. It won’t hurt him if you do, and if it helps, that’s fine too. The main thing is he’s grateful to be alive.

I’ve been trying to read and understand the latest Hawking book, *“The Grand Design”* (co-authored by Leonard Mlodinow). It’s way beyond me, but I keep trying. I’m fascinated, of course, to read and think about what the best minds think about the existence of our universe and the improbable wonder of the evolving of a human species. I am in awe of it all, whether by God or not. But the bottom line for most of us is the one declared by Kirby:

“I’m grateful to be alive!”

Not a bad line to start a day. Say, Amen!

Art Morgan — March 2, 2011