

MOMENT MINISTRIES E-mail BLUE SHEET

Art Morgan a-morgan@peak.org February 17, 2010

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Morgan's Moment...

"I respond with tears in my eyes..."

said one of several
touched by a "Broadway" column.

Jeez thought I...

I don't ever intend
to bring people to tears.

Of course I'm into "moments"
and some moments
touch deep chords.

I go back through those pages
and guess what?
Tears in my eyes.

I think it's not too hard
to write sentimentally...
but should never happen on purpose.

Reality makes us laugh sometimes
angry sometimes
helplessly sad sometimes.

What a great privilege to write
my thoughts and feelings
and get response in kind.

Not seeking comfort
I am surprised by comfort...
and grateful.

When depth meets depth
a "moment" happens...
and we should be in awe.

- Art Morgan

THE DIGITAL AGE

I wonder whether anyone is still alive to remember the old mimeo-graph machines that cranked out church bulletins and newsletters. I take that back after looking at some of the names on my list. There are even some secretaries that remember ink smudged hands and the pain of correcting a typo.

We thought we had reached tech nirvana when we installed off-set printers. No matter that it took a mechanic to get a job printed. But they looked pretty good. Many an office was motivated to send work out rather than fight machines.

Then came in-office printing technology and computers. That changed everything — we thought. Until now, when people are dropping well-established mailing systems and replacing them with e-mail publications of various sorts. Not without complaint and regret. It is just happening.

Blessed are those with savvy tech staff in place. Not so blessed are those of us trying to do what others seem to do with ease. Having just translated a lengthy postal mailing list to e-mail we appreciate those who do these tasks routinely.

OK — we're still experimenting and learning. A few have told us that they can't make our system work. THANK YOU for telling us. That's the only way we have of knowing of problems. We see that other church groups are publishing better looking pages using different distribution methods. There ought to be someone helping make the best techniques available to all.

And finally, much to my amazement, there seems to be more attention — at least response — to the emailed mailings than we ever had before. It's good to have some one-on-one dialogue instead of my one on all monologues.

PRE-EASTER MOMENTS

We're headed toward Easter on the road remembering the Jesus who was telling friends that he was going to die, while the friends kept saying "no!".

The Lenten season is a time when we try to overcome denial that we are "ashes to ashes and dust to dust."

What do we do with our lives in the face of such stark reality?

I Googled up "Lent" today and quite a few thought they would give up Lent for Lent. You can't blame people, but can one hide from ultimate Good Friday?

BOOK CORNER

"The First Paul" by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. It seemed inevitable that the Jesus Scholars, famed for their search for *"The Authentic Words of Jesus,"* with their red, pink, blue and black colors to show which words we could trust, would do something with Paul. I was sorry they left out the color code. *"First"* indicates that there is an early, more authentic Paul, than the late appearing Paul of other letters. It is not an easy read for those without at least some background in critical biblical studies, but a good book.

A GUY NAMED DON

I have a lot of guys named Don on my list, but only one named Don Reisinger. It was with regret that I deleted his name the other day after news of his death.

My last word from him came via e-mail following an exchange of both postal mail and e-mail notes over a mix-up due to my printing of a wrong e-mail for myself. I took the blame, commenting that the one thing I missed most about leaving a church staff was a secretary. I said:

I suspect you may have had moments after leaving DSF that you missed your secretary more than anything. Or, maybe you're more detail-oriented than I am.

Don was the retired President of the Disciples Seminary Foundation in Claremont, California.

He answered back the next day, February 25 by e-mail:

Glad to know that someone else has memory lapses.

You are correct I have had many moments missing the secretary.

I probably am not as detail oriented as you are.

That is probably one of the last e-mail notes he ever wrote.

It is interesting that our conversation was about secretaries and being detail-oriented. One of the things I most remember about Don was that he was often taking notes. For years he served as secretary/treasurer for the NW Association for Theological Discussion. Those notes formed the history of that group. I always admired people who could do that kind of necessary work.

Don's job required a lot of record keeping. His various secretaries and administrative associates no doubt have stories to tell of all the records they kept about all the different organizational functions Don was involved with. One of my long-time blue-sheet readers, Mildred Whitworth, was his long-time secretary. I guess she was an administrative secretary, because she occupied the front desk and dealt with all the things Don was involved with.

Many of us throughout the West knew Don as a warm, friendly presence. He led quietly, avoiding the main stage for the most part. I admired how he got things done. Despite his disclaimer, you don't get things done without being detail-oriented.

I never kept up on the honors that must have come his way. He didn't have awards posted on his office wall. He mentioned once that he just put those things away in a drawer. I did note in some publicity of a big event in March at Chapman College featuring Marcus Borg, Don was to receive an award for "Church Leader of the Year." He won't be there to receive it, of course, though he well-deserved it. He would have been a gracious, appreciative recipient of the award, but it would no doubt have been relegated to a drawer someplace.

In conversation with clergy some time ago, Don's name came up. My thought was that Don should be declared Arch-bishop of the Christian Churches in the West. The Christian Churches don't have Bishops, much-less Arch-bishops. The best they can do is "Regional Ministers." There are six regions; Southern California, Northern California, Arizona, South Idaho-Utah, Montana, Oregon, and NW Region (Washington, N. Idaho, Alaska). For over thirty years these were on Don's beat. The Regional Ministers respected him as one whose counsel they could all trust. He tied us all together.

We will remember him as an encourager and the one who proudly posed with class after class of us on graduation day. We would learn not to be surprised to see him almost anyplace colleagues gathered. He would quietly be doing his job that included raising millions of dollars over the years that enabled and will enable many to pursue their dreams.

I don't know what kind of celebration is appropriate for the Arch-bishop of the West but I hope it takes place. Don't give him an award or plaque. It will only end up in a drawer someplace.

— Art Morgan, February 17, 2010