

*MM Email Blue Sheet for Advent 2012*  
*Moment Ministries – Corvallis Oregon*

Google says: ***‘Advent is a preparatory season. It has significance because it is a season of looking forward and waiting for something greater.’*** A season for waiting.

I always figured there was something lacking in a special day you have to explain every year. Advent has always been such a day in my career. At best it is kind of a marker for the beginning of the Christmas season.

Now the marker of the beginning of the Christmas season is Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, when the sprint toward the Christmas tree begins. Ready, set, GO! And so Christmas is jump-started.

Where is the waiting?

When we were kids it always seemed that December was a long month. Christmas was a big deal. We weren't thinking biblically or theologically. It was about the big opening-of-presents-day.

Ask 1,000 people outside of Wal-Mart what they are waiting for this December. If anyone says they are waiting for the birthday of Jesus or the arrival of the Messiah, you would think the person hyper-religious. I just don't know anyone except maybe preachers who think of the season as a time for anticipating or even celebrating the alleged arrival of the Messiah.

I ask myself what I am waiting for. Confession time: My career has required me to create events that speak about the birth of the whole Christian movement. So, I do an Advent. A few weeks later I will do a Christmas Eve event, baby and candles and carols and all. It's the biggest event of the year in most churches. I have done Christmas Eve in a Brewery Pub and Deli for many years. People come. Myth, legend, history? No one seems to care which.

I tell you that the preparations are pretty much all-consuming. What am I waiting for? I wait for the event to happen...magic or not...and be over.

What do you wait for?

A grandson waits for the end of global warming. Isaiah wrote words for people who had been waiting 400 years to return to Jerusalem. A group of peace activists have been in front of our courthouse every evening for more than 10 years, waiting for the U.S. to get out Iraq and Afghanistan. Lots of little children wait for opening those presents under the tree. Millions are waiting to decorate the very trees I see harvested in front of our house to be hauled in bundles by helicopters to waiting trucks. More millions are waiting to see whether we go over the fiscal cliff. People are waiting for all kinds of things.

But few really expect a Messiah. Some early Christians apparently had hopes that God's triumphant finale would come on earth in their own life-times. They thought Jesus promised it. If so, he was wrong. They waited, and waited and waited and died still waiting.

I'm writing two days before Advent. I haven't thought what I might say in 8 or 10 minutes that matters. I want it to be the truth.

In the midst of this is a moment of truth. My friend Teddy Turner died in the night. He's the one we visit every year in Spokane. He was a great friend and colleague who kept my reading list full. He suffered no illusions about his mortality. Living was an effort in recent months, but he did so with winsome spirit and humor. I think he was waiting as we all must wait for the time when we wait no more. When Clara Fern called with the news it was not to tell us anything that was a surprise to anyone.

On with my Advent planning anyway. The printed program is almost complete. The theme title is *For the Waiting Season.* I note the last song. I read it now with Teddy on my heart:

***“Soft as the voice of an angel, breathing a lesson unheard,  
Hope with a gentle persuasion whispers her comforting word.  
Wait till the darkness is over, wait till the tempest is done  
Hope for the sunshine tomorrow after the shower is gone.”***

Wait...wait. 'Tis the season, I guess. What are you waiting for? Happy Advent!

—Art Morgan, November 30, 2012