

# Far from the noisy debates, quiet Christian bravely served

**W**ith all the fighting about prayer at government meetings, it's worth noting that many people of faith — no matter how they feel about that battle — choose to quietly concentrate on service.



**John Railey**

Wes Morgan of Winston-Salem, who died of cancer last week at the age of 54, was that kind of guy. He was also courageous in his service to a dangerous but needy part of the world that too many Americans have all but forgotten.

"He was very strong," said his wife, Barbie.

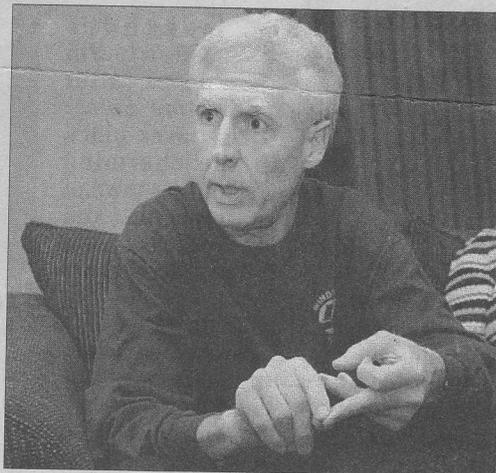
Even while fighting his illness, her husband kept up his missionary work in Haiti, where kidnappings of foreigners have been commonplace. In October 2005, Haitian gunmen snatched Morgan and a colleague. Morgan, true to form, evangelized to the kidnappers before he and his colleague were released hours later after friends paid a ransom.

Morgan, again true to form, continued his mission trips to Haiti. "If you believe you're called to do missionary work, then you're called, and you're not called to be a total blooming idiot, but you're called not to be deterred by negative circumstances," he told the *Journal's* Patrick Wilson in late 2005.

Morgan fairly glowed with his Christian faith. He wasn't in your face with it, but you knew he was happy about something. I had the pleasure of meeting him several years ago as I worked on a story about a buddy of his from College Park Baptist Church, Roger Jones, who dresses up like Santa Claus every year as he and his helpers make deliveries to hundreds of folks. Morgan helped Jones in that ministry, and Jones helped Morgan in the Haitian ministry.

"He was one of a kind," Jones said. "I have never seen a person who was willing to share whatever he had so quickly. If he saw a need, he didn't go looking for people to pay for it, he'd pay for it."

From an early age, Morgan had been a quiet leader. He was the student body president at Ardmore Elementary School and at Mount Tabor High School. He was a Morehead Scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served College Park Baptist and built a successful



JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

**Wes Morgan recalls being kidnapped while doing missionary work in Haiti (2005).**

business. He and Barbie, his high-school sweetheart, raised their two children.

And then he started concentrating on Haiti through New Directions International of Burlington. He helped with feeding programs, crusades, schools, pastor training and various other ministries. Days before his death, he led a meeting at which he started a fundraising campaign for an orphanage in Haiti.

All of this is crucial work in more ways than one. If it weren't for people like Morgan, Haiti wouldn't get any help. Humanitarian concerns and our interest in promoting democracy abroad should mean that America stays closely involved with Haiti. Yet our country has a pattern of neglecting this poor, backyard neighbor until violence or a flood of illegal immigrants demands a response.

Morgan probably realized all that. But more than anything else, he probably just wanted to follow Christ by helping his Haitian friends make it on their own.

There are a lot of ways to express your faith. One is to battle over issues such as prayer at government meetings. That's an important fight.

But another important way to express your faith is to quietly and courageously serve others. Wes Morgan did that. And the world is a better place because he did.

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