

ON BEHALF of my wife, her family, and many friends, I want to take a moment to express our thanks to all of you who joined with us in mourning the passing of Jim Morrow. We all deeply appreciate the love and support so many of you showed us in this sad time. I personally can assure you that you made a difference, helping to make Jim's passing easier to bear.

If you're interested in reading a few of my personal thoughts about Jim, feel free to read on for a few minutes. But if not, that's okay, too. Jim hated to be fussed over, and he'd rather have us all getting on with our lives anyway.

It was my honor to be one of the people who took part in Jim's funeral and shared a few thoughts. The following text is essentially what I said to those gathered there that day, with a few things added and a few omitted, and the tense changed appropriately. It helps to know that before I spoke, my brother-in-law Steve gave a great talk mixed with laughter and tears, about how he was always fixing and repairing things around Jim and Linda's house. All the things we fixed and repaired and built for Jim, sometimes in our exasperation, became the foundation of a long running and good-natured family joke.



*"There are a few things I'd like to get straight about Jim Morrow.*

*Jim was a man of deep conviction and faith, in case any of you haven't figured that out already.*

*Jim Morrow was a good man. Those of us who knew him know that he had quirks just like everybody else, and you know sometimes he'd drive us crazy and we'd say, "What is this guy thinking?" (laughter) But, the longer you knew Jim, and the more deeply you knew him, you knew he was a good man. A good man.*

*I'd like to second the things Steve said, and note that Steve has a real gift for figuring out how things work, and how to fix them. He really is amazing. But I'm clever; and I learned that when Jim would start talking about something that was broken, I'd say, "Well, I don't know, but you know Steve..." (laughter)*

*But to say that Jim Morrow couldn't fix things, or that he never built anything, would be a mistake. Jim fixed broken lives, and he built relationships. This is what he did.*

*Jim didn't care what you looked like, whether you had money or not, where you came from, what you'd done or hadn't done in life, if you were clean or dirty – it didn't matter. If you gave him half of a chance, he'd love you with the love of God.*

*On Wednesday, so many people were coming by the house to bring food, give a hug, hold Linda's hand, or just sit quietly. At one point, the doorbell rang and in came a man I'd never met. He was quiet, timid, and respectful, and I liked him immediately. "I'm Ken," he said, "I'm from State Farm but... Jim was my friend." And he moved to the next person and said, "I'm Ken. I'm from State Farm but... Jim was my friend." And he moved to another person and said, "I'm Ken from State Farm but... Jim was my friend." And when Linda walked out, he simply said, "Jim was my friend." And he burst into tears, and held Linda tightly, and just – sobbed. And it struck me very hard and I thought, This is what Jim did. He made friends.*

*In New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas... all over the country and on different continents in different countries... in Africa and in Europe... Jim made friends. This is what Jim did.*

*A person might say, "I met Jim and he asked me to study the Bible with him and I said yes and he baptized me and changed my whole life and... he was my friend." Or, "I met Jim and he always asked me to study the Bible or go to church and I never did but... he was my friend." Or they might say, "I knew Jim through banking and finance or through real estate or chamber of commerce or whatever and... he was my friend."*

*This is what Jim did. He fixed lives. He built relationships. He made friends.*

*Jim didn't leave behind a fortune in gold. He never built an empire of concrete, stone, or steel. He was too busy for these things. Jim never had time to keep his old cars in top shape, or fix things around the house, or complete many of his plans and dreams. He was too busy. He was too busy investing in people, and building relationships. This is what Jim did.*

*You see, if you're a Christian, you face a troubling duality in life. You face the world on one hand (gesturing to the left) telling you, "This is what is important, this is what you need to do and be," and your faith in God (gesturing to the right) telling you, "This is what is important, this is what you need to do and be." More than any person I've ever known personally, Jim picked this one (gesturing to the right). He picked the correct one. He did it all right. And for that, people sometimes thought him strange.*

*I know some people may not believe this, but I know, that there are people who belong in heaven more than on earth. When they leave, we're sad and we miss them, but they have gone home. And while they are here, they look a lot like Jim Morrow."*



SOMETIMES I think that if God asked us to dinner, we'd want to know what we should wear. And while we waited for God to say "Formal," or "Casual," God would say, "Cotton. Cotton is good."

I have long said and am quite convinced that when it comes to our faith in God, faith is a material, a cloth, not a particular style or cut of garment.

Jim was a conservative Christian, and he wouldn't mind me saying so. In fact, come to think of it, he'd want me to say so. I, on the other hand, am a liberal Christian, and wouldn't mind Jim saying so. The cut and style of our garments were always different. But, we both were always good old fashioned cotton. When Jim and I got together, we didn't bother to talk about differences in doctrine. We knew they were there, we respected them, and left them in their place. Instead, we talked of our love for the poor, of our passion for the Jesus Story, and our struggles to be what we believe God wants us to be. Jim and I met and laughed and cried in the Love and Grace of God, and that made us friends in God.

It is my hope and prayer that people like Jim, and relationships like the one I shared with him, can be a witness to all people of faith that in the end, it is the unsurpassable glory of God's infinite Love which binds us together, and not our frail and questionable human ideas.

Jim, welcome home, amigo. You were my father-in-law but... you were my friend.



OVER THE past five or six days, I've thought a lot about Jim's life. There is so much more to say, as there is with any human life, but I want to say just one thing more. It is very complicated, but I will try to say it clearly, and it gets back to the duality thing I mentioned at Jim's funeral. Without fail, without question, without compromise, Jim did what he believed God wanted him to do. He was a kind man, an incredibly generous man, and a hard working man. He was so courageous in what he believed that sometimes we'd think... well, I'm not sure what we'd think. Even if you were a total stranger, he'd give you his clothes, his car, his money, use of his house, time away from his family, and if you never said thanks or boo or kiss my behind, he didn't stop. He just kept on giving and giving and he never complained, and he wouldn't listen to anybody else (including us) complain. After enough years of it, we'd have periods where we would get frustrated and think maybe he should be "more wise" or something. Maybe he should get a clue and be more practical. But he never did. He just kept on stubbornly working and giving. I guess it finally killed him, because he wouldn't stop to take a break, but I have decided that Jim did it right. I'm not sure, but I think, that Jim decided long ago that his life didn't matter. Any pain he had endured in life didn't matter and didn't deserve a second thought. His own life didn't matter; didn't deserve a second thought. All that mattered was his belief in what was right. And the part of it all that gets me, the reason I've been crying the past week, is the glory of it all — the absolute glory of it all. Now that Jim has passed, and the totality of his earthly life lay before us to view as a completed story, with the last chapter written and edited, his story is really a testament. Jim's life has taught us that his beliefs were solid, his faith well placed, and his work not in vain. He put his heart into helping other people, and when they came out in droves in response to his passing, his treasure was evident. Jim left little of worldly value behind, but the legacy of love and friendship he built through his selflessness has left his wife in the hands of many friends who will always take care of her. It is clear now that Jim struggled along in life driven by a voice that many times only he heard, a voice that said something akin to, "If you give me everything, you will want for nothing." Now we all see that that voice was right, and Jim's life has made it known to us. And all I can say in response is, "My God, oh my God, the glory of it all."

