

New Lifer News

God Shows Up

by Jason Morris

It was November 1st at the Gathering. The candles were lit, the coffee was served, and we were trucking along in musical worship when something happened that I can only describe as God showing up. Al Oliver was leading us on acoustic guitar with Amy Salyers on vocals, Chuck Reynolds playing bass and Dwayne Carr also assisting on vocals while banging on a djembe for percussive support. We sang “Your Name...is a strong and mighty tower...your name...is a shelter like no other...your name...let the nations sing it louder...’cause nothing has the power to save...but your name.”



Our service plan said that I was supposed to come forward and close the worship segment out with prayer and move on to casting some vision for the future of the Gathering, but as we sang through an extra couple of choruses of the song it seemed like something special was happening. I headed up front and prepared to pray as Al played his final chords, but it just seemed like any words that I formulated were going to squelch what God was doing in the room, so I stumbled out the beginning of a prayer, “Lord we...we just...we love you, Lord.” It was in that moment that I realized I needed to shut up and get out of the way, so I apologetically asked everyone if it would be okay if we sang through a verse and chorus of the same song again even though we’d sung through an extended version of it already. Al quickly reminded me that God wouldn’t mind if we kept singing to him, so I went to the front row to participate in just a little bit more worship through this song.

A couple of seconds later Chad DeWeese, a long time New Lifer, a Gathering attendee and friend of mine, left his seat in the back row and came to me asking if he could share something with all the people. I trust Chad, and what was I going to say, “no”? So I told him to go grab the handheld microphone and come back up which he promptly did. As we finished the song for the second time Chad planted himself up front and shared about being adopted as a child and what having the name of Jesus means to him as he continues to find his identity in Christ. It was meaningful, impacting, and utterly spontaneous.

I was proud of the Gathering at that moment. We’d gone beyond planning a service and executing it without a hitch. We had actually encountered God - and I long to do that more and more as we continue to gather every Sunday in the fellowship room; but the Gathering is not the only place at New Life where God shows up.

We’re officially a multi-venue church. That means that we congregate in three different locations every Sunday to experience worship through varying styles of music, to receive the teaching of God’s Word through different communicators, to partake of communion as a subset of New Life’s population, and to pour our financial resources into one pool to further God’s kingdom. God shows up every week at our church, and the reason **I can be confident of this is because in each of our venues there are people who are gathered in the name of Jesus and He has promised that if even two or three of us come together in His name, that he will be there in our midst.**

As we grow and change and morph into a church that continues to spread out into further venues and eventually into sites, I believe that God will continue to speak to us and change us as one church, that is New Life, even as we meet in varying locations. Doing venues spreads people out and creates a certain level of separation of people groups. It’s true. It’s a physical reality and sometimes it feels like a loss; but as long as we continue to gather in each of these people groups - whether it’s first service Central, Torch, second service Central, the Gathering, or whatever site we plant in the future - and each group is assembled in the *name* of Jesus, the strong and mighty tower, we’re accomplishing the mission God has given us as a church...and God has promised that he’s going to continue to show up.

