

Dr. Berty Shares His Story at New Life and A Grand Celebration

"But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. ...we were encouraged about you because of your faith."

1 Thess 3:6-7 NIV

January is called the "door" of the New Year. Our first few Sunday gathering times have served to focus our faith firmly upon our Master's faithfulness and His love for His Church and those yet to come to know Him. The New Year presents us with fresh opportunities to trust Him. May we press in to know Him like never before. Here is a brief recap of our meeting times: During our first celebration gathering on January 6th, we heard stories from New Lifers of Jesus' faithfulness during both our 9:00 and 11:00am gatherings. We heard a variety of ways that Jesus showed Himself faithful, but the stories that were shared had a constant theme that was proclaimed over and over again: that Jesus is Lord over circumstances that seem hopeless in our eyes. We heard how He helped one man overcome nagging depression and how He healed another family member from deadly disease. Our Master Jesus has shown Himself faithful and powerful this past year. I never tire of hearing stories of Jesus' faithfulness because they become great mental and spiritual "tools" that strengthen my faith and empower me in prayer. If you were not in attendance, I'd recommend getting the CD.

On January 13th, we were honored to have Dr. Berty Abdulmashi as our guest speaker. He represents the Barnabus Fund, an organization that offers practical help to those who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ after being set free from the stronghold of Islam. It was nearly a year ago that I heard him speak at a meeting of our local pastor's association and was deeply moved by what he shared about the prayer that Muslims pray seven times daily, and their core beliefs about Christians. What I heard that day moved me to intercede in a fresh way for the Islamic countries around our world and for the Muslims within our nation. Little did I realize when we set up a time for him to come to speak to us that we would be facing the situation we are in Walkersville, with an Islamic group wanting to buy a sizable piece of property and develop a cultural center. Dr. Berty shared one important principle that spoke to my heart. He said, "I deeply love Muslims, but not Islam." This reminded me that how we respond to this situation involving Muslims and any who might oppose us, ought to reflect Jesus' words, *"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you... Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Luke 6:27-28; 35-36 NIV*

Last Sunday (the 20th), we celebrated and honored Paul Kemp, for his 19.5 years of service in leading our ministry of New Life Christian School. We heard from a number of New Life families how the ministry of NLCS has been a blessing by providing a sound, Christian education for their now adult children who have graduated from our High School. During our follow-up celebration in the gymnasium, we heard from graduates from each class since 1993 of how they now look back and realize the godly example Mr. Kemp was to them as he led the school. What spoke to me about their testimonies was the common thread of what they saw in Mr. Kemp's heart – the heart of a servant

leader, who led this ministry by example. What a great day of celebrating a great servant. "Paul, we love you and are proud of the work you did in the lives of countless students through the ministry of New Life Christian School."

I believe 2008 will be a year where life will not get any easier in the sense of the constant spiritual opposition that we've all been facing throughout our daily lives, but I also know of the sustaining hope that His resurrection from death provides for us. 2008 will also be marked by our Master Jesus calling us to a deeper love relationship with him that results in miracles of deliverance from stubborn, sinful habits, and of miraculous experiences of God using us to lead others to salvation in Christ. Press in with me to this calling and let's believe and contend for a year of

"His Kingdom come, on this earth, as it is in heaven."