

# snapshot.

a glimpse of Life!



March 2009

## You Can Almost Hear the Angels



Bob Lenz

### Billings, Montana • February 17-19, 2009

Three days of schools & rallies were scheduled. In total, there were six schools and 5,000 students, plus three rallies averaging 350 in attendance each night, and more than 75 responding to the gospel for the 1<sup>st</sup> time at each rally. That's 225 receiving the love of Jesus and trusting the gospel!

You can almost hear the angels rejoicing.

Almost. I have a hard time going on with this Snapshot because I know how much you love youth and pray for this ministry to continue to have results like this. You see, this is a Snapshot that was never taken. I have a confession: The story above never happened. If you're not too mad at me, will you please read on and see what really did happen?

A year ago I was booked to speak at a weekend conference with Youth Encounter on February 20-22 in Billings, Montana. A friend of the ministry, who also lived in Montana, contacted us to see if we could come to his community to do school programs and outreaches around that same time. His son served with Life Promotions as an intern and he believes wholeheartedly in our ministry. He was also a school teacher for more than 30 years and served as a student council advisor, so he is well-respected and a well-connected person within the community. We set aside three days preceding the conference to speak at six different schools. He wanted more and was determined to make it happen.

He was so excited and began meeting with school administrators to plan. One principal met him with open arms and shared about the great needs of the kids and how the students needed to hear this quality program on prevention. As they continued speaking, however, the plan slowly seemed to slip out of reach. The principal simply stated, "If we had \$500 - \$1000 to spend on a program, we would choose to get new computers for the students instead. The governor cut school funding once again and our computer lab hasn't been updated in 13 years."

Disappointed, our friend went on to the next school and was met with almost the same story, only this principal said, "If we had the money we would buy books." They didn't even have enough books for all the students. At each school the response was the same.

This economic hard time has hit us all and even affected budgets at schools. The stress of the economy has also affected families, and youth are dealing with more issues on account of it than ever. It's a dilemma, because as the economy declines, so do opportunities to address the increasing needs that result from it.

If we could, we would just do the programs for free. But the costs of travel, sound equipment, flights, a quality opening act, lodging, a road manager, bibles, follow up materials and other expenses make it impossible to do it for nothing. I truly wish we could.

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With much regret, the three days of schools and rallies had to be cancelled. As I think of it, a knot grabs my stomach and won't let go. I still spoke at the weekend conference, and after talking with our ministry friend we were able to donate one program at a school in his hometown: Lewis & Clark Middle School in Billings, Montana. There were 650 students. They laughed so hard at my embarrassing moments, and their eyes filled with tears when I spoke about the hard issues many of them face. The assembly program ended with a standing ovation. The principal later said that it was the best program he'd ever seen in 27 years of teaching. "We have to get you and this message into every school," he told me. "We're ready and eager to come," I thought. "But how?" We were able to arrange for student council leaders to attend from other schools to see the program as well. I'm hoping that they can catch the vision and get others to raise the money so we can come back and recapture those opportunities that were lost.

I weep as I write this. Five schools cancelled. Three rallies never happened. Hundreds of youth didn't have a chance to hear the gospel and come to Christ. I know from theology that God is bigger than all of this, but I also know that we have a responsibility to do our part. Youth need prevention programs in their schools and need Jesus more than ever.

We need people to pray. We need people to come together and bring us in to different schools. We need people to raise the money for their community so messages of hope can fill the hallways of our junior and senior high schools. We need people to provide for scholarships that offer these programs in communities that can't afford to bring us in. I know things are tight, but we can't stop now.

Please continue to pray as we finish out this school year, and also pray for the community organizers who are diligently working to bring us in. Please also pray for the 2009-2010 school year. Bookings are increasingly difficult as school budgets are being cut in nearly every community across the country. Meanwhile, the need increases. The response from students is greater than ever, which indicates their hunger for truth, hope, and a love that never fails.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to *almost* hear the angels. They are waiting with anticipation for a reason to rejoice, and I want to hear them loud and clear. Let's never stop sharing the love of God.

For the Kingdom,

**Bob Lenz**

International Speaker

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Life! Promotions

211 E. Franklin St. Appleton, WI 54911

800-955-LIFE [www.lifepromotions.com](http://www.lifepromotions.com)