

snapshot.

a glimpse of Life!



January 2009

Only in Alaska



Bob Lenz

ONLY IN ALASKA...

We sat in the Anchorage airport this past December waiting for our flight to Valdez, Alaska and heard that it was cancelled because of a blizzard that was dumping 4 feet of snow in the area. We were disappointed that we would miss our school programs and rally. But then our sponsor said, "Why don't you just drive instead?"

What!? Only in Alaska would you get 4 feet of snow and have the local residents think we wouldn't have any problems driving. So, you guessed it... we drove. It took 6 hours to drive through the mountain pass. It brought back memories of when I was in North Carolina and they canceled school where I was supposed to speak because of a half inch of snow.

ONLY IN ALASKA...

We once again were in an airport waiting to pick up our luggage at baggage claim. Like in many airports, there was a wall of windows overlooking a sidewalk outside. We couldn't believe our eyes. Because unlike many airports, along with passing cars and pedestrians who didn't even seem to notice, there walked a large bull moose on the sidewalk, casually weaving in and out of traffic. I'm not sure if the moose was looking for his luggage or what.

ONLY IN ALASKA...

I heard a new term that I never heard before called "Couch Surfing." While speaking at an alternative school I found out that a couch surfer is a high school student who is homeless but is still trying to go to school to get their diploma. They end up going from one friend's house to another, sleeping on their couches. High school years are hard enough. I don't know how they do it being homeless as well. It seems so difficult to believe it's possible to be homeless in Alaska in through the winter. But this is reality for many. In fact, I learned that two homeless men I met last year when I was in Nome, Alaska froze to death, and another lost his leg because of frostbite.

ONLY IN ALASKA...

I wasn't sure how to gauge one particular assembly program because the response from students didn't seem as enthusiastic as usual. Jokes and funny stories received very few laughs, and the kids hardly seemed to respond or clap with the band. I thought that perhaps they were just tired because it was the first thing in the morning, or maybe they missed the surf and spent the night out on the streets in an Alaskan winter.

Despite the unenthusiastic group earlier in the day, I felt good about the rally that evening where many youth responded to the gospel. After the rally I met a girl named Angel. It was then that I found out she had attempted suicide the night before. She had attended my school assembly program earlier in the day, hiding the cuts on her wrist with a myriad of bracelets. After the school program that I thought had such little impact, Angel turned herself in to the counselor at the school to seek help.

When I saw her that night she had gauze on both wrists instead of all the bracelets. She was a tall and attractive girl who looked more like 30 than 17. She sat in the second row for the rally. This time she did laugh at the stories. Afterwards, she told me she was moved by my talk and felt hope for the first time in a long time.



I couldn't help but notice that she hadn't responded to the gospel, so I hoped maybe she had Christianity in her background. But after our discussion I found out she was heavily involved in Wicca, a pagan religion. Before you judge her, I explored why. She told me one of the reasons was because the Wiccan religion has female goddesses. See, she had been abused and assaulted by men who, in name, used the "Christian" title. My heart sunk. Their hypocrisy had repelled her from the Christian faith.

She said, "I loved everything you said but I'm not into Jesus." I replied, "If you're not into Jesus then why did you come tonight and why are you talking to me?" "Because," she continued, "At the school the person that introduced you said people had donated money for you to come. If people who I don't even know care about me enough to have a speaker come and they really believed that you were genuine and believed in what you were talking about, then maybe there was some hope for me." She softened as she spoke the next words, "You really encouraged me with what you said."

THE REAL JESUS

For a moment I was taken aback. Despite her pain she came. I couldn't help but apologize for ways in which the church, or people who call themselves Christians, has hurt women or pushed down their dignity in the name of Christianity. "That's so not how our leader Jesus treated women," I said. I told her the story of the woman at the well, whom the world had used and abused and left to feel worthless – the woman who even made bad choices herself. I shared how Jesus broke all customs and social barriers to reach out to her with worth, value and forgiveness. "If you like anything that I said tonight," I continued. "I want you to know that I get it all from that person, Jesus."

I wish I could put a nice bow on this story and tell you that Angel responded to the gospel that night. That didn't happen. But Angel now has a seed of hope and a taste of the real Jesus because of your partnership with us. She said it herself, "If people who I don't even know care about me enough to have a speaker come... then maybe there's some hope for me." You care. And there is hope. Angel now believes that. Please pray for her and the countless others in need of the one true hope: Jesus.

IMPACT

Here is a report of the impact in Alaska this past December. Praise God with us.

- 18 programs in 10 days
- Spoke to nearly 5,000 people
- 185 people responded to the gospel
- Spoke at schools, churches, youth rallies, a prison and a youth detention center

Hope isn't only in Alaska. It's all across America. It's the hope of Christ growing in the hearts of youth who have heard the Gospel and His truth. Please continue to pray for youth to know the hope of Christ and for Life Promotions to continue sharing His love.

For the Kingdom,

Bob Lenz

International Speaker

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Clara is the sponsor who worked so hard to bring us into Alaska. Here are some of her personal thoughts:

At McLaughlin School (a juvenile detention center) you could visibly see a difference from when the students came in to when they left. We were all fighting back tears as Bob shared his message on "Value, Courage, and Respect," because of the thought of the pain some of these students have endured.

I think it was my personal favorite. Even though these kids couldn't attend the outreach event, it made such a difference just to let them know that no matter what has happened to them they still have value. That totally made all the time and struggle of organizing these events worth it for me.

The principal hugged both Bob and I afterward! She said she would have the students write about the assembly and send me copies. I know I will have a box of tissue handy before I sit down with them!

The outreach events were beyond what I could have hoped. More than 100 raised their hand to receive Christ. And that's just what we see; we know God is doing amazing things that we can't see!

Please pray for the new believers as well as the seeds that were planted, especially for protection. They are receiving follow up materials, but we know these youth are going back to some difficult situations, so pray that they get and stay connected to people who can help.

Clara T.

You can be a part of reaching young people with messages of hope and the love of Christ!

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Life! Promotions

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