

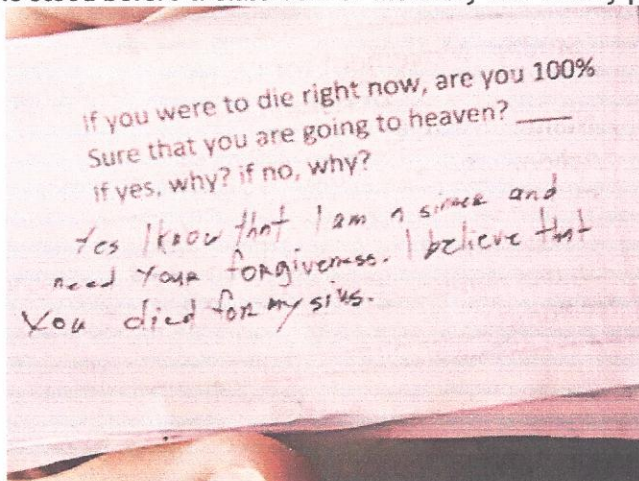
by Pastor Larry Ball



Last year at this time eNews featured an [article by Missionary Mike Redick describing the 2010 Evangelistic Campaign in the Philippines](#). This year I was privileged to be part of the 2011 Evangelistic effort along with 12 other people from our church. I am taking this issue of the eNews to describe for you one of the most amazing works of God that I have seen in my lifetime.

[Student Movement for Christ International \(SMCI\)](#), a college ministry in the Republic of the Philippines, grew out of an evangelistic campaign in 2002. Since that time, SMCI has become one of the largest campus ministries in that country of about 94 million people.

During the six weeks of the 2011 campaign, a clear Gospel message was presented to over 263,000 students in colleges and high schools across the Philippines. Nearly 5,250 times someone stood before a classroom or assembly and clearly presented the Gospel of Jesus



Christ. Over 161,000 respondents filled out a decision card with their name and contact information and indicated that they had put their trust in Christ alone for salvation. As amazing as those numbers are, perhaps the most incredible number is the thousands who are being actively disciplined every week. Although we worked hard during the e-campaign, the greatest work is done before and afterward as the SMCI staff disciplines these converts and prepares for the next year's campaign.

Here in America we have become very skeptical about numbers, for the most part for good reasons. Let me assure you that what is taking place in the Philippines is a genuine work of God. Only the Lord knows the true number of those who genuinely received Christ, but each of

us on the evangelistic teams repeatedly heard stories and testimonies from those who had placed their faith in Him. The testimonies of those we heard gave great evidence of not only their understanding of the Gospel, but their tremendous gratitude to the Lord for His work of salvation in their lives. The staff of SMCI are almost entirely converts from evangelistic efforts of preceding years. It was an incredible blessing to hear these godly young people speak of when they had trusted Christ, most in the last few years.



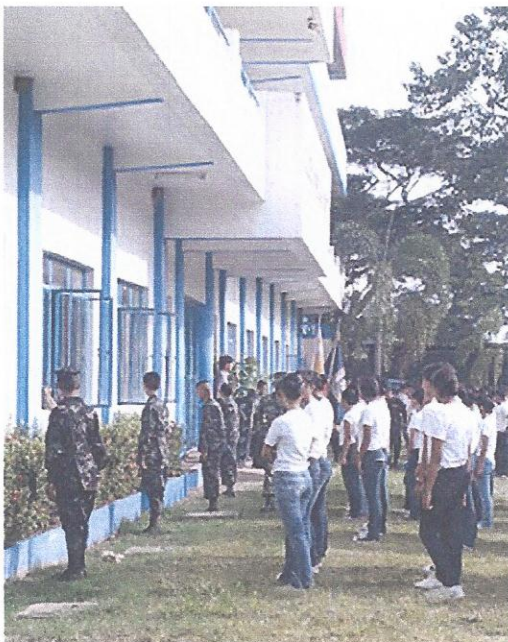
After one of the evening Gospel services, a young lady came forward to talk with one of our workers. She indicated she had trusted Christ and had come to find out more. When asked when she had heard the Gospel, she said she had been at one of the evangelism rallies. She could not remember the preacher's name, but she explained that he was a "big white guy" (I was the only one who filled that description!). One day after I preached at a high school reserved for only select and high achieving students, a young fourth year student named Ted came up to me as I was leaving and thanked me for preaching the Word of God. He told me that he had trusted Christ as his Savior that day and now knew that he had eternal life. I cannot help but think of Ted often and pray that he will grow into a faithful servant of the Lord.

This movement is not mystical or mysterious. The Filipinos have a strong Catholic background. Their culture, however, has caused them to remain open to the Gospel. We did not have to convince students of the existence of God, or that they were sinners, or that Jesus had died for their sins. Most classes could quote John 3:16 as well as several other verses of Scripture. It was as though no one had ever connected all of the dots for them, or as one pastor put it, ". . . as though a piece of the puzzle was missing." We had the privilege of going into classroom after classroom and giving them that missing piece of the puzzle. The Department of Education emphasizes training the whole student-- intellectually, physically, emotionally, and **spiritually!** This is the door God has opened that allows the staff of SMCI to successfully present the Gospel to young people who are searching for the truth.



Another great benefit of this campaign was the effect on the team I took with me from Arizona. Many of the young people have indicated they believe God has called them into missions. All of them have become eternity focused and conscious of lost souls all around them. They have all testified that the three weeks they were in the Philippines were truly life changing. Most of our team consisted of college age young people. They were greatly impacted not just by seeing the need and the working of God every day, but also by the testimony of the SMCI staff. The dedication and simple faith of those outstanding young people left an impression on our team that they will never forget.

I am sure that some who read the stories and hear about the numbers of souls reached during this campaign will shrug their shoulders in indifference or roll their eyes in unbelief. Having experienced this campaign first hand, I assure any doubters that this is truly a great work of God. I heard one testimony after another of those who had been saved in previous campaigns and how their lives were radically changed. I saw the tears of a young student when she realized that Jesus Christ had died in her place. I have heard the emotional "thank you" from those who had just trusted Christ and were trying to express their gratitude for our coming. I saw God move in a mighty way in those three weeks, and I pray for the Lord to continue to develop this movement in the years ahead. I encourage churches to prayerfully consider sending a team to help in the future.



There is one scene that sticks vividly in my mind. It was one of our busiest days. As I finished speaking in the seventh classroom, I had to sit down on the desk because the heat was so draining I had become utterly exhausted. When I had gathered sufficient strength, I left the classroom and began to look for another member of our

team to point me to the next classroom where I would preach. As I walked along, I could not find anyone from our team. Not knowing where to go, I wanted to sit down again to rest and get my thoughts together. However, students from two classrooms where I had already been saw me and began to follow me wherever I went. Many of them were asking questions as they clung to the Gospel tracts that I had left with them. I really needed to sit down, but I could not because I knew I would be surrounded and nearly smothered by their curiosity. After about 15 minutes, I finally saw a familiar face and headed that direction.

Afterwards, I regretted I had not spent more time with those eager young people, listening to them and answering their questions. As I reflected, I remembered how the Scripture described our Lord being pressed by the multitudes so that He did not have time to eat or sleep. In a small way, I felt that this must have been what our Lord Himself experienced as the multitudes sought to hear Him. Without a doubt, “. . .the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few!