

Encounter vs. Exposure

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Near Kursh, Russia, many years ago, attendance at a Sunday school picked up after a priest started handing candy to the peasant children for their good work. One of the faithful children was a pug-nosed little shepherd boy for the village of Kalinovka who recited scripture with proper piety. He would pocket his candy and then run to the fields to munch on his reward.

The priest took a liking to the little fat boy, and the child became more and more interested in Sunday school. He became so intrigued that the priest succeeded in training the boy to recite all four gospels by memory. The boy received a special prize for his accomplishment and also recited Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John nonstop in church oneday.

More than sixty years later this man died, and on his tombstone was inscribed the name Nikita Khrushchev. This man could quote the four Gospels by heart, but the words made no change or progress in his life. He knew the basis of the Christian faith was through the words of the Gospels, but he lacked the relationship of Christ in his heart. Khrushchev died an atheist as far as we know because he knew of religion but not the reality of a living relationship. Exposure does not place people closer to heaven or even make them Christians.

When we go to Russia, we give the lost an opportunity of a personal encounter with a resurrected Savior. Their encounter with Jesus comes through teaching them the gospel of Christ. Exposure to Christ is not enough! The Russian Orthodox church gives its people only an exposure to Christ. Russian Orthodoxy is working overtime to instill in its people a nationalistic pride for their religion instead of a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

Millions of honest Russian seekers are getting only a distorted picture of Christ because Orthodoxy give them only an encounter with a resurrected Lord. An encounter with Christ through the power of Scriptures and prayer makes true disciples who go out making more disciples.

After the crucifixion, the disciples retreated to a room and locked the door for fear of the Jews. The resurrected Jesus walked right through the walls of their guilt and shame. John 20:20 says, The disciples were glad (overjoyed) when they saw the Lord. The personal encounter changed them forever. The book of Acts is a story of the apostles fearless courage.

Exposure to Christ does not make people Christians. This alone produces Nikita Khrushchevs. Lost people need a living encounter with Christ. This will place people closer to heaven and can make them Christians.

Encounter vs. Exposure. Our efforts produce an encounter with Christ, not just exposure to Him.
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