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Famous in Russia

Olsen: Famous in Russia

Jillian Meredith Olsen

On March 30, 1997, I embarked on a journey to another country to host an English Camp. I taught in classrooms and spread the word of God to people who had never been exposed to the writings or teachings of Jesus Christ. The months of learning a religious performance and various words and phrases in Russian did not nearly prepare me for the effect this trip had on my faith, my outlook on life, and my heart. I realized how spreading the word of God should be done through actions, not only by using words. I realized that sacrificing my time and anything I can is so worthwhile. I watched the faces of those who had not yet come to Christ soften and change while watching our play and listening to our testimonies. I realized how sacrifices should be made without looking for gratitude. All of my experiences were important and meaningful, but the ones I have chosen to write about are the ones that stand out in my mind.

Until this particular incident, I had never fully realized how self-involved people could become without Jesus Christ in their lives. A group of us were sitting on the Metro on our way to Leningrad to teach classes on "reconciliation." An elderly woman who could barely get onto the train by herself got onto the car. I looked around, and no one was offering a seat to her. The woman couldn't possibly hold onto the bar and manage to stand; the jerking start of the vehicle would have made her fall over. I rose from my seat and motioned to her to take it. I couldn't speak her language, nor she mine, yet she thanked me

with her eyes. Her solemn face had turned into a smile for one brief and precious moment. I felt I had done a heroic thing, a chivalric deed, but all I did was give up my seat. I realized that showing how God works can be simple. Spreading the word of God has no real spoken language; there are many ways to go about it.

I never thought of myself as a famous individual until I was used as a tool for God. As my group and I were on the Metro, I anticipated the reactions of those I would soon influence. We rose from our seats, and as soon as the curtains were drawn we were adorned with smiling faces and warm applause. We proceeded with our performance, and directly afterwards, with not even a moment to remove our gloves, we were swarmed with many children who were demanding autographs from us and waving little spiral pads in our faces. I was honestly shocked and a little bewildered. I am not a famous person, my autograph is not of importance, yet I signed the notebooks and gave tons of hugs to many children I had reached. I suppose Hollywood will not use me anytime soon, but God used me to reach the hearts of many, and being famous in God's eyes is the best fame there is. My autograph is everywhere in Mother Russia, in many little notebooks, and my presence is in many memories over there. I guess I am famous!

All of these instances were special and memorable ones. The time I spent in Russia opened my heart to new experiences, ones that can never be equaled.