

Russia Field Report

July 2019

Perspective

I recently had lunch with a single guy who serves with Pioneer Bible Translators. He is currently learning the Evenki language and scouting out where the Evenki reindeer herders live across Siberia. His excitement grew as he told me about the recent trip through the Republic of Buryatia. The villages in the north of the republic, he reported, were a speckling of Buryat and Evenki settlements, along with what he believed was a third distinct people group; one that Soviet and Russian anthropologists said moved out of Russia into China a long time ago.

I relay this story because it illustrates the needs among the Siberian people in an eye-opening way. There are so many isolated areas where no believer has spent more than a couple days. There is no agency close to being prepared to move into and work in these areas, if it is currently possible at all!

My perspective is a long-game view of building a team that seeks the Lord's timing to find ways to reach the hard places of Siberia. Each year it seems like a new piece falls into place, but I'm also aware that it is only in God's timing that we will be able to accomplish anything. While we wait, we remain faithful, staying focused on discipling and facilitating, but ready to jump at opportunities to go into unreached areas when they open.

People

Shawna Hess – Shawna continues to disciple women in Ulan-Ude and play a supporting role among the believers in her local fellowship. She shares our passion for reaching the villages, but is strongly limited by her battle with lupus.

Lucas and Jamie Orner – Discipleship remains the main focus of our ministry in Krasnoyarsk, all the while praying that God will use our disciples to eventually go to unreached areas with the Good News. We plan to travel to Tuva in August to encourage the local Native church leaders and their families.

Frankie Emrick – Frankie transitioned from being a volunteer to an employee in May and is currently living in Ulan-Ude. He is engaged to Ira (Buryat believer and one of Shawna's friends), and they plan to be wed in September of this year. This will fast-track his Russian residency permit and open countless doors for the two of them in ministry.

Summer Team –We have two people serving in EnGage! this summer.

Summary:

<u>Missionary</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Ministry</u>
Shawna Hess	Full-time, on field	Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia	Discipleship (focus on Buryat people), midwifery
Lucas and Jamie Orner	Full-time, on field	Krasnoyarsk, Krasnoyarski Krai	Field Director responsibilities, Discipleship (focus on moving Russians toward going to UPG),
Frankie Emrick	Full-time, on field	Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia	Obtaining residency permit, building relationships in Ulan-Ude and surrounding regions.

Partnerships

Pioneer Bible Translators: The local missionary has informed me that he and his supervisor have decided that the local team is now working as a secular organization, promoting literacy as opposed to previously working openly as Bible translators. While the change is understandable, it limits InterAct’s ability to openly partner with them as they translate the Bible into Siberian languages.

Tuva: The leadership of the (only) Tuvan-led church in Kyzyl has reached out to us and asked us to be active in encouraging them as they face multiple difficulties. We plan on taking a trip to Kyzyl in August and possibly a more active role in discipleship.

Prayer and Praise

- Pray for more workers on the Russia Field. As Thomas moves on, we lose a mobilizer who has experience on the Russia Field.
- Praise the Lord for Frankie’s engagement to Ira and pray for God to prepare them for life and ministry together in the future.
- Pray for Shawna to have more good days than bad as she perseveres and continues to serve in Ulan-Ude despite the troubling side-effects of lupus.
- Pray for discipleship relationships and the daily challenges that they bring.
- Please pray for the Orner family as they balance Lucas’ administrative work, advancing the field vision, everyday ministry surprises, and family.

Joyfully Serving Christ!
Lucas Orner
Russia Field Director