

Russia Field Report February 2017

Well, we've been praying that God would peak people's interest in Russia and the news outlets have certainly been helping with that. As we visit schools and churches everyone asks similar questions about Russia. Is it still open to missionary work? Will local events change anything for your work there? And so on. We don't expect much to change for InterAct's ministry in Russia. Unless you're a politician in Russia, politics exist on a different reality than everyday life. We sense, and from others opinions as well, that when missionaries operate in Russia and attempt to bring those two areas of life together, they increase their chances of government interference in their work. After the new "anti-missionary" law was passed, there were stories that in some regions of Russia the local FSB called local pastors together and told them straight-up, "If you don't say anything about politics, you won't have any problems under the new law."

Looking through the list of people who have been fined under the new law, there are two commonalities. One is that they have broken another Russian law and the "anti-missionary" law was tacked on as a way to more easily fine the law-breaker. It ranges from short-term missionaries breaking visa laws to Buddhist monks using narcotics in their religious ceremonies. The second similarity is using aggressive public evangelism. Many of these fines for public evangelism were overturned because sharing one's personal beliefs is protected under the Russian Constitution; however, this type of evangelism has been looked down on for a long time and has been mostly ineffective since the mid-90's

Perspective

Two of most often prayed requests for our Special Assignment to the U.S. this Winter were that God would guide us to connect with people with a heart's burden for Russia and that God would help us understand the younger generation in college know and what drives their passion for missions.

Our time on college campuses was fruitful. We have two EnGage! Russia applications in from people looking toward long-term ministry and are awaiting a third. And our interactions have shown us that although Millennials may see the world through a different lensed certainly have been raised in a world different that we were, the passion for Christ has not diminished.

As we continue with our vision for a team in Krasnoyarsk and a team in an unreached town, we know the first step toward accomplishing that goal is recruitment. This was the primary focus of Special Assignment and needs to continue as we return to the field in March.

People

Shawna Hess – Shawna continues to use her interest and skills as a midwife to open doors for relationships with young women in Ulan-Ude. She is in the process of renewing her 5-year residency permit. Please pray for favor in the eyes of officials and that God would grant her good health during the process as she must visit various clinics and offices in the dead of winter.

Lucas and Jamie Orner – We are back in the U.S. from November '16 through February '17 on a recruitment-focused Special Assignment. It's been intense, with an overfilled schedule, but rewarding in the relationships we have been able to build on college campuses. We are also seeking a \$500 boost in monthly support with our growing family and our aging support base.

Ted and Kate Mole – Ted and Kate continue their plans for assisting the formation of a rehab center in Namtsy. They have a hurdle of obtaining legitimate visa to continue their trips but there are options available.

Frankie Emrick – Frankie has jumped back into full-time support raising. Please keep him in your prayers as he restarts that journey.

Tucker and Grace Grose (NAIM)- Under a MOU with InterAct this Grose visited Yakutia this summer. Their debrief provided us with insight that we had been making assumptions about regarding Yakutia. Namely that Yakutia's isolated villages remain largely unreached and that a knowledge of the Sakha language is imperative

Partnerships

Dr. Marc Canner: Dr. Canner is a professor of Russian Language and TESL at Moody Northwest and also heads up the Institute of Strategic Languages and Cultures. Thomas and Jerry have already begun a relationship with Dr. Canner and Jamie, myself and Thomas will be visiting him the week after the board meeting to deepen that relationship and talk about partnering with him for language study for future teammates and also promoting our field as an opportunity for internships for his students and Institute.

Prayer and Praise

- Pray that God would call more people to ministry in Siberia. The needs are immense and we long to see God's name made famous throughout Siberia!
- Please pray the God would grant Shawna favor in the eyes of officials as she applies to extend her residency permit. Pray that her health would not hinder her as she travels around the city gathering and submitting documents.

- Pray for wisdom for a full-team for EnGage! this summer.
- Pray for the Orners as they wrap up their Special Assignment and head back to Russia on February 27th.
- Pray for wisdom for the Namtsy believers who are involved in the development of the rehab center and that the Moles would be used by God to facilitate the process.
- Pray for Frankie as he restarts his support-raising. Pray that his faith and reliance on the Lord would be deepened through the process and that all of his needs would be met as he seeks partners to support his ministry.
- Pray that God would raise up Russians with a passion for cross-cultural ministry in Siberia. That the partnerships that we have with churches in Krasnoyarsk and Ulan-Ude would grow and that they would catch our passion for the least-reached groups.

Joyfully Serving Christ!

Lucas Orner

Russia Field Director