

# Russia Field Report

## January 2018

### **Perspective**

We strongly believe that our team needs to be working alongside local churches in Russia as much as possible-- supporting, encouraging, discipling, and challenging. We've seen other missionaries enter Russia and turn away from local churches in disgust for their lack of \_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with any number of things). But if the thousands of unreached, isolated villages of Siberia are to be reached with the gospel, then there needs to be participation from local churches. This is why, I believe, that God has parked us in Krasnoyarsk, arguably one of the more church-ed cities in Russia. While we build teams to go to unreached areas, we will be passing on the passion and declaring the need among church congregations in the cities.

Most people here don't see the need. As a pastor in Ulan-Ude told us, it is more strategic to reach the young people who move from the villages to the city. He recognized the unreached areas but told us that those towns and villages are dying out. While we (and many others) don't agree with his assessment, even if this was the last generation to live in the village, it is a group of thousands of people who need the gospel. Organizations send teams of people and support structures to areas where there are people groups numbering less than 500 and yet strong churches in Siberia struggle to get people to go to villages a day's drive away. We need to pray that God uses InterAct to not only go to the unreached areas but also to play a role in changing the hearts of churches in Russia.

### **People**

Shawna Hess – Shawna returned to the US during the summer after her 12-year-old nephew unexpectedly passed away in his sleep. Her connections in Ulan-Ude and Buryatia have been very helpful as we begin to lay the foundation for future team ministry in unreached regions.

Lucas and Jamie Orner – Following up with summer teams and organizing a winter trip has meant many late nights and early mornings for Jamie and me as we try to do a better job of connecting via video calls with those who may be possible prospects for future team members. The intentionality of recruitment is important but living 12-15 hours ahead of the U.S. can be quite exhausting. Locally we are involved in discipling a couple young men and continue relationships with local churches and partners.

Ted and Kate Mole – Ted’s recent knee issues seem to have put on hold a possible trip to Yakutia to continue training at the rehab center.

Frankie Emrick – We are on to Plan D or E for Frankie, which is par for the course for Russia. Our contact who offered him an English teaching position, backed down. We weren’t able to find any other teaching offers, which usually require cultivating a relationship. So, currently he is waiting for his student visa and will come to Krasnoyarsk in February to study at the Pedagogical University for a year. During the year, he will pursue relationships and get his feet wet in various ministries, while assisting the Orners with moving the field vision forward. At the end of the year, he will return to the U.S. to finish support raising for full-time involvement.

John and Gina Turton – Because they came to visit Siberia in the winter, we introduced them to our friends in Russia as either being incredibly brave or downright crazy. After spending 2.5 weeks with them, we believe John and Gina would be a great fit for our team. They returned to Normal, IL where John will finish his final semester at ISU (MA Art Technology) and Gina will continue working to pay off school debt. We are praying that they will send in an application this summer for full-time ministry, although they have not made that commitment verbally yet.

Summer Teams – We currently have one person signed up for *EnGage!* 2018. She will arrive a month early to fulfill her Emmaus 10-week internship requirement. We are keeping in touch with the *EnGage!* 2017 team, with one prospect for long-term ministry.

Summary:

<b><u>Missionary</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Ministry</u></b>
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	Arrives 02-2018 for 1-year position	Krasnoyarsk, Krasnoyarski Krai	Will be studying at KGPU with a goal of building relationship in city and assisting Orners with moving field vision forward

Ted and Kate Mole (full time AK field)	On hold	Namtsi, Sakha Republic	Facilitating training and start of rehab center
---	---------	---------------------------	--

### Pipeline

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Status</u></b>	<b><u>Ministry/Other Notes</u></b>
John and Gina Turton	Have completed vision trip, strong prospect for long- term ministry	Passion for relational discipleship among young people. Being mentored/in internship with church pastor and couple from missions team.
Lisa Curtis	<i>EnGage!</i> 2017 alum	Strong interest in long-term ministry, will be married summer 2018 and hopes to take trip to Russia as married couple in future.

### **Partnerships**

Dr. Marc Canner: We were disappointed to hear that MBI Spokane campus will be closing. It's the one university that we have contact with that offers Russian language courses. We are not sure of Dr. Canner's future plans, but will continue to pursue the relationship with him and his organization.

Pioneer Bible Translators (Hannah Ely): We put way more time than we were expecting into facilitating Hannah's trip to Russia in October, but God blessed it in so many ways. God used Jamie being at the right place at the right time to meet a Buryat woman who recently moved from St Petersburg with a burden to have the Bible translated into her people's heart language. We were able to connect that woman with Hannah over dinner at Shawna's apartment. And are we ever excited to see how God uses them in the future to get His Word into the hands of the Buryat people.

SEND: This summer we didn't have as many opportunities to connect with SEND as we had hoped. Most of their team was back on furlough. We do plan to meet with them in the future to see how we can partner in reaching the Buryat people.

Tuva: We took a short trip to Tuva in January with the Turtons and were very encouraged by the stories we heard there. In Kyzyl, there is a new church plant with a Tuvan pastor (Ayes from Ak-Dovurak). This is the first Tuvan language church in the capital city.

### **Prayer and Praise**

- Praise the Lord for three possible long-term teammates in Frankie, Lisa and the Turtons.

- Pray for at least two more *EnGage!* applicants for this summer.
- Pray that churches in Russia would grow a passion for unreached, hard-to-reach villages and peoples in Siberia.
- Pray for Shawna's health as she continues to have good days and bad as she lives with the symptoms of lupus.
- 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