

# Russia Field Report

## January 2020

### Perspective

One of the main tourist attractions in Krasnoyarsk is Stolbi National Park. Located right outside the city, it offers a 5-mile hike through a valley and up into the mountains. After the five miles there is a rock formation extending out of the forest that is easy enough to climb for the most novice of hikers. The view is spectacular. It looks back through the valley that you've just spent the last couple hours hiking through. Turn around any other way and you see other rock formations jutting out from the Siberian forest. In ministry having that kind of 360-degree view is something we don't often get naturally. We can picture it in our minds, reflect on it in prayer, and rejoice in remembering it during fellowship. In September last year I experienced one of those rare moments in ministry where God aligns several paths and events to grant me one of those mountaintop views.

It was at Frankie and Ira's wedding. A month prior we had heard from a Chinese student we witnessed to a decade ago. He had accepted Christ and would be studying in Ulan-Ude (see the latest InterACTION story for the full story). We reconnected with him at the wedding and found out his pregnant wife had already been visiting with Shawna about her upcoming pregnancy. Wow! God wove together relationships and ministries and a taste of the fruit from a seed planted long ago. Then we celebrated the wedding and reflecting on how God brought Ira and Frankie together was a testament to His power and goodness. Over 200 Buryat guests filled the hall; many of them Ira's relatives from the villages where there are still no churches. It has been our prayer for a long time that God would open doors to Buryat villages. Frankie's relationship with Ira is likely be the first step in answer to that prayer. As I sat there in the wedding reception, I experienced one of those mountain-top views of seeing where our team had been, the present fruit, and the joy of looking at the exciting road ahead.

That time will be a marker that I look back on for many years to come. As David wrote in Psalm 63, when things were not going very well for him:

"So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.  
Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you."

Psalm 63:3

God is moving the Russian field forward. While we always pray for more workers, we trust His timing and look forward to the fruit that we will see down the road.

### People

Shawna Hess – Shawna continues to disciple women in Ulan-Ude and plays a supporting role among the believers in her local fellowship. Continue to pray for her ongoing health struggles. In the past few years we have witnessed a growing desire among some believers to go to unreached villages.

Lucas and Jamie Orner – In November I began my first course toward a master's in biblical counseling. Jamie and I continue with a few discipleship relationships in the city and have been praying about facilitating a regular gathering for Tuvan believers.

Frankie and Ira Emrick – We are thrilled at the addition of Ira to our InterAct family, although she is no stranger to our team. Shawna has been involved in her life for many years now! Frankie and Ira are both actively involved in using music in ministry and are a part of a team that writes and performs worship music in the Buryat style. They are currently praying about moving to Ira’s village in three years.

Summer Team –We have one application in for *EnGage!* Russia 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, Discipleship
Frankie and Ira Emrick	Full-time, on field	Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia	Discipleship/Facilitating ministry to villages, music ministry.

**Partnerships**

SEND: SEND has a team of missionaries in Ulan-Ude who serve in a variety of ministries to both Russians and Buryats. Their team leader said that they are already looking for the next steps for their team, which would likely be starting ministry in a new area of Russia. The Emricks partner with a couple SEND missionaries in the music ministry but at least one will be leaving Russia this year.

Tuva: We believe that God has not closed the door for our team in Tuva and still sense the need for discipleship and encouragement. Also, there has been a noticeable increase in migration of Tuvans to Krasnoyarsk. We are discipling a young man who has shown interest in working with us to facilitate a gathering of Tuvan believers in the city.

**Prayer and Praise**

- Please pray for Frankie as he deals with paperwork and residency permit applications. He’s run into a lot of red tape that he must navigate.
- Pray for Frankie and Ira as they continue to bring together their two very different cultures in the unity of marriage.
- Pray for Shawna to have more good days than bad as she perseveres and continues to serve in Ulan-Ude despite the painful 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, family, and coursework.

Joyfully Serving Christ!  
 Lucas Orner - Russia Field Director