

Training the Tuvans to reach their people for Christ

Neighboring Tuva, located in central Siberia, is a vast and remote region plagued by high rates of poverty and unemployment. It is among the poorest regions in Siberia and is recognized as a welfare state. There are few opportunities for people to make a living and many struggle with depression, alcohol, and as a result, high crime — and spiritual poverty as well. But our leaders are training and equipping the Next Generation in Tuva to share the light of the gospel.

Since September of 2020, our School Without Walls (SWW) has worked to develop their leadership training program among 50 leaders for outreach ministry in Tuva.



Following decades of atheism in Tuva, with a population of around 318,000, there also is a mix of Shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism. Most of the people live in isolated, mountainous areas that are difficult to access by vehicle and have little opportunity to hear the gospel. Evangelical Christians make up less than 2% of the population.

As Mission Eurasia continues to take the gospel throughout Tuva, we remain hopeful for future ministry. Training local believers to share the gospel and training other leaders is critical. This past month our team provided four training sessions.

One local coordinator Ayas writes, “Young people have become more involved in the life of the church, and we believe that they can become leaders for our people, showing Christ with their whole lives.” A School Without Walls leader noted, “We believe that these young followers of Christ will become the leaders of their generation and the Tuvan people will be reached with the message of Christ.”

Thank you for lifting our ministry up in prayer and supporting our work. Your gifts do make a difference. Please see link to learn more about the recent training in Tuva: <https://youtu.be/vVSeV9z4KY4>

How can I help?

■ PRAY

Please pray for our School Without Walls leaders as they train and equip the Next Generation for ministry among the unreached people of Siberia. Sign up for our monthly prayer guide at missioneurasia.org/resources and our electronic ministry updates at missioneurasia.org/enews-sign-up.

■ GIVE TO UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS INITIATIVE

Through our strategic outreach efforts, such as our annual summer outreach Bible camps for children, ministry opportunities in Siberia continue to open up. With added travel, comes more wear and tear on vehicles navigating hazardous roads. In areas like Buryatia, we hope to purchase a used SUV for about \$20,000. To help with this and other related ministry needs, please see the enclosed response device or go to missioneurasia.org/donate and click on the School Without Walls option.

■ PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRAINING NEEDS

In areas of Siberia such as Tuva, Buryatia, and other regions, we are working to train and equip additional School Without Walls leaders, who can train other leaders. For the cost of \$500, we're able to train and equip one ministry leader for one year.

■ JOIN KINGDOM BUILDERS

Sign up for our monthly giving program, Kingdom Builders, to help fund essential ministry opportunities. This allows us to plan ahead for critical outreach training year round. Find out more at missioneurasia.org/monthly-giving-program.



UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS INITIATIVE



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” — Matthew 28:19

Reaching the unreached of Siberia



Dear Friends,

After the Soviet Union collapsed and opportunities for ministry opened up, I will never forget visiting the Yamal region in the Far North of Russia where our first national missionaries had heroically volunteered to move.

These missionaries came to Yamal (which actually means “the ends of the earth”) to plant churches in this frozen and remote region where Stalin’s political concentration camps once stood and where groups of unreached pagan reindeer herders lived. During my visit, I thought that I was reliving the Book of Acts when I saw these vibrant new churches and how open these unreached native people groups were to the gospel.

A couple of decades since then, the churches that were first planted are flourishing, despite the harsh environment and economic struggles in this region. We see that the gospel has taken root and that is why Mission Eurasia is now focusing on training the Next Generation of indigenous leaders to spread the gospel even further throughout this remote and inhospitable land. We want to train, equip, and mobilize indigenous leaders to reach the unreached within their own communities and regions.

Why is this important?

1. This is the command that Christ Himself gave in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). He commanded us not to evangelize just every individual, but to reach every nation that needs to hear the gospel. This is our obligation.

2. The first church in the Book of Acts modeled this. The Apostle Paul talks about reaching those who haven’t heard yet. Access to the gospel was his top priority for those who haven’t heard, and we need to focus on training young leaders like Paul who, despite any obstacle, will reach the unreached.

3. The church, the global body of Christ, grows as we fulfill the Great Commission. That is why we need to focus on not just reaching those at home, but in other unreached regions around the world as well.

In all of this, we see the potential for a Great Commission partnership. This newsletter will provide a glimpse of the need and potential for ministry among the unreached in Russia’s Siberian regions. I hope that you will consider partnering with us to help reach the unreached with the gospel at “the ends of the earth.”

Gratefully in Christ,

Sergey Rakhuba, President



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” — Acts 1:8

Throughout the vast territories of Siberia that reach into Russia’s Far North, we serve areas where Joseph Stalin’s concentration camps persecuted millions. Monuments to Stalin still stand today in some of these regions. But when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Mission Eurasia (then Russian Ministries) and fellow partners in Christ launched missionaries into this spiritually dark region. Today, we continue to advance the Good News of Christ into the most frozen and desolate of places where Christians suffered under the control of a repressive communist regime.

As we train and equip Next Generation leaders for ministry throughout Eurasia, our daunting task to reach the unreached remains.

Right now, there are **6,671 unreached people groups in the world — and more than 300 of them live in the former Soviet Union, where Mission Eurasia focuses its ministry**. This means there are a staggering 93 million people that we are working to reach with the gospel: the Kalmyk in Kalmykia, the vast North Caucasus region, the Udi people in Azerbaijan, the Roma (Gypsy) people in Ukraine, and the Tatars and various groups in Arctic Siberia and beyond.

“There are hundreds of thousands of people with little or no access to the gospel of Christ in the former Soviet Union (called Eurasia),” says Don Parsons, Mission Eurasia’s director for unreached people groups. “They probably don’t know where to find a church. Most don’t even know a single Christ follower

or have heard the name of Jesus.”

Mission Eurasia remains “committed to inspire, mobilize, and equip the Next Generation of leaders to mobilize national churches in order to cross borders and cultures and preach the gospel of the Kingdom to all people groups living in post-Soviet nations,” Parsons says.

Thank you for your investment in our ministry among those who are hearing the gospel for the first time!

Navigating the roads of Siberia can be brutal — both physically and spiritually. In neighboring Russian republics like Tuva and Buryatia, located in central and eastern Siberia along the Mongolian border, you’ll find unforgiving, rugged terrain, ice-covered rivers that stretch into the horizon, extreme cold — and also coldness to the gospel — but hearts are warming to Christ as our ministry pushes forward.

Outreach in Buryatia

Every week, a team of Christian Buryat missionaries travel to remote villages and towns on broken roads in the autonomous region of Buryatia. The Buryat remain Siberia’s largest Buddhist group. Many of them put their faith in syncretism, Buddhism, and various pagan beliefs. They are believed to be descended from Mongols who moved north to escape the rule of

the Mongol empire. Russians arrived in Siberia in the 17th century but didn’t have much of an impact on Buryat culture until the rise of communism in the 20th century. Traditionally nomadic herdsman, the Western Buryats have largely abandoned their nomadic lifestyle and have settled in villages and survived on farming, which they learned from the Russians. They practice a shamanistic religion called Burkhanism that focuses on the spirit world — oracles, sorcery, mediums, and astrology. The Eastern Buryats remain nomadic cattle herders that live in traditional round felt tents or yurts. Those that live in the city are often highly educated with good paying jobs.

While sharing the hope of Christ, our team and ministry partners are handing out gospel booklets, New Testaments, and our popular Good News Prayer Guide (Molitvoslov). The work is growing.

A local pastor and Mission Eurasia partner has seen his church’s membership go up from 35 to 110 people and they’ve started a new church plant. About 40% of those who attend this new church have been reached through street evangelism and house-to-house visits, and they contribute 20% of their budget toward evangelism and reaching more young, local Buryats.

Huge vision, rough roads, big needs

The difficult travel conditions have taken their toll on the team’s ministry vehicle in this region. It nearly tipped over twice during a recent trip and the team needs about \$20,000 to purchase a more durable

used SUV that can handle the unstable roads. This will allow them to reach the Buryats, the Soyots to the south, and the Evenks to the north. While the Buryats nominally adhere to Buddhism and a mix of other pagan beliefs, the Soyots and Evenks are mostly animists who worship nature.

Our missionary teams are reaching the younger generations. They recently reported seven new young Christians who have joined a church and are growing in their faith.

