

Kungurtug

With the Gospel to the Ends of the Earth

Jim Capaldo

I get an adrenaline rush when I think about reaching places that have never heard the gospel. To actually get to do it was an unbelievable experience!

That's the story of our Tribe 49: Bible distribution expedition to the unreached region of Kungurtug, Republic of Tuva, Siberian Russia. It was a little like living in the New Testament ...

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news of good things!" Romans 10:15



Our team of 12 (eight expatriates and four Tuvan believers) left the capital city of Kyzyl headed for the wilds of Kungurtug in a Russian monster truck called an "Ural" (oo-ral). We loaded 500 Tuvan New Testaments, 2,000 Tuvan evangelistic tracts, ourselves and our gear for two weeks into the back of this beast on wheels.

For about 300 miles there were literally no roads. We scaled 10,500-foot mountain passes and, when we descended, glacial rivers became our roads. For 28 hours we churned

through the Tuvan wilderness, acquiring new bruises as we bounced along. Finally, we arrived.

"And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city." Matthew 10:11



Our group was prepared to live in tents, yet God provided a "man of peace." Dalai, the driver of our monster, warmly invited our whole team to hole up at his place during our entire stay in Kungurtug. Dalai's home became our distribution base camp.

"And you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake ... But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are



to say." Matthew 10:18-19

The Kungurtug region of Tuva includes an archeological dig of an 8th century Uigur fortress called "Por Bajin" (Clay House). We were expected to visit this crown jewel, and we were happy to comply. Our visit was documented on video for a nationwide news broadcast. We

were also promptly reported to the FSB (the new KGB) who arrived by helicopter to interrogate us. Our entire team was placed under house arrest for having come to a prohibited border region without special documentation.

Actually we had fulfilled all legal requirements before visiting the fortress. Nevertheless, we were questioned over 20 hours by both the FSB and Russian Immigration Services and threatened with over \$100,000 in fines. We were released to return to Kyzyl and finally, three weeks later, all the charges were dropped!

Meanwhile, our Tuvan co-laborers, all Russian citizens with full religious freedom, were ready to stay in the area until the last Scriptures and tracts were distributed, even if it meant missing their ride back to their families in Kyzyl. In the end, two of them stayed to give out the remaining Scriptures. The rest of us loaded the Ural and started back to Kyzyl, distributing another 150 New Testaments to Tuvan nomads on the way.

To God's glory, our Scripture distribution expedition was accomplished. The people of Kungurtug accepted the Word of God with open hearts and arms for the first time in history!

We are planning to return this fall and pray that the Lord of the Harvest may draw many to Himself. We long to see many come to faith in Christ and a church to form that will bring powerful transformation to the whole community.

