

It is never too late in life to experience His love for you.

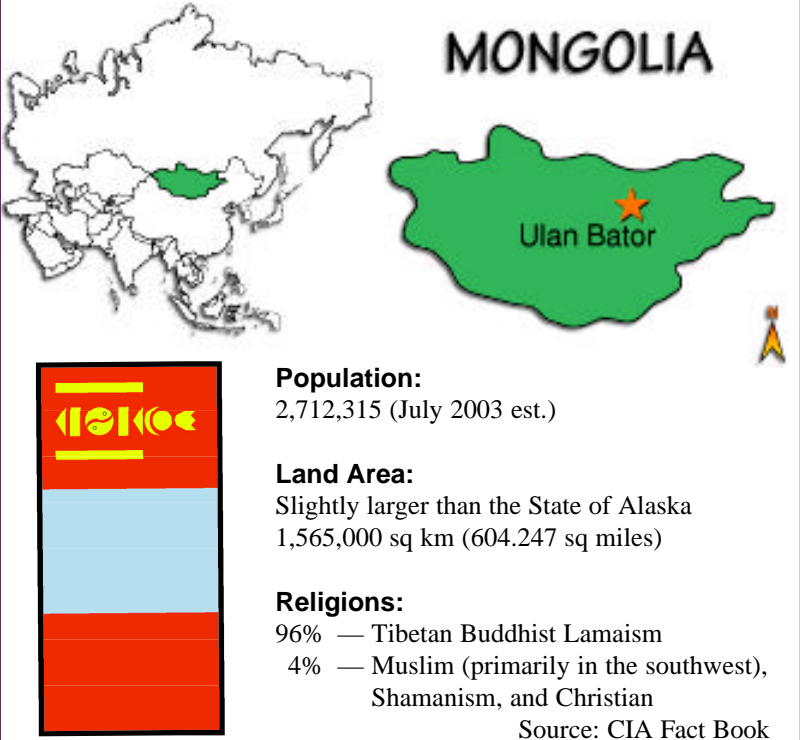
It is never too late to see Him work in your life in a personal way. It is worth it—even worth the uncomfortable stretching that you get when God requires more from you than what you think you are capable of giving. You don't have to go to Mongolia to be challenged. You just have to be willing to follow Him. If you don't know where to start, start by asking Him where to start. If you are quiet and listen, you'll know and hear His answer. Try it. He can hardly wait to talk to you.

Report on Mongolia

I went to Mongolia because I know that God had spoken to my heart to do so. In many ways, I still don't know why. In some ways, I do. In three short weeks, I was blessed, stretched, tested and...best of all, actually grew. I came back a changed man of God. There were many personal internal challenges going on. There were a couple of days that I wanted out and wanted out now. This was especially true the first week in the Orkhon Valley while going through some culture shock.

These were some of the challenges beyond what I really wanted to experience. I am no hero—just one of God's kids. He asked me to do something and I was willing and obedient to do it.

It turned out to be an advanced course in knowing that He hears our prayers and responds to them. At times He answered my prayers so rapidly and effectively it was almost hard to believe. He will do this for you too, if you ask and believe in Him.



The image contains a map of Mongolia and its national flag. The map shows Mongolia's location in East Asia, with a green star marking the capital, Ulan Bator. The flag is shown as a vertical rectangle with a red top and bottom section and a light blue middle section, with yellow and white symbols in the top red section.

MONGOLIA

Ulan Bator

Population:
2,712,315 (July 2003 est.)

Land Area:
Slightly larger than the State of Alaska
1,565,000 sq km (604,247 sq miles)

Religions:
96% — Tibetan Buddhist Lamaism
4% — Muslim (primarily in the southwest), Shamanism, and Christian

Source: CIA Fact Book



It isn't like the BMW I used to have, but it's a motorcycle. There in that rugged terrain, Valodia kept his bike totally spotless.

The Trip's Mission

The purpose of the trip was to determine effective ways to reach the Mongolian nomadic tribes with the Gospel. Reaching this group is going to be an ongoing challenge for many reasons since they base the movement of their home sites on the seasons and other variables. So, the challenge is not only how do you reach them with the Gospel; but also how to disciple them once they are saved. We gathered enough information on this first trip to start doing serious research on how to explore or implement feasible ideas. The Lord provided some great contacts with other missionaries working in Mongolia, as well. Further contact and coordination with them will provide a starting point.

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Well Which TV Show Was It?

In my e-mail “*Mongolia, Overview Part I*,” I alluded to popular television shows from which this trip could have scripted: (A) Survivor Mongolia, (B) Big Brother, (C) Little Ger (House) on the Prairie, or (D) All of the above. If you voted for “D”, you got the confetti and resounding “hoorahs”.

Survivor Mongolia

Just like the TV show, “Survivor” in the title sets the stage.

Here are some of the reasons:

- ▶ We were in the middle of no where.
- ▶ We had only a limited amount of food and supplies.
- ▶ We had no real transportation except by foot.
(The nearest “village” was about fifteen miles away.)



Pumping and purifying water was a daily task.

Unlike the TV show, we didn’t have a production crew of a few hundred people and the knowledge that there were facilities a few miles away that were available in an emergency. We were basically on our own and trusting God.

Never Enough Water. Every evening at dusk, the nomadic kids took the water cart down to the river to fill up a plastic barrel. The problem was that 20 gallons of water didn’t sustain ten people cooking, cleaning and drinking. During the evening the barrel was always nearly empty and the bottom filled with the dregs of dirt and sand. Getting more water during the day was impossible since the bull that pulls the cart was out on the range until dusk. The river was about three quarters of a mile away and we didn’t have additional buckets or pails to transport water back to the camp if we did hike it. Most of the time, to take some of the pressure off the camp water supply; I just went down to the river. There I processed my water with my trusty little backpacking water purifier and an extra one liter Platypus bottle.

No Showers. That was okay, we shared “bathing facilities” or should I say just a good sized river. You didn’t mind sharing the river with your fellow team members of any gender. It was of course, all proper. How do you take a bath with your cloths on? The people in India have figured it out. We have all seen them in the River Gangees on National Geographic.

Sharing the river with the cows, horses, sheep and goats bothered you at first. However, you quickly learn to look up stream as far as you can to see if they are in the water “bathing” or whatever. Admittedly, it is a little disturbing to see a cow patty floating by you when attempting to “clean” up. You wish the animals could have learned not to pee in the pool. Within a couple of days, it doesn’t matter. I looked forward to getting “clean” or at least wet and cooling off at the same time. You don’t think about the water quality. The EPA is no where to be seen. It is something akin to blessing your food. You just pray that nothing gets on you or in you. Enough said.

Laundry Sans Maytag. It is obvious that you can’t bring three weeks worth of cloths with you. It is even more obvious that you can’t bring three weeks worth of winter and summer cloths with you. The weather in Mongolia during this time of year can be anything and everything. Flexibility and layering are the operative words. We all brought about a weeks worth of cloths that mixed and matched (or not). It was all utilitarian. We purchased some plastic tubs before we left Ulaan Bataar. They would work as wash tubs, food processing and anything else we needed. So, on a regular basis, it was down to the river or creek to do laundry. Nothing truly got clean; but psychologically it made you feel better.



“Road? What road?”



Edith doing food prep on the floor.



Watching the flocks on horseback.

No Toilets. In the Orkhon Valley (about 125 feet from our camp), all we had was a not deep enough slit trench with a couple of boards over it. Privacy? What privacy. The three-foot tall plastic sheeting covered your left, right and backside while you squatted down; but when you stood up, it was another matter. It wasn't a pretty picture. Even a Porta-Potty would have been luxurious. Any thought about using it for a library was out of the question. The mosquitoes and flies already claimed the area and anybody in their territory. You know you can get stung in the most unusual and awkward places. Tired of the "official camp restroom," you could go out in the woods, except there aren't any. Woods that is... or brush tall enough to get behind for miles around. Unless you were in the higher elevations in the forest, you could see anything and everything that moved for miles around. It was amazing. This is great for a shepherd; but a little tough when you are trying to find some privacy.

Big Brother

In one sense, it was Big Brother for nearly all of the three weeks. The day to day challenges of being in a Fourth-World country and the constant contact and interaction with ten people that were basically strangers were at times tough. It seemed that everybody was everywhere all the time. There were times that space (both mental and physical) was just not available.

Little Ger (House) On the Prairie

Most of the time, it could have been called "Little House (Ger) On the Prairie." Ger is pronounced "care" with a "G". A Ger is the transportable one-room circular home made of wood and one inch thick felt the Mongolian nomads live in. When they decide to pack up and move to new pastures, it all breaks down and fits on a wagon for easy transport. In the center, there is a circular hole in the roof to allow ventilation and an exit for the cooking/heating stove pipe.



*Doya, the mom, cooking outside.
Note the bucket with the tongs — it holds the cow dung to fuel the fire.*

Some of the nomads cover the ground inside the Ger with cloths or rugs depending on how

much money the family has. Some very poor nomads only have dirt floors. Everyone in the family lives and sleeps in the Ger. Generally, a couple of cots are used as beds and line the walls for the parents. The kids sleep on the floor on and under heavy blankets.

The nomads use cow dung, which is never in short supply, for fuel in the wood stove. Summer ventilation consists of opening the only door. On the opposite side from the door, they lift up the felt wall to create a draft.

The seven women on our team slept in tents. The guys had a small permanent "Out Building" that normally was used for a tack room,

and as a garage for the prized motorcycle by the nomadic family. When we arrived, the building also became the men's bedroom, group living room, game room, kitchen and the coolest place to hide from the sun when the temperatures got above 94 degrees. The flies and mosquitoes also enjoyed the shade and a place to hide from winds that seem to blow most of the time. Two nights before we were to depart for the Village of Tumurbulag, we had a huge dust storm and thunderstorm roll through. It blew all the tents down and just poured rain. For the last two nights we all just jammed either into the Out Building or in the Ger with the nomadic family.



The "old" and the "new".

What Would You Call It?

To call this a “trip” really is an understatement. You take a trip by car, plane or train to the beach for a vacation. I think it was a low budget expedition under the guise of a Fourth-World Mission’s trip. It is the kind of journey that either makes or breaks you from ever thinking you are really capable of being a missionary to a Third- or even Fourth-World country. I have increased respect for those who fulfill their calling to these countries. I also had the blessing to run across a few of these incredible people.

Mark and Karen Binder and Family

One of the missionary families that I was blessed to meet was Mark and Karen Binder and children. They have lived and ministered in Muren, Mongolia for ten years, where they also teach the Mongolians how to improve the quantity and quality of growing their own fresh vegetables. The town officials have recognized their work in this area and are endorsing and encouraging the nationals to learn these techniques.

Support Info for the Binders

Donations can be sent to:
 The Pioneers
 10123 William Carey Drive
 Orlando, FL 32827-6020
 (407) 382-6000

Please include a note indicating the donation is for the Binders in Mongolia. Because of IRS regulations, please do not write their name on the check itself.



Our kitchen counter located in the Out Building.



Karen Binder and family. Husband, Pastor Mark, was ministering in the countryside during our unplanned visit.



*“Would you like some fresh yogurt?”
 Alternative caption:
 “Would you like some fresh flies with your yogurt?”*



One of the many "Ovoos — a place to put your offerings to the gods. The custom is when you come upon an Ovoos, you toss something, anything on it to appease the spirits.

Making cheese...



...the ol’ fashioned way.



We brought some food staples to this family in their one-room log cabin where they live year around. Notice the gaps in walls and floor. Rugs are hung on the wall and laid on the floor to minimize the wind and weather from entering their home.

A Grandmother and Her Grandchildren

Depending on how remote the nomads are in the countryside, they may never go into the local village. They are completely self-sustaining. On one of our treks deeper into the countryside, we met a grandmother who had three of her grandchildren living with her. The children's mother had left her children in the countryside with her mother, so she could seek employment in the nearest town. In some cases this means traveling as far away as four hundred miles. Because of two severe winters, this trend has been on the increase the last few years. The nomadic tribes and this way of life are slowly diminishing. These children had never seen the nearest village, some 25 miles (40 km) away. She had no transportation or the ability to get them there.



The Auto Trader Ad Read:

For sale, Toyota Jeep, new but experienced. Less than 4k miles. One Owner. Radio works. Slight cosmetic damage but needs new windshield. Moving—must sell. Best Offer

Going Fast—A Way of Life

The Mongolians drive like they ride their small horses, flat out. It must be in their DNA. Everywhere we drove, especially in the countryside, they would drive as fast as they possibly could. When we were four-wheeling, the routine was to go as fast as you can, then slam on the brakes just feet before you need to cross a creek, major rut or pick your way through a dry wash. Literally, just a few hours before we arrived at the Orkhon Valley, someone had rolled a nearly new Toyota Jeep.

After the accident, they rolled it back on its wheels and drove it to the nomadic family for safe keeping until arrangements could be made for it to be picked up for repair. It had less than four thousand miles on the odometer.



*“Can you hear me now? Can you hear me now?”
Joy, our interrupter,
attempts to use her cell phone.*

Would I Go Back?

When I got on the outbound flight from Ulaan Bataar, I could have cared less about ever returning to Mongolia — except seven weeks later you realize... The country was incredibly beautiful in such a strange way. More importantly, the people were just as incredible as the country they lived in. They are warm, hospitable, inviting. For me, the children are always the best. The children always touch my life in some way. But these kids were different than kids in any other country I have been in. They were innocent, free, loving, fun, and respectful of elders and their peers. They appreciated anything and everything. They had no “expectations” and were not “owed” anything.

The Mongolian people are a proud and determined people. They have to be—they live in some of the most unforgiving land on the face of the earth. Yet, they still need to hear the salvation message of Jesus Christ. But I can't think of a better people group as a whole that have and will respond to this message and run with it. Much like the way they ride their small horses or drive their jeeps. Once they “catch it” and see the Lord manifest His love for them, they will go flat out to spread the Word.