

# KAZAKHSTAN REPORT

July 2, 2005

Dear family, brethren and friends,

## Trip to Ireland:

Our trip to Ireland now seems like a very distant occurrence. But we are thankful to all our brethren and friends there who went out of your way to show us hospitality and kindness. We even managed a few days' holidays to the west of Ireland while we were there. I did manage to see brethren in Dublin, Cork and Bangor, our only regret was not being able to travel north to Bangor for the congregation to meet our children. We had planned it for the final Sunday of our stay, but Ramash was ill and not up to the journey. Our apologies to the church there. Lord willing, next time.

Officially, we managed to obtain Irish passports for the babies, which will make traveling overseas from Kazakhstan 100 times easier. And I received a "certificate of good character" from the Irish Police force, stating that I have no criminal convictions. This is one of the 23 required documents for me to begin the process of realizing a Kazakh Resident's Permit (a Pink Card). I hope to be able to begin that process this summer and have already contacted a lawyer here in town to help. Those lawyer-fees will amount to about \$3000! (If any brethren or congregation would like to help me with these cost, let me know and I will send you more details.) But with this new religion law that has been passed and the looming crack-down on religious groups, a resident's permit will make my stay here less precarious and will also help towards registering the church with the appropriate bureaucratic bodies.

We have also begun the process for Ramash to acquire Irish citizenship. And that procedure is far, far less complicated.

Practically, I finally arranged for the shipment of the remaining third of my books that were left in Ireland when I moved here. And the shipping company has phoned already to say that the crate is now sitting in a custom's clearance warehouse here in town. That half-ton crate has arrived quicker than most of the 4 lb. packages that we mailed!

## The Lord's Church

We were happy to be at the baptism of Ramash's younger brother Kairat on June 13th, and to listen to his confession of Jesus as Lord before Charles immersed him for the forgiveness of his sins. It now means that they are a complete family of Christians who can encourage and strengthen one another in their faith, united against the influences of the world.

While we were in Ireland in May we received word that two ladies had been baptized. My eyebrow rose a little when I heard. Initially, Kheyash had been talking to two acquaintances of hers and asked Charles to speak further to them about the gospel. After studying with them for a few days, they decided they needed to be baptized. And they have hardly been seen since. In October of 2002 Ramash and I studied with one of these ladies, Saule, and she was convinced then of her need to be saved. And I said then that she needed to come to worship and Bible studies. But she never came, except one night to a gospel meeting in July 2003. In this particular case, her baptism may well have been nothing more than the removal of dirt from the flesh. The seed seems to have fallen somewhere between the road and the rock (Mt.13:19-21).

Lord's Day attendances for the months of May and June averaged 14 and 17 respectively, while for mid-week Bible studies those numbers were a little lower. But those numbers do not tell the whole story. Last Sunday all the faithful Christians were present together, and together with visitors and children, we had our largest ever assembly - twenty souls of those who had made a conscious decision to dedicate some small time to God and to their brethren. Five families in this city who have made the choice to serve the Lord.

## Bible Studies and Contacts:

We continue to drive out to the village every second Friday to study with Jumabai and his family. We were interrupted recently as I my Kazakh driver's license expired and I had to renew it. Thankfully they made a mistake and gave me a 10 year permit, instead of linking it to my visa (which was the usual practice), so I will not have to trouble them until 2015!

Our mid-week class has finished studying the letter to the Ephesians and will start into Philipians next time.

## Personal and Family:

The girls are doing well. Ruthie is talking away at people, who turn and ask what language she is speaking, to which we reply, Ruthsky! Firka is sprouting teeth (almost daily) and has mastered the art of the speed-crawl and has already taken her first steps in stair climbing, literally. Ramash and I have been blessed with our children.

We want to take the time to say thank you to everyone who gave us gifts and presents and baby clothes during or trip home. And for your hospitality, for taking us into your homes, for feeding us, for putting up with us and the babies, for that trip to Connemara, for the day in Killarney, for the barbeques, for all those shopping excursions, for the priceless loan of that car, for all the ways you have shown us love and kindness. We also want to thank the brethren in Dublin for their offer of financial help towards our Ireland trip. I hope we didn't offend any by not taking up that offer, but Ramash and I both feel that you are already sacrificing so much in order to support us in the work here, that your offer would have been an unnecessary burden to pay for a vacation?.

May God bless you all,  
MICHAEL AND RAMASH CONNOLLY  
P.O. BOX 342  
CENTRAL POST OFFICE  
ALMATY 050000  
KAZAKHSTAN



**Kairat after his baptism**