

# KAZAKHSTAN REPORT

May 16, 2006

Dear brethren and friends,

## Gospel Meeting

The church here has recently ended our second gospel meeting of 2006 where we advertised and letterboxed "God's Plan for Kazakhstan". It was a mixed bag. On the one hand the gospel has been preached and the truth has been told and that always is good (Isa.55:10-11). Slava preached his first gospel meeting lessons on two of the evening, and did a really good job considering. He's come a long way in his understanding and organizing a lesson and continues to improve each time. Altogether we had 6 separate visitors, two of whom came as a direct result of our letterboxing and street advertising efforts before the meetings began. Lord willing there will be possibilities to follow up on some of these contacts in the coming weeks. But on the other hand most of the local brethren were too busy to attend. This is interesting in view of those same brethren constantly asking for prayers on their behalf for "the Lord to bless them in their spiritual growth". How they expect to grow spiritually and apart from the word of God is a mystery – perhaps they know themselves, or maybe they are confusing spiritual blessings with something else. Apart from the 'foreign' and 'preacher' element within the congregation, attendance by brethren was second-rate; it must surely have given the visitors that came a lot to think about.

And Slava and I were almost incarcerated, persecuted, bound hand and foot and threatened, for the sake of the gospel. ... almost. And before anyone shouts "religious persecution!" it turns out that the city administration has changed the law regarding posting fliers in public (although to look at the streets, it's hard to tell) and so, it's more a case of "law breakers!" But the ever vigilant local law enforcers / tax collectors are well up on every financially punitive "infringement of administrative codes", and so we were duly fined for our crime 20600 tenge (about \$165 or 132 euro). What was interesting to note was less than 100 yards from the police station a large group of lightly-clad, young ladies were 'working' without fear of "infringing".

## The Lord's Church

Attendances for April were good. We had on average 21 souls each Lord's Day and 18 present for each mid-week Bible study. Charles and Kay have just left for the States this past week and after spending time there and in Russia and Ukraine, Lord willing they will return to us in late July or August, just in time for our next scheduled gospel meeting.

Irena has been continuing to bear fruits in accordance with her repentance and has filed for her divorce. One consequence of the upheaval is that her oldest son, 10yr old Nurbolsyn, has been finding it difficult to adjust and accept the situation. Please keep them all in your prayers for the next few weeks as they struggle. We cannot always shelter people from the consequences of their sin, but we can certainly be here to weep with those who weep.

We have not heard anything from Jumabai in the past few weeks. He returned to the village for the spring sowing and is obviously being kept busy there.

## Studies and Contacts

Studies with Slava have continued and are now in their final stage. We have moved on from study to application, from theory to practice. From now, until he and Lena and Pavel leave at the end of June, they will be getting a little taste of what it means to be a gospel preacher, as he will be preaching and teaching at every assembly and study. Slava recently asked me how long I take to prepare for a class or a sermon and when I told him "about 6-8 hours each time" he was flabbergasted that I would take so long, but hopefully the experience of the next few weeks will help him to see what is involved in doing some of "the work of an evangelist" (2Tim.4:5).

While Charlie is away, the study of the book of Revelation has been halted and in its place, Slava has begun a study of the letter to the Colossians on Wednesday evenings. The Classes for the ladies continues in Kay's absence, in Kay home, with the women taking turns to teach one another.

Our classes with Irena on Tuesdays have been interrupted by her traveling to and from the village to formalize her divorce proceedings and by her having to move house again. We've decided that it may be easier for her to come to our home with her children on Tuesdays. I have heard recently that Tanya, her younger sister, who had been sitting in frequently on those classes has stated her desire to be baptized. Please keep them both in your prayers.

One interesting turn of events, regards Irena's situation, has been the infrequent presence of her husband Nurlan at some of our assemblies. There are indications of repentance on his part; his desire to quit drinking, to be a good example to his children, to work harder for their sakes. Time will show if that repentance is godly or not. But one thing is clear; no one (including Irena) has explained to him Irena's reasons for seeking a divorce, and that to me, seems unfair on him. Please pray for him and us, as we continue to work this out.

## Support

We want to thank the North Terrace church in Tampa, Florida for their one time support as well as the Warner family in Cork, Ireland and the other offer of help we received from Northern Ireland. Your generosity has helped us enormously to assuage our money worries regarding my Resident's Permit application (I still have not heard anything either from the Ministry or from my lawyer regarding our application, but was assured that I wouldn't until about the end of May).

Brotherly,  
Michael and Ramash Connolly

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