

# KAZAKHSTAN REPORT

September 4, 2005

Dear brethren, family and friends,

A number of people have written to ask if we have been affected by the recent change in legislation that I wrote about before, regarding the freedom of religions. And the short answer to your question is "not yet." We have not been affected because we have not "stuck our heads above the parapet." But Lord willing, we will be holding a gospel meeting in the New Year, and that may prove to be an interesting situation. There have been crack-downs in other cities in Kazakhstan, but these seem to be directed toward regulating either maverick Muslim clerics or enforcing emigration laws against Uzbek and Kyrgyz pastors of protestant churches.

Of course, I fall into that second category, officially. And we are hoping to begin the process within the next couple of weeks to obtain a "pink card" (a resident's permit) which will give me the same rights and responsibilities under law as a national. I have been gathering all the requisite documentation and now it looks as if it is up to the lawyers to do their thing, for which I will be charged about \$3000! If there are any congregations or brethren who are willing to help us with this extra burdensome expense, I would really appreciate hearing from you.

## Baptism

On August 18th we baptized Kylsharia in the name of Jesus. She is an older sister of Gulmira, and has been attending regularly since she moved to the city with her 2 teenaged sons from the village. We first met here last winter when we were traveling to Chillik to study with her father Jumabai. She speaks Russian badly, and so there has been the need to use an interpreter with her on most occasions. But it was Kheyash who had been talking to her who showed her the need to begin her life anew in Christ. Incidentally, Kulsharia was the first in her family to leave Islam and seek Christ, back in 1997. And she has influenced a lot of her family to do likewise. Now she has come full circle in completing her obedience to the Lord, due mainly to the influence of those same family members. Please pray for her as she begins her closer walk with God as a child of His.

## The Lord's Church

The recent conversions are making a noticeable impact at assemblies. We had on average 17 souls in attendances at worship for July and August and 12 and 13 respectively for our mid-week studies in Philipians.

One of the disappointments of the summer was the inevitable loss of Kim Ottwell. She had been stationed her in Almaty for the past 3 years and her cheery nature and good humor were appreciated by all. She will now be working in Germany and we pray that the Lord may use her and her skills to help others there.

We were blessed at the end of July by a visit from a brother in Christ from the congregation in Cy-Fairs in Houston, Texas. The brethren in Cy-Fairs have been contributing enormously to my support since the start of my work here in Kazakhstan and it was a pleasure and a blessing to see Bill Olson again and to share some time with him while he was here on business. And of course, we coerced him to preach for the congregation while he was here and all the brethren appreciated his lesson. Hopefully, there will be occasions in the future for him to make the long journey to Almaty.

And right now we are enjoying a visit from Tanya Moskvina from Nizhny Novgorod in Russia. She is the 20yr old daughter of Slava and Elena Moskvina; faithful Christians and members of the Lord's body in that city. Slava wants to be a fulltime preacher of the gospel and he and his family have decided to move to Almaty for a short time in order for him to learn how to do that. They should be here from late October through to May 2006. The idea is that he will work and study with Charles and me to get a better understanding of both the nature of the work involved and how to be a more effective Bible student and teacher. He will then return to Russia to preach there. If you have any literature on effective teacher training, I would appreciate hearing from you.

## Family

Right now the Connolly family is living with no roof over our heads! We are in the middle of phase 2 of our house remodel/reconstruction. We hired a crew of locals to do the work and fired them later on the same day as most of them insisted on drinking while walking about on the roof. And that has left us to do most of the work ourselves, but we are managing and the work is progressing well. It just takes up so much of our time. 2 more years and we should be finished!! maybe!

Of course, the girls are not too happy as most of the yard is filled with building materials and walking (or crawling as the case may be) under a construction crew is not the safest thing in the world. And Ramash is doing a great job cooking and cleaning up daily for us, as well and looking after the girls. I am proud of her and know that the Lord has blessed me with an "excellent wife."

Brotherly,

Michael Connolly

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