

PURE RELIGION

Will They Really Come Again?

In the spring of 2007, Elder Charles and Sister Karen Ball became aware of the great need for a neonatal resuscitation training (NRT) project in Kazakhstan where they were serving as humanitarian missionaries. They spent many hours visiting government offices to find the right contact.

They were finally given the name of Dr. Tamara Chuvakova, chief neonatologist for Kazakhstan and director of the Neonatal Department of the Kazakh State Institute for Physician Improvement. Dr. Tamara is revered in this country of 15 million people. Elder and Sister Ball visited with her to explain the project. She was very interested but wondered why American doctors would want to teach Kazakh doctors and nurses and donate equipment without payment. They explained to her that NRT projects are one of the major humanitarian initiatives of the Church, and the goal is to help save babies who aren't breathing at birth, regardless of where they live.

Dr. Tamara then visited with Church neonatal resuscitation specialists about the possibility of establishing NRT as a national program with donated training and equipment to make the program permanent and successful. When she realized the capability of the Church to help babies there, she began making

contacts and doing everything in her power to prepare the way. Since then, Church-sponsored American doctors have traveled to Kazakhstan each year from 2007 to 2010 and have trained with wonderful Kazakh neonatologists. The result has been 5,000 medical providers trained and many friendships!



This year, Dr. Tamara asked Dr. Mark Underwood, a member of the Church and neonatologist from California, if he would return and help Kazakh neonatologists learn about new technology for treating sick babies. Consequently, Dr. Underwood spent two weeks as a special consultant working with neonatologists from all over Kazakhstan. He strengthened relationships with these wonderful people as he taught them new techniques.

Dr. Tamara expresses her gratitude to the Church on behalf of her country: “Thank you for all you have done for my country. We love you and are so grateful to you. Doctors all over Kazakhstan can hardly believe you would come here to help them. Each year they ask me, ‘Are you sure the Americans will really come again?’ We have learned so much as a result of your love and concern for us. We have made many changes that have helped our babies and families.”



Dr. Tamara and Dr. Zarina



Dr. Mark Underwood training Kazakh doctors