



## DESNA, UKRAINE 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015 Report

### January

Christmas time is always an opportunity to witness and to tell both adults and children about our Savior. This year we had planned several different outreaches, about which I would like to tell you. For this Christmas it was planned to have youth from Chernigiv to come here. And we planned on having these young people spend Christmas in the church, and they could draw closer to the essence of Christmas. We held a Christmas service, where we sang Christmas hymns and also had a sermon. The children read Bible verses and sang songs, and then the youth walked from home to home of our church members and to wish them and their families a good Christmas. They sang songs, gave Christmas cards, in order to leave good memories of Christmas. My children took active part in the holiday, and afterward in visiting people they had never seen in church due to their sicknesses and inability to leave their homes. Having seen how people suffer, our young son began to pray sincerely for one lady. Each evening he reminds us that we need to pray for her, that her feet not hurt anymore. I will say that I am glad that my children's participation in Christmas has changed their relationships with people. I know that visiting people at Christmas gives them and their families a chance to witness for our Lord; also, after this they continue for a long time to talk about and to remember that their relatives are under the influence and care of the church.

### Chemist Day



One of the good events that we held for children was called «Chemist Day.» The essence of this holiday was a chance to tell kids and their parents about our Lord. In order to get them to come, we invited brethren who demonstrate various chemistry experiments and slight of hand tricks. In the intervals between performances we told Bible stories. Everything went great; the kids and their parents participated in the experiments. Everybody was happy and joyful. During the Bible stories everyone listened attentively. We pray that the seed that was sown will sprout and grow. We are certain that the kids will talk about the «Chemist Day» for a long time to come to parents, their friends, about the unforgettable holiday that their Sunday school held for them.

Natasha Gulaya handles the visitation of handicapped folks in our church. This week Natasha visited invalids of our city. She took them Christmas gifts and tried to witness of our Lord. She says she doesn't know why it is, but this time they all received her with joy. People became more open and trusting.

Because, when she visited them before, they were closed and did not eagerly talk with her. We see how God works with these people.

Pray with us:

- 1) For the ministry of our church, that it would grow,
- 2) For the children of the Sunday school, that God would work in their hearts and in their parents,
- 3) For the ministry with handicapped people.



## **February**

### **In darkness I called on the Lord.**

Dear brothers and sisters, I would like to share my joy with you. I have a younger sister. When I came to the Lord, she was 10. She has been to many services with me and has visited Sunday school. God always cared for her and protected her from many problems. But when she grew up, she wanted to live not as the Word of God teaches. For me this was a source of great pain. All I could do was pray.

She fled from any serious conversation with my wife or me. She tried to avoid us. We decided not to pressure her, but to wait for God to place her in just such circumstances in which she would think of Him. She began to live in a common-law marriage with a young officer who served in Desna, and she would hear none of our advice.

After some time, he was transferred to a different city, where they lived for a while. Then the war broke out in eastern Ukraine, and with him being an officer, he was sent to the war zone. And then it began to dawn on her that only God could protect him. When we would telephone, she always asked that we pray for him, and I would say, "You pray too." She replied, "I never stop praying." I recall one day. Like now, I was at church. My sister phoned me and said, "Sergei has been wounded. He is in a military hospital. He just recently regained consciousness, and I still don't know how he is." Sergei had been wounded; his leg was broken so severely that the doctors considered cutting it off. In his other leg there was a lot of shrapnel. My sister traveled to the hospital to take care of Sergei. And every day there was a threat of amputating the leg. Our church did not cease praying for Sergei's health.

During this time my sister became extremely exhausted and ill. She began to lose consciousness and the doctors feared she would go into a coma. The doctors could not explain what was wrong with her, but she got worse. The Devil was not asleep, and through acquaintances he told her that there are grandmothers (shamans) who could cure her. Because she was feeling poorly she succumbed to their tricks. One time a woman who worked in the pharmacy advised her to go to a meeting where a shaman woman casts demons out of people. At that meeting they frightened and intimidated her even more, saying that someone had cursed her and she would die. She got terribly afraid and began to phone me more often to talk with me; she said she did not know how to live. We recommended that she come and live with us a while. For six weeks we talked a lot with her about how the Devil had deceived her. She went to all the church services and attended Bible study groups. On her own, she began to read the Bible and to pray before meals. Even my mother was shocked at these changes, because my sister wanted to live with God. But the most interesting thing is that her guy, Sergei, with whom I had never even talked, but who knew that our church prayed for him, wanted to repent. Well, that is what my sister said, that he declared, "I want to talk with your brother, to repent." I was happy to hear that, even though he hasn't called. But I see how God works in their lives. Recently my sister went home, and said that she will attend church in her own city and will be praying for Sergei, that he will come to God.

I ask you to pray with my family, that the Lord will save Sergei and my sister will grow in the Lord.

## **March 2015**

We pray, but without believing. I caught myself thinking that there is a prayer, in which we do not believe, but we continue to pray.

I want to tell you a story, which happened to us a week ago. My son Daniel, who is 5, made friends outside with a boy named Vitya, who is 8. They struck up a friendship. They were walking along the street. Vitya pulled out a tablet and left it and Daniel outside while he himself went home for an apple. But Daniel proceeded to play in the sand and had nothing to do with the tablet. And when Vitya returned with his apple, the tablet was gone. He began to cry and walked along the street looking for it and sobbing. My wife Sasha ran outside and, after learning that the tablet had been stolen, likewise became upset, because Vitya had left it with Daniel, who had not taken care of it.

During this time, I had been at the church. They showed up and told me this story. I talked to Vitya and could tell that this was a good-hearted boy, and I was just sick that someone had stolen his tablet. That evening at church we had our Bible study group, and I told about this situation and suggested we pray that God would help get the tablet back. However, my mind replied that if a person stole it, then he did not take it in order to return it. And this is a bad circumstance; nobody would return it, but in my soul there was still hope, and so we prayed about it. In the evening before bed we prayed with the children that the tablet would be returned to Vitya. A week passed, and then my daughter told me that Vitya had gotten his tablet back. It turns out that a woman came along and, seeing the tablet there with no one nearby, she picked it up for safe-keeping, but a week passed before she learned who it belonged to. I rejoiced, thinking how good God is. We need not doubt that God can do a miracle. We need simply to pray and to believe that nothing is impossible for God. For our children this was a living example of how God answers prayer. And I am sure that this story will be equally encouraging to our church.

With respect,  
Igor Fomichov