



DESNA, UKRAINE 1st Quarter 2013 Report

January

Dear brothers and sisters, I ask you to pray with us for one young guy, Lesha, who has a desire to change his life. Lesha is 31 years old, is married and has a young daughter, who for two and a half years has needed a father who is not an addict. Lesha tried to build his life without God, and this led him into crime, and he started using drugs, and every day of his life was falling apart. This Sunday at a meeting with his brother, Sergei asked to have the church pray for Lesha, and we prayed, and just when we were coming back with Sam from the BIEM office in Kiev, Sergei called and said that he had spoken with Lesha and he agreed to go for rehabilitation at a Christian center. We thought it was an answer to prayer, we called Vitaly Bilak, who gladly agreed to talk with Lesha and after the call has agreed to accept him at the rehabilitation center in the city of Ternopil. For Lesha's family, this is also increasing testimony of God, because his mom so much shed tears. Even though she is not a Christian, but as people do when life turns hard, she turned to God, and what could be harder in life than when your child is lost and dying? Lesha was lured to this way of life, spending a lot of money for drugs, and thus his family suffered. It started a lot of fights in his family. His mom got into debt, trying in every way to help her son, and did not know what to do. And there is such a hope. She watched as God changed Sergei, who had also used drugs, and God saved Sergei. That was six years ago, and her son has agreed to go to rehab.



Brother Sam Slobodian, hearing about the whole situation, tried to help Lesha and his family and the mission BIEM paid for Lesha's stay in rehab. When I told this to Sergei, he was so grateful, knowing the financial situation of his family. And he asked me if I would tell this to his mom. I said yes. He said that for her it would be evidence of how religious people upheld them. Please pray for God to change the life of Lesha, and that this will be a testimony to his family.

February



This year, winter is not going to leave us. The snow keeps falling. All of Desna is snowbound. They can no longer keep the streets plowed. Elderly people are less likely to go to church, and we are encouraging them to try. The most effective thing is a visit to their home.

Lena (female)

Twenty years ago, she began to suffer symptoms of a disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and every day it gets worse and worse. For several years, she has not been able to leave the house. All day long she stays at home. She has a hobby – she loves to knit. But, the last time

she hurt while doing it, and the worst thing is that her hands do not obey. She does not walk and sometimes cannot even feed herself. She had many questions regarding the Bible, and our sisters Irina and Natasha went to her to hold Bible studies. And Lena understands. But in moments when the pain is worse, and there are days like that when her hands do not work, in these times, she asks the question, Why is this? Why did God let it happen? At one point she accepts, but in the other she just does not agree. We pray for each meeting, her condition, and see how God answers our prayers. It has happened more than once that at the meeting we prayed, had a visit, and she said that she felt better at the time when the church was praying. We see how God is working in her heart. She said that this is the only spiritual food that she receives. And recently, she decided to tithe to our church. We were encouraged by this; God is working in her heart.

Valentina (a grandma)

At prayer meetings, she keeps praying for our church, and it's so encouraging. She writes poetry, and when she attends the services, it is with our whole heart we listen to her poems. For her, it's now hard to go to meetings, partly from the weather, partly from her health. She is constantly tormented by pain, and she cannot sit. And because of the weather her blood pressure rises. We tried to visit her regularly, to take her some groceries. She is always happy to meet us, and most importantly, she is interested in the life of the church. She tells us how she witnesses to her neighbors. But what encourages me, as a pastor, is that the brothers and sisters of our church provide great joy to these people.

One family, I would like to talk about is Vova and Alyona. I asked Vova if he would visit the elderly, and he brought them food and found out what they need. Vova and his wife visited, prayed with, and encouraged Valentina. She tells me they are two flashlights that produce heat and light. Maybe you are reading this letter, and wondering why is Igor telling about this? I'll tell you: during this snow-covered time, this is our ministry. This is how the church lives. That is how God works in their hearts; He is encouraging and showing the hand of God.

March

This month, we held a youth gathering, based at our church. Our brother Igor came home from a missionary journey, he was three months in Russia. We wanted him to give a presentation of that missionary journey. We decided it would be a good opportunity to invite more young people, who also are on fire to serve our God. A group came from Kiev, and youth also came from Goncharovskiy, plus the youth from the Desna.

Igor (missionary)

He was three months in Russia, worked for our Lord, and came home a different person. We all just cannot get enough of seeing how God changes people. He told us about how God uses him, and he plans to go back to Russia. He talked about his trips to the Gypsies. I thought, «God has called another brother from our church to missions.»

Alex and Victoria

To this service a fellow named Sasha came with the youth from Goncharovskiy. Now he is an officer. At the time when my family came to the ministry in Goncharovskiy, he had just finished school. He was a young man, who behaved like everyone else and was smoking and drinking and not thinking about God. And a girl named Victoria started coming to our group. Her family had experienced much grief. The father was sent to prison for killing her mother. The Mission BIEM many times helped Victoria with clothing, and much more. She began to make friends with Sasha. I remember I was not

very happy. She was interested in God, but he was not. When he was drinking, and hanging out with friends, I told her, Vika, this might last all his life; he can not change. Well, she was not listening, she was in love with him. He entered the Military Institute and then became, well, well-behaved. Vika did not stop witnessing to him. He believed, was baptized, and now they have two children. I really admire what our God is and how He miraculously changes lives. And he blessed Sasha and Vika. And I'm a little ashamed that I did wish for them to split up, although I was thinking about her well-being, and was afraid for her.

Dima (Desna)

At this meeting, Dima told the youth about how much pressure is on him because of what he believes. That since his parents did not understand, they constantly badgered him. And then he enrolled in a school, and he said he could not expect that he would have this kind of pressure, all because of his faith. He says the pressure has increased. Dima asked that we be praying for him.

Also to this youth fellowship came young people from Desna. There were guys who came to the church for the first time, and for them it was a big surprise to see a lot of youth. They looked so suspicious all the time. When we played a game, they did not relax. I worried and prayed that there would be an icebreaker. We had dinner together, I invited the guys to dinner, but they look even more suspicious. However, after dinner, they relaxed and perceived us as friends.

Pray for the ministry of our church.

- 1) The spiritual growth.
- 2) We do not have musicians; ask that God will bring musicians.

Sincerely,
Igor Fomichov