



DESNA, UKRAINE 4th Quarter 2012 Report

October

Dear brothers and sisters, thank you from the church in Desna for your prayers and for your support. Thank you, for by your prayers God is miraculously working and drawing saved ones to the church. I want to tell you how God has used me and our brother Lyosha, in ministry to Him.

In our church, the main day of ministry is Sunday. Almost everyone has Sunday as a day off from work, and we decided that after the meeting, we would not disperse; rather, we would spend the whole day in the church building: talking, preparing a meal, praying, playing the guitar, singing psalms, as well as playing various types of board games. So this Sunday, we decided to get together in the church. In the evening, Lyosha and I had just driven away from the church when we came upon two young men. One we knew. That was Vova, who serves in the Army and visits our church whenever possible, but the other guy we were seeing for the first time. Vova said that they were coming to see us, and that this was his friend Vitaly, who wanted to talk to us. We returned to the church and started heating water to make tea. We began talking. Vitaly said that that day after lunch he was in the military barracks and then began to feel he was not alone. He was attacked by fear, and he even began panting, so much fear came over him. He opened the window, thinking to get fresh air, and suddenly he had a strong desire to go to church and repent. Vova came back from his workday, and Vitaly told him what was happening and that he wanted to repent. Vova offered to take him to church. Lyosha and I told him our personal testimonies and explained the gospel of salvation. Vitaly agreed to pray and accept Jesus into his heart.

However, I was not at peace, because I knew that Vova had never been reconciled to God. And more than once I spoke with Vova about the matter of repentance, but his answer was always, "I'm not ready." I asked him, "Vova, have you resolved the problem with your soul?" and he said, "I'm not ready; I do not consider myself worthy to come to God." We explained to Vova, there is no one worthy, but by the sacrifice of our Lord are we able to come to God. We explained that he would never feel ready, and he should come to God just as he was, for God will be pleased to accept him. He said, "I don't see any reason to wait, I want to repent." This evening, Vitaly and Vova appealed to God in prayer, and repentance. Afterward, Vitaly said, "I feel so calm in my soul. All the fear is gone." Vova said, "For such a long time I've been trying to prepare myself; it was so hard to make this move."

And for brother Lyosha it was a great joy to see the work of our Lord. ☺

Please pray for Vova and Vitaly that God would strengthen them and give them the desire to seek Him.

These guys are in the army. Pray, that they could grow and to testify to other soldiers of our Lord and Savior.

November

“It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” (Luke 15:32)



Dear brothers and sisters, I have in recent months seen sorrow and joy. I have already shared how a friend of mine by the name of Oleg, who for twelve years was taking drugs, sincerely turned to God. One and a half years ago, he came to church, and was for the whole church a great encouragement, and for many people it was a great testimony.

But the devil was not asleep and found a way to knock him from the right path. Oleg worked at a furniture factory. There, he was in good standing with the leadership, and they gave him private orders. And so he began loaded with work, so much so that he didn't have time to come to church, or to fellowship in a small group, and over time we had less and less communication with him. And then the devil, I do not know exactly how, started to lure him back to the old life. Over time, he stopped going to church.

To be honest I just wilted; I was not so good. I could not understand why he went back to the old life. For the whole church, it was a blow. We were trying to communicate with him, but with no result. We had to remove him from our members list, and he lived this life for about six months. We prayed without ceasing in the church about it. I do not know how to explain this, but for some reason it became so hard for me even to call him. And when I did find strength to call, it was obvious he didn't want to listen to me. That made me even more upset. I told him many times that he was destroying himself, but he replied that it wasn't so bad as I was saying. I realized that his sin had blinded him, and his heart was closed.

His mother came to the church to talk to me. She urged me to do something to influence him to change. She and his father worried about him. It was strange to hear this from his mother, because when Oleg did attend church, she was the one who always declared we are cultists. She told him not to go to our church, that we were fanatics. But now she came and asked for support. We prayed for him all the time, and at one point I came home from church, and I had such a desire to call him. I phoned, and he was free. We met and talked a lot, and during that time we had the most sincere conversation. I began to hope that all would be well in his life. Since that day, he has been attending church, and he seeks to deal with those sins that were destroying him. He's like the prodigal son who has returned to God, and to his family. I will say to me it's such a joy to see him praise our God. And he cut off relationships with all the guys who steered him from the right path. And our brother had died but now is found.

On Sunday he and I drove to to talk to one of those guys, but there was a whole car full of these guys there. One had worked with me once, and he said hello, and started inviting me to visit.

Another asked Oleg in his ear, “Do you go to his church”

Oleg said, “Yes”.

“Take me”, that one replied.

Pray for Oleg, that God would strengthen him and use him for His work and for the preaching of the Gospel. I know that his parents saw the difference when he lived with God and when away from God.

December

Dear brothers and sisters, real winter has started here. We are all filled up with snow. Because of the snow, the buses are barely running in Desna. This Sunday, not many people were able to come to the services. The old people have a hard time coming because of snow and ice. We have organized for the elderly a car that can bring them to the meetings. Due to the severe cold, parents are afraid to let children come to Sunday school. But the kids are so fond of the Sunday school, in spite of the cold they beg their parents to let them go to Sunday school. I spoke with one mom. She said her daughter was waiting for Sunday, when she could go to Sunday school.



Alyona Minenok

One of the blessings happening in our church is that one sister has gotten on fire to do spiritual ministry. And with great joy that I can write to you of the joy in my heart. Alyona attended our seminary. She comes from Khartsysk, but then met a man named Vova from our church. They married and after school they came back to Desna. From the beginning, we tried to interest Alyona in service, but it seemed to my mind that she wasn't eager to serve. I had even stopped considering her as a potential Sunday school teacher, and a person who would love ministering, and would with all her heart serve in the church. But I'm not ashamed to admit that I was wrong. God has plans for each person. It took several years, but now Alyona is actively serving in the church and helps all children's ministries, of which we have three. The first is a Sunday school, then nursery, and ministry with the children during the meetings. Yesterday I spoke with the team, and all the leaders of the church to designate Alyona in charge of the Sunday school. She is very happy and very much wanted to do it. Everyone at the church sees how Alyona has grown during this time, as she relates to service. She loves children, and she is a very kind person. Alyona even helps in the music ministry, and others. I say that only God can make such changes in the human heart. Please pray for Alyona, that God would bless her, and that she could do much for the cause of God.



Sasha, 32

Later this month we had a situation. We invited a guy to church. We had invited him many times, and he always refused, but this time he decided to come. But he said he would come for a couple of minutes, but if he didn't care for it, he would leave. We were concerned, but all according to God's will. That particular Sunday, young brother Vova happened to preach. This was his second sermon in our church, and maybe the third one in his whole life. So Sasha showed up on the Sunday when Vova was preaching, and Vova didn't preach delicately. He preached pretty strongly. Well, Sasha, didn't walk out, so we concluded everything was fine. Then we had singing, praising God, prayer, and then someone else preached. After the meeting, I went up to him wondering what he thought about the church (but a little afraid to find out, as any person would), and he said, "You know I liked it. I arrived thinking otherwise. I figured I would give it a couple of minutes, and then leave. I only came because you've been inviting me for so long, but I have no regrets. Sasha is experiencing problems with work, and in his life something strange is happening. Clearly, he needs God, or else the devil will ruin his life very quickly. I ask you to pray for Sasha, that God would give him a sincere repentance.

Vova, 25

In our church, there were two people who were preaching in the church, me and Lyosha Savchuk. Sometimes other brethren too, but mostly us two. Lyosha moved to Chernigov and began to hold services there, leaving me alone as the primary preacher here. I began to think, and I decide to encourage the brothers of our church to participate in the preaching of God's Word. Now brother Vova is trying to preach, but he's nervous. I request prayer that God would bless Vova in preaching the Word of God. I think he has the makings of a decent preacher.

Pray with us:

1) For the children's ministry, that God would bring children to Sunday school, that right from childhood kids' desire will be to please God and to seek Him with all their heart.

2) Our church music ministry is limping along, and for several years I have prayed to God that He would help and bring people who could lead us in praising God. Or that God raise up a person from our midst who is burning for God.

3) Please pray for Sasha. As I wrote this letter, I received a call and was told that he was fired from his job, and I am worried for him. Pray for his salvation.

Sincerely, Igor Fomichov, pastor of the church