



DESNA, UKRAINE 2nd Quarter 2012 Report

April

This month we celebrated the great and joyful day, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We held a solemn service at church. There was a full room of people, and there were guests, as well as new people who had not even once attended our church. The Sunday School department had prepared a dramatic presentation and holiday program. Some children's parents came to see how their child is singing and reciting poems. But one thing struck me most of all: it's two guys whom I had encountered and could tell that they drink, and do not lead a correct way of life. I called them to come into the service, but they started to say that they are ashamed to go to church that way and would come on the next Sunday they will come, but they didn't. One guy who came had come before, but his companion came for the first time. I persuaded them to come in and listen to a sermon. It can be seen how the Devil struggled to keep them from entering the church and with great struggle they entered. On the day before, I had talked about Easter with a soldier who all his life had no idea what the Easter is. I told him the gospel; I invited him to church, but he did not come.



Wrestling - I want to tell you another thing that happened this week. As I previously wrote, a gypsy family started coming to our services. They are living twelve kilometers away from the Desna, in the town of Oster. We have long prayed that God would plant a church there; we even wanted for a missionary to rise up from our church to go there. Our plans have not come to pass, but God saw a different plan. They gypsy father, Vasya, talked to me about baptizing him, and we are waiting for the warm weather so we can baptize him. But the story is not about that; Vasya calls me and says, «Pastor, we need to pray. There is one man who needs our help,» and they invited him to the Bible study. They arrived, I met him; his name is Sergey. He told me about his life, which has been hard. We prayed for him and read him the Bible. He got so fired up, and said that as there had been so many obstacles in his life, but that he was so happy. And said he wants to live with God. But a few days later he wrote a statement to the police that he had been sucked into a cult. Vasya was summoned to the police, and they forbade him to approach Sergey, and he had to explain what had happened.



Vasya was strongly stunned by this. And he was so upset, not knowing what happened. I, too, could not understand. It seemed like everything was fine; he was so sincere, and now this happened. I thought maybe someone had turned him against us.

Pray for Vasya, and his family,. Gypsies do not easily come to God. Their way of life does not allow them. Not long ago, I visited Vasya's home. There were all the relatives, and I had the opportunity to testify, but they looked at me so distrustingly.

Pray for Oster, and for Vasya's family that God would use him.

May

At our Wednesday night meeting in the church, Lyosha Savchuk invited us to participate in the distribution of invitations to an evangelism project, which will be held in Chernihiv. Some of the leaders of our church were able to go, and walk to various institutes and universities in the city of Chernigov and distribute invitations and talk with students. Even though there was rain, we were handing out invitations. With great enthusiasm, we passed out invitations in the street near the university. We talked with students about the

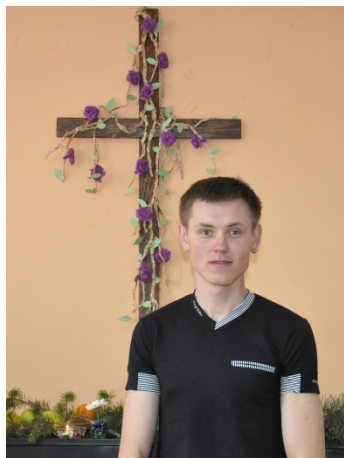
project. And we had planned that after the Americans come we would invite the students to a meeting in Desna and have a picnic on the church property. We prepared, and invited them to Desna. With some we talked and invited them to come to church, where they could play different board games. And then they started to come and socialize, our guys spent time with the Americans, to play different games and just talk. They often ask me when there will be another group. For our church this is a huge help, because thanks to this new guys come into the church. At a picnic near the church came one ethnic Azeri fellow, and we chatted with him for a long time on different topics. I became friendly with him, and he said that he wanted to talk long. Many of the students with whom I spoke were surprised that there is a church, and said that they would like more time to come.

Pray with us:

- 1) For the next camp
- 2) That we could bear witness to God.
- 3) For the church, and for its growth.
- 4) Pray for the youth in Desna, that God will draw them to church, and that they will sincerely repent.
- 5) Please pray that people will be open to the preaching of the gospel.

June

This month we have great joy in the church: we baptized four men, and they have their own stories:



Sergey, 23 years. He lives in Goncharivske and attends church in Desna.

The first time I met him was in 2004, when he moved to live in Goncharivske. Sasha Petrenko and I organized a soccer club and Sergey came to play soccer. He was a goalkeeper. I invited him many times to the Bible study, but he did not come. However, he came to the camp, where he could hear preaching at the campfire and heard Christian songs, but I did not see where he has any interest in God or the Bible. But when he went to Chernigiv, he was invited to the group; he came and he liked it. After his studies he returned home to Goncharivske, where he continued to attend Bible study. Eight years after our first meeting, he was baptized. This is a great joy; this year he took an active part in the landmark children's camps, and with great diligence speaks of God to all people and he invited friends to his baptism.

Uncle Volodya.

I met Volodya more than eight years ago, I heard from his son that his father was not very happy that he goes to the Bible study and tried to hinder that, but something happened. Instead, he and his wife ended up believing. Volodya suffered from alcohol and because of it was expelled from the army. Then he tried not to drink but couldn't keep it up. Once I came to preach at the church in Desna when I still carried on the ministry Goncharivske, and after the service I was approached by Volodya. He said, Vitaly Sychev advised him to talk to me, that I could help him because I knew about addicted people. Volodya said that I do not believe that you could help me because you're so young. I was confused, seeing that he was a proud man who will not accept my words seriously. I prayed inside myself and we talked quite deeply. We prayed; that was the beginning of our friendship. After that it was all different, and he saw how God knocked at his heart. He attended a Bible study meeting.



Volodya was involved in the repair of the church building, and he said that for him it was a great testimony of how the group came from the U.S. and worked for the church. Volodya had long been thinking about baptism. His family prayed for him, and then came the moment.

Vasily (an ethnic Gypsy).



He came to our church six months ago. He had just been freed from prison, and came home to his wife in the town of Oster. His brothers advised him to visit our church, and he liked it and he began attending our church. He put his faith in the Lord while in the prison. God revealed Himself to him there. As he sat in the prison and thought a lot, he thought that he no longer wanted to live as he used to do. He wanted to live properly and honestly and did not want to go back to a life of sin. When he was released, he began to experience temptations to return to the gangster life, but he remained faithful and did not yield. He always invites relatives to services, but you can see that they are not

happy. They enjoy a different lifestyle. Before baptism, Vasily overcame fears; God has strengthened, we prayed. On the eve of the baptism, his wife was ill, even had a temperature of forty [Celcius], but after the baptism she got better.

Vera (50 years).

I know her son well. I have often spoken to him about God, and invited him to meetings, but he did not come. His sister is in prison, and there she came to believe has become a leader and works and brings the Word of God to prisoners. She always writes in letters, that her brother Alex should come to the services, but all he has done is to tell me about it. And then his mother, Vera came to a service and said she had repented and wanted to be part of our church. We are glad that God is working; she smoked for thirty years, drank heavily and cursed, but after repentance quit smoking. She was a different person, all her relatives noticed the change. So God touched her heart and changed her life.



Please pray:

- 1) For Volodya, that will be strengthened in God.
- 2) For Sergey, that God will show him what to do next; he thought to enter the seminary.
- 3) For Vasily. It is not easy to live and preach among the Gypsies. I pray for his spiritual condition, and that his family would come to God.
- 4) For Vera and her family That they will believe.

Sincerely,
Igor Fomichov