



The Petrenkos 4th Quarter Report, 2018

October

Greetings to you, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ!

We would like to share some news with you. First of all, we took part in the All-Ukraine Floor Hockey tournament. When we arrived in Boryspil, we were well met there, and they showed us hospitality. We were ready for our first game, and sat waiting for our turn, when all of a sudden the guys heard a familiar, encouraging voice behind their backs. When they turned, they saw our own Vitaly Nikolayevich (the mayor of Goncharovsk), who had come to cheer for us! For the players and me, it was an encouragement that even the mayor of our town, Vitaly Nikolayevich, had come to watch our game and to cheer on our team.



So then it was time to get onto the floor, a very exciting moment. Unfortunately, we lost that game. The guys were dispirited, both physically and mentally. So the time for which we waited so long had come, but we did not think this game would bring us so much frustration. We returned to the hotel, and everyone discussed the game we had lost. I was looking for mistakes of my own and wondering what I'd done wrong; why had the guys lost? But I also knew that we had a second game that we could win. However, before that could happen the guys had to be lifted up somehow, and coaches from other teams gave me good advice on how to encourage the boys, for which I thank them!

The time came for our second game. We stood in the hall, and I said to the boys, "Let's pray for victory in this match," and the boys and I prayed for a win. The boys won! Praise God! Our spirits were high! In one and the same day, we experienced being conquered and being victors; however, the second feeling is more enjoyable. 😊

The second day rolled around, and we lost. ☹️ We were all downhearted and returned to the hotel practically in silence. In sports, that's the way it goes—someone loses.

Conclusions:

1. We should never overestimate our capabilities nor underestimate our opponent.
2. There await us an uneasy pathway, filled with many hours of training, plus more losses and more wins.
3. It's better to play than not to play.
4. Not everyone can enjoy sudden success.
5. Achievements require efforts.
6. We need to learn how to function as a united team.
7. We also need to learn to respect others.
8. And we must never forget to thank God for the chances He has given us to play!

At the end of November there will be another tournament in which we would like to participate. If God gives the opportunity, then we'll go!

The second thing I'd like to share is how, after the game, there arose a need to talk to the players' parents. I decided to gather all the parents and to get better acquainted with them and to discuss our plans for the future, in which I could share my own vision. All the parents came, and we had an enjoyable talk. I told them about the achievements of their children and plans for future games. We also talked about the cost of each tournament, and it is 10,000 hryvnia [\$365]. I raised the question of whether the parents would like for their boys to travel to competitions. They replied "Yes," and they said that, to the degree they could, they would assist with the finances for this. I was glad to hear this, since I'd grown tired of constantly wondering where I could ask for money in order for the team to play.

In addition, probably the brightest moment in that evening was when someone raised the question of why I'm involved with the boys at all. The parents do not pay me any sort of salary, so for them it was an important question. For me, this was a good opportunity to share my testimony. I recounted how, like them, I had grown up in a small town where no one took the time to teach me proper principles, and this had left negative effects on me. I told those parents that I'm sharing with their children proper truths, which are written in the Bible, and only those truths are able to change a person. In case they were curious, I invited them to come and to listen to what their kids and I discussed during the Bible studies.

The parents know that I'm a believer. We've been involved in this sport for a long while already, and only now is fruit beginning to be seen. Please pray for our team and for this ministry. Pray that God would, indeed, help me to use this sport as a tool to bring reconciliation between Christ and these boys and their parents.

That's all we have to report this time. Please pray with us for Goncharovsk, and may God continue to work in people here through us.

November



Greetings to you, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ!

We would like to share with you some of what God has done in this month. First of all, let me tell you about an elderly man whom my wife Ira and Vika visit. His name is Eugene Alekseevich. He was once a pilot, and he grew up and lived in communist times, when the topic of God was forbidden, especially when you were an officer. He has told much of interest concerning his youth, and the various places

where he served, and about how to this day he doesn't stop dreaming of soaring into the sky in an airplane. But of course, it's difficult for him because he doesn't even get outside much due to the condition of his health. Yet, with every visit, his heart draws closer and closer to God. During the first meetings, he thought about God as if He was just a legend.

At the current time, he realizes that God is real. However, he recently ended up in the hospital and was in bad shape. When we suggested reconciling with God, he whispered, "What do He and I have to be reconciled about? We've never quarreled."

All the same, God is working in him, and we are praying (and we ask you to pray) for Eugene, that God will continue to work in him through the Holy Spirit.



Furthermore, God is blessing the ongoing cooking meetings, at which girls not only learn how to cook, but also read the Bible together. There have also been blessings for which we asked God. This month we acquired for the cooking gatherings a portable hotplate, which expanded the opportunities for food preparation. For the girls, it's been very interesting to participate in such culinary-Bible study meetings. We hope that eventually this ministry will bring forth fruit.

Also, it's a great blessing to us that the BIEM mission has helped us to rent a location in the House of Officers building. The establishment greatly raised the amount of the rent, and we were no longer capable of paying the rent for that location. But praise God! He has resolved this matter, and we can continue meeting there: Sunday school, cooking and Bible studies, and

also floor hockey meetings. So, as they say, there was joy over the ministry this month!

That's a little about how our month has been. Thank you for all of you who actively participate with us in ministry in Goncharovsk. May the Lord bless each of you!

Please continue to pray and to be concerned for the ministry in Goncharovsk.

December

Hello, dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ! Allow me to share with you some last news for this year.

God continues to work in people in Goncharovsk this month. He led a new person to the church. Her name is Sveta, and she suffers from alcoholism. They took her to see a "babka," which is a kind of witch who supposedly helps people. But after visiting her, Sveta began feeling very ill. As she retold it later, Satan was mocking her. Someone invited her to come to church, and she has been to services twice.

Sveta is the daughter of a third marriage, of brother Aleksei, who allows us to use his apartment for ministry. We talked with her after the service, and her heart felt lighter after having been to church. She needs our joint prayers, since she is married and her husband also drinks. And in general, that God will continue to work in Sveta and draw her to Himself.

In addition, this month God blessed us with humanitarian aid in the form of clothing. We took it to the future church building in Smolin, and it is already serving to glorify God. We invited people who are in need of clothing to drop by there and allowed them to choose something they really needed. Those people were thankful to God for His concern for them. Some of them have not been able to buy new clothing for themselves for years due to the low amount of their salaries and pensions. So, as they say, this help came right on time, and to



God's glory. We also want to make some available to the villagers who live right there in Smolin, and we're praying for God to give wisdom in how to do that, since the people there are a bit closed and timid about accepting anything. Anyway, as soon as can be arranged, we have plans to distribute clothing among the residents of Smolin, too.

So, that's a little about how things have been this month. Thank you to each of you who has supported however you could this ministry in Goncharovsk this year, and we hope that next year God will give us many more joyful moments connected with His work through us.

May God also bless you and your church with His abundant blessings.

Your friends in Christ,

Sasha and Ira Petrenko