



The Fomichovs in Desna, Ukraine

3rd Quarter Report, 2020

July

*“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28*

I'd like to ask you to pray for two men, who I'll describe below. They need our prayerful support in order to be confirmed in the Lord and to settle into the church.

Zhenya

I've known Zhenya's family for a long time, and things haven't been easy for him. Early in his childhood his mother died. The father raised the kids. The father was in the military and was assistant to the commander. More specifically, he organized banquets for various military commanders. He was always on duty, and the little ones were left to themselves. So that's how it turned out that, from early childhood, Zhenya began to use drugs. For more than 20 years he used them, and for all of his conscious life he was a slave to narcotics and alcohol.



Around 5 years ago, his father committed suicide. He hung himself, and Zhenya was gripped by disappointment and pain. He wanted to smother the pain in his heart with alcohol and drugs. Three years ago, his car crashed, and all of us in the church prayed for him. When he got out of the hospital, I visited him and told him how we'd all been in prayer for him. Thus began his acquaintance with the Lord. After this, Sasha Kapshuk fought for him, taking him to the rehabilitation center, but Zhenya couldn't stay there long and kept leaving. Each time, he sank lower. He understood that his life could end at any moment, because he kept falling into unpleasantness.

So, one day circumstances once again led him to the rehab center, where God gave him true repentance. He began learning how to live in a new way, to establish a new life. He had big debts for his apartment, but now he works and has nearly caught up on those debts. He attends church and wants to grow further in the Lord. He comes to all services and to the studies that we hold at the rehabilitation center. Zhenya shines for the Lord, and for over a year now he has been living a sober life.

We are praying that he will feel as among family in the church, and that he will be part of our Christian family. For many people, Zhenya's life and how God has changed him serve as a huge testimony to the praise of God.

Denis

There is a fate that is similar among teens who live in Desna and who, not understanding it themselves, have become the servants of sin. Denis is a good, calm guy who grew up in a good family. He fell into bad company and began to smoke and to use hard drugs, not understanding where this would lead him in life nor how much evil it would bring.



Many times, he was on the verge of death from overdoses and from serious illness. When he ended up in the hospital and learned that life is very fragile, he was horrified. He tried to drown his fear and anxiety with alcohol and drugs. I ended up speaking with him more than once. He gladly listened, but he couldn't pull free from the claws of sin and go to church. He was invited to the rehabilitation center, where he repented and began to grow in the Lord. Now he is one of the helpers at the center. He wants to serve the Lord and to enjoy a new life and a relationship with the Lord.

For me, the way that God is changing the lives of these two men is a huge testimony. I ask that you pray for them, that God will protect them so they can unite with our church. At the moment, they still feel very uncomfortable, because they spent so many years ruined by drugs and alcohol. They have many complexes and strongholds. We pray for them and give them support, as for a new creation.

God is very good and merciful. If not for the grace of God, where would we be now?

August

In this month, we actively distributed Bibles, both children's Bibles and for adults, for which we thank the BIEM mission with all of our heart. We gave out the first children's Bibles even before we left for summer camp. People from the church took children's Bibles and gave them to their neighbors and relatives that have children or teens in their homes. The Bibles we received from the mission are very special. The kids were overjoyed to receive such Bibles.



After we distributed Bibles to the children in camp, they immediately began to read them. They caught their attention so completely that they didn't want to stop. We had never seen such a reaction from the Bible. It was the same with the youngest teens through the older ones. They were all interested, and they were reading. I couldn't believe it, and my heart overflowed with joy. One boy took a few Bibles and walked along the beach giving them to children who had simply come with their parents. They all rejoiced to get them, since they understood that this children's Bible was a precious gift. This children's Bible is a special find for children. It simply grabs their attention, and they want to read it. We are grateful to BIEM for such an opportunity to distribute Bibles to children.

Pray with us, that children and teens will come to the Lord at a young age.

August *Tent Camp*



Dear brothers and sisters, we are thankful for your prayers, since this year it was difficult to organize a tent camp. We didn't know what to do, since there were difficulties due to the quarantine. Parents were fearful and concerned. Mayors set prohibitions and didn't give their consent. We prayed a lot and asked God to give us the right decision.

But we began to see how God answered, and many children called and asked when the camp would be. We decided to proceed, and we put our hope in the Lord.

We received many unbelieving children who didn't know that Jesus is the Savior. We talked a lot about the Lord and the importance of salvation. On the last day we gave the children an invitation to repent and to invite Jesus into their hearts. It was very evident that God was working and knocking at the hearts of the teens. We can't get over our amazement that so many still don't know or understand why Jesus Christ came.

We talked a lot in small groups and developed some trusting relationships in which we could testify of our Savior. We held services where we explained how Jesus died for our sins and how vital it was to repent and to place faith in Jesus Christ. We learned Christian songs together and held discussions and spiritual topics.

As a prevention measure, we talked about the dangers of alcohol and drugs, for which the parents and city administration expressed special appreciation. We tried to minister and to be good examples to them for Christ. After camp, the parents all expressed as one voice the same thing—that they are thankful that someone is spending quality time with their children and trying to give them an unforgettable time. And we know that, without your support, none of this would've happened. After all, we are coworkers together with the Lord. We taught them how to



pray, and each day we talked about the importance of reconciliation with Jesus Christ. When we gave the invitation to repent; everyone agreed. We were thankful to the Lord for such a response, and we believe that God will finish the work that has begun in their hearts. But we need to remain faithful to Him and to support ministries for our Lord.

Sasha Khlyupka



I got acquainted with Sasha's parents long ago. His home situation isn't easy. His father is a drug user who has used narcotics for many years. Many have tried to witness to him, but his heart is closed to Jesus. I've also talked to Sasha's mother several times about the Lord. What's surprising is that, when they learned that we're holding a camp, they decided to send their boy. In camp, he was very closed, although he tried not to show it. He didn't want to play sports games, and he refused to participate in competitions and relays. I set out to develop a rapport of trust with him, and I succeeded. I testified to him about the Lord, and when I suggested that he pray, he agreed. When he returned home, his grandmother thanked us, noting that he was very impressed by all that he'd experienced in the camp. This was a big testimony for his family.

All of the parents thanked us and were very glad that their kids had been in a Christian camp. We gave the children Bibles that they took home. This, too, is a good testimony to their parents, that the kids themselves can recount what they learned in camp. We ask that you pray together with us that the seeds we planted will grow and bring forth fruit.

September

Dear friends! We thank you for your prayers, and we are praying for you and your families. May God defend and preserve you from all harm. We are continuing to labor and to take the good news of salvation to people while asking God to guide us in His pathway.

This month we had printed 1000 informational booklets that present part of the ministry of the church. Along with our church team, we have distributed them all around Desna. We passed them out to people and told

how the church is doing good and teaching people to live according to the Word of God. We had a lot of interesting discussions.

I had one such conversation while sitting on a bench with two elderly women. They looked at the booklet and got scared. They refused to touch it, saying that they didn't want to be drawn into a cult. I asked them, "Why do you consider me a cult member? You know me, and you know how God changed my life. We lived as neighbors. Or have you forgotten me?"

They said they couldn't remember me. I began to recount about myself. One of them said that she remembers me and said, "You lived in Goncharovsk." I told them that I've lived in Desna for a long time. They said, "Okay, give us one. We'll look it over."

I replied, "Wait. First, why do you consider us a cult? We are a Baptist church officially recognized by the government, and we do much to help people here."

In this way, through personal conversation, they accepted the information about us. They explained that they are afraid of being deceived. After that, we talked with many more people, young and old. Many people were surprised because they didn't know about the work that we do. And we showed them the work that God is doing through our church team. After we'd distributed those booklets, a woman named Sveta with whom I was acquainted came to church. She didn't want to step inside the church. She wanted me to help her and said "I don't know what's happening. My soul hurts. I try to drown out the ache in my soul with alcohol, but it doesn't always help. She asked me to help her.

I said, "God can help you."

She became aggressive and started to recite all of her disappointments in life. We talked a long while. She tried to unbalance me, first swearing and then calming down again, and I had the feeling that she might be possessed by an evil spirit. I understood that the Lord had led her to me. I explained the Gospel to her. She refused to accept the Lord, but as she walked away she said that after this conversation she felt better.



Zoya

We visited this woman at her home and gave her a copy of the New Testament. We shared the Gospel with her and prayed. She was so glad that we showed her some attention. She is very lonely, and she shared with us that she had lived through a lot of losses. She lost her mother when she was still a teen. Her husband was killed during his service in Desna. After the death of her daughter, she suffered a stroke and that affected her legs. We prayed with her and tried to comfort her heart with the Good News.



Nina

When we visited her, Nina received us very warmly, and we talked with her quite a bit. We listened to her; she listened to us. We gave her a New Testament in the Ukrainian language. We also invited her to church. She promised to come, and toward the end she asked how we pray. Brother Pasha said, "Igor will pray right now, and then you'll understand everything."

I prayed for her health, and that God would protect her and fill her life with joy and love. While I prayed, she cried. Afterward she said that every word of the prayer had touched her heart.

We visited many other people whom we wanted to uplift with the words of John 3:16. It's evident that in this world there are many beaten down and lonely people who need the Lord. Pray with us:

1. That God would touch each of those women and save their souls.
2. Pray that God gives us wisdom and the desire to organize ministries for lonely people.
3. Pray for the church to grow and to burn with the desire to serve people.

Respectfully yours, Igor Fomichov