



DESNA & GONCHAROVSK, UKRAINE

4th Quarter 2008 Report

October 2008

Desna

Dear friends!

We are glad to greet you in the love of our Savior Jesus Christ. And we are thanking our Lord that you are our collaborators in ministry, which we are fulfilling for our Lord and Savior.

As we have already written, we had started a Sunday school in Desna. And we are so thankful to our Lord that we have a good team who are working in our Sunday school. One interesting event happened in our Sunday school. The teachers told the kids that they could tell their parents that if they want to come and see what their children are doing here, they can come and observe and ask all the questions they want. One grandmother came. She sat in on the lesson, and we started to chat with her. She said that her grandchildren were always inviting her to come, but she was always saying she busy. And one evening her grandchildren came and said, "Will you go with us to Sunday school?" She answered that she is busy; she wanted to go into the woods to gather mushrooms. She woke up in the morning and was barely out of bed when the children began knocking. She opened door and saw a whole basket full of mushrooms. She explained that her grandchildren had woken up early in the morning and went outside to pick mushrooms, because they wanted their grandmother to go to Sunday school and see what they do there and to meet the teachers. This woman said that she couldn't say no to her grandkids. We sometimes wonder how God uses kids for reaching parents. It is wonderful that these boys worked hard to provide their grandmother with an opportunity to visit the service.

One girl Nastya always attends our Sunday school with her cousin. I know her family. The father is strongly opposed to believers; he thinks that we are just a cult. As I was sharing my testimony with him, he thought that I'm involved in a sect. I was surprised that his daughter is in Sunday school. But recently he met me near the church with his wife, and he said that he called me but my cell phone was turned off. He told that he wanted to talk with me, but not just then. I gave him my new phone number, but he didn't call. I thought he would stop permitting his daughter to come, but praise the Lord she still attends. Nastya's parents are alcoholics, and I wait for her father's call to share my testimony with him.

Pray for:

- 1) Ministry in Desna
- 2) For Nastya's parents, for their repentance and freedom from alcoholism
- 3) For more kids in our Sunday school

November 2008

Desna

We have a big prayer request for you, for our ministry. We ask you to pray for our family, that God gives us wisdom in leading our church. Every day we understand more and more our responsibility, and we want to make right decisions. Now our team is delving into all questions, related to church membership, and we are also working on our church building. I see that many matters haven't been decided, because all questions in our church get decided by our church members' council. And we see that day by day more and more questions arise; it's impossible to gather the church member for every single situation. We want to resolve this problem and suggest to our church to elect a brothers council to be responsible for regularly deciding the church's problems. And if more serious problems come up, that is, matters that deserve our whole church's attention, we will convene church business meeting, only in that case.

We plan in the near future to gather the church body to decide structural questions. And we also plan to conduct a doctrinal study in our church. Brother Oleksei is already preparing materials for the study. Also, we added a new Tuesday night service, and we ask you to pray that this ministry will bring great fruits. We are worrying a little because our church's building is close to the edge of town, and in this season days are short; it gets dark about 5 p.m. And to get there you need to cross a small wooded area. Many women are afraid to cross it, so this is the reason why they aren't going to that service. We also have some elderly people, and it's hard for them to attend this service. For now we've decided to use a car for such people. And we have another prayer request: twelve kilometers from Desna there's a town named Oster without any Baptist church. One family from our church wants to start a ministry there. They came to me and share about their wish. I received it with a joy, because we all know that there's big need for a church. Now we are praying that God will open the door for this ministry.

Please pray:

- 1) For wisdom to our family,
- 2) For unity in our church,
- 3) For our church's spiritual growth,
- 4) For evening service,
- 5) For new ministry in Oster

November 2008

Goncharovsk

Our beloved brothers and sisters, we send you a big greeting from Goncharovsk.

Everything is fine here; we are continuing driving to Goncharovsk, developing the children's ministry, and conducting home Bible studies.

We are glad to have people who are interesting in our work; it encourages us as well, when we know that we are not alone. For about a year my wife Sasha was reminding me again and again that some kids who attend our Sunday school are older than twelve and that it is boring for them to be with younger kids. It causes them to be disobedient, and Sasha began to worry that if we don't organize a group for their age they would stop coming. We decided to pray about this problem, asking God to help us organize a group for older kids. During the last half a year it was not easy for us to coordinate our schedule because the Desna ministry was added to our ministry. God had answered our prayer and we thank Him for it. We decided to hold a Sunday school for teenagers, those older than twelve, each Friday at 5 p.m. Sasha announced at Sunday school that everyone older than twelve is invited to come and allowed to bring their friends. "There will be lots of interesting things for you."

Starting at three o'clock teenagers began to knock our door asking will there really be a teens' Sunday school. It showed us that we are in the right way, and that this ministry is necessary. When we arrived, teens were already waiting for us. For the first meeting we had ten kids. As we were talking and asking them their ages, they proudly answered. There were several boys who were attended for the first time. They asked us if these meetings will be continuing. We answered yes, which made them happy to have their own group. Looking on all these events, we see how God was leading us to this ministry.

The kids want to talk with us. That's why we decided, that each Saturday before Sunday school, those who want to help us are invited to come and help to prepare games and to make sketches. And about five kids are coming steadily; we see how it's making us closer. And interest in a Sunday school is growing. The parents told us that Saturday mornings their kids woke up, and their mothers asked them where are you going? The kids answered, "We're going to Sasha's home to help her." Most parents are glad that we're working with their kids, but some people aren't. They try to slander us. One mother told us that her girl came from school and said that she is not going to go at Sunday school anymore. After her mother asked why not, the daughter answered that her teacher said it is not "our" faith; it is just a cult. This woman said that she would be going to this school and will be talking about it.

I remembered the verse from the Bible, 1 Peter 4:14 and was thinking, "Praise the Lord."

And there are some good changes in group for adults: two sisters joined our group to attend Bible study. And we see it's very interesting for them to study the Bible. This past Thursday one of them brought her husband, who is a retired lieutenant colonel. It's interesting that he came when we were looking at Colossians 2:13-15, which is talking about Christ's work. As we read, I asked, "Is this clear?" He said, "No, can you explain it?" I had to smile and said, "Yes, this is the reason for our meetings." We talked a lot about the Gospel, and I saw that he was thinking. Afterward he invited me to be his guest, and we continued our talk in his apartment. I don't know why he didn't repent, but I know for sure he knows the Truth now.

Please pray:

- 1) For teen's ministry
- 2) Sunday school
- 3) For Bible study for adults

December 2008

Desna

Dear Friends,

I always feel encouraged as I see people getting closer to God and how their life is changing. This month we felt great encouragement because Zhenya, the son of our sister Raya, stopped drinking and began to attend our services. He had been drinking for several years almost without stop, and sister Raya was always asking us to pray for him. She asked me personally to talk to him. I have talked with him and his wife several times. I remember one event, when we had a very serious talk with Zhenya, and that evening Zhenya and his wife repented. At that moment I saw Zhenya's eyes specially changed, and Toma invited Christ into her heart just for Zhenya. However, Zhenya didn't stay away from his bad habit for long, but I prayed for that seed to be growing. The whole church prayed for a spiritual rebirth in Zhenya, and a month ago Zhenya came to a service. During the service I invited Zhenya to the front so that all the church could pray for him. As we prayed, sister Raya was crying because of joy and worrying about her son.

During this time I saw how Zhenya was struggling. Before he stopped drinking, Zhenya came to my home. We talked together, and I said that I'm ready to help him and that if he needs support I'm always open to him. I said that if he feels a temptation to drink, then he can call me and I will pray with him. Zhenya began calling me in the morning and at night and asked me to pray and said he wanted to talk to me. I was disappointed because he was calling after he drank, not before, when he felt tempted. And to be honest, I'm not so happy talking with a drunk person. More than once I have talked with drunks, people who were beating their selves asking for help. But the very next morning they didn't want to hear anything, which continues again and again. I think that you understand what a big encouragement it is to see results and to see God's hand in this process. We talked with Zhenya and from his words I understood that Toma didn't understand anything from our evening talk. Otherwise she didn't like that Zhenya is in relationships with believers. That's why I was surprised that they came together to a Tuesday night service. After the service they wanted to go, but we asked them to stay for cup of tea.

We want to continue enjoying God's work in Zhenya's life. I ask you to pray together for Zhenya and his family.

This Monday I had an interesting talk. It was dark outside. I had just read my Bible and decided to walk before dinner. In the street I met some guys who are into a life of crime. I walked over to them to say hello. They asked me about my life, and one of them called me aside and began to ask about our worship times. He shared that he has a great desire to come. He told me that he understands that everything is temporary, and how bodies are not as important as souls, and that here on the Earth he needed to decide where he will spend eternity. He said that he often remembers my salvation and waking up every Sunday he has a desire to come to a service, but he hadn't enough strength.

As I listened to him, I understood how God is knocking at his heart. He said also that he wants his wife to be closer to God. The most interesting thing is his searching of God, but his life is so deep into crime. In the

course of our talking several of his friends joined, us and to my surprise they agreed and shared their own ideas about God. That evening I didn't want to leave them, and I began to pray that God will enable me to have a Bible study with them. I'm sure that it will be a great testimony for Desna if one of these criminals becomes a believer.

Please pray:

- 1) For Zhenya and his family
- 2) For those guys who lead a criminal lifestyle
- 3) For beginning of Bible study for them

With respect,
Igor Fomichov