



**The Fomichovs
1st Quarter Report 2017**

January

It's the most wonderful time when everyone is preparing for the wonderful holiday of Christmas [January 6 in Ukraine]. During these days our church holds various evangelistic events. We put out a call for all of our members to invite their relatives as guests to witness to them about the Savior.

The children

Thanks to the support of the BIEM mission, we had an opportunity to give Christmas gifts to the children. We noticed that the children from the Sunday school always wait with great joy for Christmas. They know that the Lord is in this holiday; something special would be prepared for them, and it would bring them much happiness.

That's just how it was this year. God worked through BIEM so that the children could have gifts. The most interesting thing is that even children who had previously been in the Sunday school recall that there will be gifts at Christmas time. But we are glad that there is such an occasion to witness to children about our Lord. In addition to the gifts, we were able to give out Children's Bibles, which made the kids very happy, and there's always the possibility the kids will read these Bibles with their parents.

Invalids and widows

On Christmas evening there was a strong cold snap. It was about -20 outside, extremely cold. A number of people got to the service only with difficulty, but others from surrounding villages couldn't get there at all because automobiles were not starting. In the evening we held the service at church, and afterward we divided into two groups. One group went home to prepare a holiday dinner, and the second group took a guitar and went out to visit church members who couldn't come and their relatives to sing and wish them a merry Christmas and to witness about the birth of Christ. This was a great challenge, since it was so bitterly frigid. But, for the sake of witnessing of our Lord, we found the strength to go.

We sang and witnessed. We knocked on the doors of our church members, gave them Christmas greetings, and sang Christmas carols for them. People in other apartments even stepped out to the hallway to call us to come and sing for them too.

They gave us sweets. And when we arrived at the second-floor apartment of one family from our church, we were heard by another member's father, who had never visited our church. He came down the steps to bring us coffee. That was an encouragement to us, that these parents who had never visited the church would associate with us so courteously.

We also visited families of invalids and widows, and for them we created a memorable evening. For them and their relatives, we wanted to create a great witness for the Lord. We wanted to express clearly for them what an amazing holiday this was. In addition, we wanted to encourage these people and let them know that God loves them and cares for them. We had prepared food gifts, and after we greeted them, we offered them packages of grocery items. Some of these people broke into tears. They couldn't express all of their gratitude, but we told them it was all thanks to our Lord.

After the Christmas carols, we all gathered in our home where we could praise our Lord and spend an unforgettable Christmas. We all wanted as deeply as possible to partake in this remarkable event, which happened more than two thousand years ago.

February

Pray with us.

I'd like to ask that you join with us in prayer for one fellow by the name of Igor, and for his family. I've been acquainted with Igor for a long time, since before I came to the Lord. He is a lot younger than I am, but that didn't hinder us from spending time together. To him, I was like a mentor in the criminal world, and I sowed a lot of bad ideas in his head. Before I got saved, we ran around together a lot.

After my conversion to God, he and I lost touch. Occasionally we would run into each other, but we had no deep conversations. Someone always interfered. But years passed, and sin destroyed more and more in his life. Each time when we bumped into each other he would say that he's happy for me, that I'm doing great. But I always told him that God saved me and that my current life is only thanks to Him.

After Christmas he was doing very poorly physically, and by God's mercy he agreed to go to a rehabilitation center. His family encouraged him to do that. For over a month already he's been in a rehab center where he's begun to read the Bible and to pray, and it is evident that God is working in him. And the most wonderful thing – his mother has begun to attend our church. She will not miss a service. We fellowship with her.

We maintain relations, and after the Sunday meeting she asked for a Bible. She said, "I want to read the Bible, and I want my daughter to attend the services, too, but for now it is difficult and there are many obstacles for her." This is the story, but now see such a work taking place in this family. I ask that you pray that God would save them and they could be established in the faith. I believe that God has a special plan for Igor; many guys die from drugs and alcohol. For them Igor's life can

serve as a great testimony. I know that many times Igor hung in the balance of death, and only by the grace of God did He let him alive, so we hope to see him serving God's kingdom.

March

A Long Road

Each person walks his own pathway to God, and oftentimes this path is not easy. That is how it was with some people I want to tell you about. In my previous letter I told you about a fellow named Igor, and about how God saved him and now he is at a rehabilitation center, and his family has begun to pray to God. Men from our church went with me to visit this rehab center, where we were able to spend some time with Igor to pray for him and encourage him, and to let him know that when he gets out of rehab there is a church that is constantly praying for him and his family. For us it was a great encouragement to listen to him telling about how God has been showing him the total pointlessness of all his sinful life. His mother visits the church every Sunday and continually requests prayer for him. For me as pastor, it's a big encouragement when brothers from our church want to reach out on their own to support him and encourage him as they seek occasions to visit him.

But the most interesting thing is his friend Sereyozha, who has tried many methods to free himself from narcotics but has given up. Sereyozha advised Igor not to go to the rehabilitation center. He said, "It won't help you one bit. I've been in hospitals and various centers, and they didn't help me, and they can't do anything to help you." After we had visited Igor, he heard about it, and brother Pasha talked to him. Sereyozha said, "I want to come to your service", and this Wednesday he came to our evening service. This was a special sign to us of how God is working in Igor's life and in the life of his friends. After learning of this, Igor's mother was amazed. She knew how strongly Sereyozha had urged Igor not to go to the rehab center.

Slavik

Let me tell you another story about another acquaintance of mine, whom God has touched. When I got saved, one fellow by the name of Slavik began to attend church with his family. Slavik was addicted to drugs, and his father drank a lot. I was only a new believer at the time, but I recall how the pastor instructed his father that if he did not forsake alcohol, it would kill him. That's exactly what happened. His father died from vodka. And his mother and Slavik ceased going to church. And no matter how much we invited them to come, they always had excuses. Slavik had a difficult path; during these years he spent time in prison, and many times he was a hair's breadth from death. At last he was persuaded to enter a rehabilitation center, where God touched him. He came to Desna on business, and the first thing he did was to come to our home group, where he could testify to the church of his salvation.

Slavik told then why he and his mother stopped attending church after the death of his father. His mother worked in a store, which was next door to the home of an Orthodox priest. His mother became friends with that man's wife, and after the death of his father they went to the priest to ask him to perform the funeral. The priest refused their request, but said, "I will do the funeral on one condition: if you give your word that you will no longer visit that cult [how he referred to the Baptist church]."

They had only recently begun to draw closer to God, and in their grief they promised that they would not come to our church. And for 16 years they did not come. They kept their word to that priest. Slavik endured a lot during those 16 years. At last, not knowing how to rid himself of his addiction to drugs, he called on God for help. And God heard him; now he openly declares his faith in God. His mother does not really go to church, but she is glad that God has touched Slavik.

Zakhar

It was a great joy for me when a young family began attending our church. It's already been quite a long time since I was asked to chat with a man by the name of Zakhar, so that I could talk to him about God and influence his life. He wasn't much interested in connecting; he was drawn to a different lifestyle. However, in recent times he has begun to use narcotics more frequently and could no longer stop himself. He quarreled with his wife, and quite quickly his family began to fall apart. His aunt prayed for him and asked that we pray, too. Yet, Zakhar resisted with all his might. But recently God began to show him that such a life would never lead to anything good. And so he mustered his resolve and came to a service, where our brothers received him with great joy. We invited them to visit our home, where I could get better acquainted with his family. It is a great joy for our church to see how God works in lives of those who come to Him.

Pray with us:

1. For Igor and his family
2. For Slavic and his family
3. For Zakhar and his family

Sincerely,
Igor Fomichov