



The Fomichovs in Desna, Ukraine

1st Quarter Report, 2020

January

The Church in Desna

The church in Desna was planted with the support of the BIEM mission, and now this church holds services every Sunday. In the church we have several different categories of people.

The first category is former members of the military and other people who were somehow connected with the army. In the church we also have the family members of soldiers and their relatives. But we also have coming some active servicemen who serve in Desna, plus some who come for a limited time for training, because Desna is a training center for servicemen. And here, this past month we held services, which were visited by many servicemen who have come here for training. Unbelievers who had never before stepped inside a church also came. And thanks to the BIEM mission, this church was founded and continues to spread the Gospel to unbelievers.

There are no coincidences

This past Sunday, two women who came to church are unbelievers; they study in the military institute. They came to Desna for their practice. At first I didn't realize this was their first time in a church. They behaved quietly and confidently. When I asked whether they attended church anywhere, they said "No." They were there for the service, and after the service we had a meal to celebrate my birthday, and we invited them to stay. They did stay and spent that day with us.

When the two women prepared to leave, they wanted to tell me something. They said they had never known that such churches exist. They were impressed by the atmosphere, and the things we said about God during the service were all easy to grasp and understandable. One of the two shared that her sister had married an Orthodox priest, but the things she had heard about God in our church were so understandable. She also shared that, when she'd been to an Orthodox church, she couldn't comprehend what they were saying, and their prayers weren't understandable.

They sincerely shared from the heart so many of their impressions that their comments touched all of us to the depths of our souls. We are so glad we had a chance to witness to them for our Savior. They departed with full hearts, because we encouraged them to pray and read the Bible. One of them responded so sincerely, saying she has a Bible at home but had never opened

it. Yet now she declared she had found new energy and interest to read it. There is no greater joy than when you can witness to people about the Savior.

It's great to be together with brothers in Christ

Yet another new soldier has visited our church. He went to his commander and received permission to come to our church for fellowship. It's so encouraging that God so works things out that a serviceman can search for the Lord. And we can talk and share our faith in the Lord.

Please pray with us for our church, that it will grow and bear fruit.



Respectfully,
Igor Fomichov

February, Part 1 *The minister*



I'd like to share with you something that inspired me this month. When I became a coworker in the BIEM mission, one of the first ministries my wife and I got involved in was the establishing of a new church in Goncharovsk, a settlement that exists for a military base.

Along with me went my wife and another brother from our church who wanted to be involved in ministry. Very much could be said about all this, but in time my wife and I were called to Desna, and brother Sasha became

responsible for the ministry in Goncharovsk. In time, a modest-sized church developed there, and Sasha fulfills the role of pastor. He invited me to go along with him in driving a team of teenagers he works with to a floor hockey competition. I joyfully agreed to go along. We spent several full days together, and we were able to witness to these youth, not only with words, but also through our lives and examples to establish trustworthy relationships.

I enjoyed seeing how Sasha continues to lead the ministry that he and I had begun there. I observed him, how he conducts himself and how he ministers to these teens. They love him and obey him, and his outreach to these teens is bearing much fruit. Once more these young people had a chance to hear the Gospel and to pray together. I was inspired by how these youth prayed before a game. And when they won, they understood that this was an answer to prayer; when they lost, they didn't give up or throw away their faith. They continued to pray, trusting in God without their faith slipping. I returned home, rejoicing about several different things:



1. That God is continuing His work in Goncharovsk.
2. That God continues to use Sasha, and I see how he has grown spiritually.
3. That the ministry Sasha is doing brings praise to God, and the church is making itself known.
4. The local newspaper in Goncharovsk wrote about the competition, and the article described Sasha, not as a trainer, but as a mentor.

Pray with us for the ministry in Goncharovsk.

February, Part 2

"Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7



Dear brothers and sisters,

I want to share with you a very important testimony for our church. For a long time already, I have asked you to pray concerning the musical ministry in our church. And for a long time we have been waiting for an answer from God. We have been praying that God would lead to our church someone who could lead our musical ministry, and here God raised up someone from our own midst. My daughter has begun playing the synthesizer, and women from the church began

holding singing rehearsals. Thus, step by step God began to shift everything. This encouraged me, but there wasn't satisfaction because my daughter is still young and not everyone listens to her. Plus, she doesn't yet have a clear understanding of how to do this. We supported her all we could, but to no effect. We'd even thought about inviting somebody from another church to come and assist with the music ministry. I even spoke with several musicians.

And God answered our prayers through a young man named Roma, who was drafted into the army. He's a young Christian. He clearly understood his calling to serve God. He shared his testimony of when he turned to the Lord and how his life gained peace and meaning. He's a talented musician who plays the piano and saxophone and has been to various concerts. When he got saved, he decided to serve God. In one month, he learned to play the guitar. And when he visited our church, he said he wants to serve God and to help with the music ministry. But there was a problem: He's a soldier, and it's not so simple to get leave to attend church. But God also saw to this. He inclined the heart of his commander, and they allow him to come, so he gladly helps with the music ministry. The musicians come early to pray, read the Word of God, and worship our Lord. All of us in the church enjoy the music. With the coming of Roma, God inspired everyone, and everybody gladly glorifies God. Each time, I can't help but rejoice and thank God. Very often, we make our plans and decide how God should respond, but sometimes God has in mind an answer to prayer that we hadn't even imagined.



Pray with us:

1. For our church's music ministry.
2. For Roma, that there will be no obstacles to him coming to be involved in the music ministry.

Thank you all for the prayerful support. May the Lord bless you.

March



Dear brothers and sisters,

We've all become witnesses of these difficult times, and it's hard to adapt. Well, God calls us to serve and to evangelize and to tell others about salvation. We can't gather in large groups of people, so we meet in small groups, where we study God's Word and worship our Lord in song.

On Sunday morning, we had a meeting with soldiers, where we had time to read from the Word and to praise the Lord. In the evening another group came, and we dedicated that time to studying prayer, because in Mark

13:32-33 the Lord gave us a lesson, teaching that we must pray and be encouraged in order to be ready to meet with the Lord. What's nice is that, due to the quarantine, many don't rush to go anywhere afterward. Sometimes we have groups that last up to four hours, and this encourages me because we can go deeper and reflect, and each one has a chance to share his experiences as we look into the Word of God. Because of the quarantine, many are not so caught up in vain things and are ready to talk.

In the evening, while going home after the meeting, I saw an old acquaintance at a store. We greeted each other. When I stepped back outside, he was waiting for me and began to talk and ask me what I'm doing. I told him I'm a Christian, the pastor of a church. He wasn't surprised. He already knew this. He had known me well before I got saved. We hadn't talked for a long time. He told me that he serves in the army, but that doesn't stop him from getting drunk. He can't stop [drinking] and fears that everything will end with his dismissal. I shared with him my testimony, how I turned to God and how God saved me.

He asked whether I thought God could help me. I told him yes.

While I was talking with Dima another guy stood off to the side. I didn't know his name, but I'd seen him many times, and he's a good guy. But one time I noticed how he'd started to ruin himself with drinking and often walked around drunk. I pitied him and began to pray for him, although I didn't know how to approach him. But suddenly here he was, standing nearby and listening to me. He said, "Do you mind if I listen?"

"I don't mind," I said.

He began to tell me that he has problems with drunkenness, and that it has begun to affect his life seriously after he spent time at the war zone in the East. He said he can't sleep and wakes up in pain and fear and didn't know what to do. As I listened, I understood this was an answer to prayer. I gave him my name, and it turned out that he, too, is named Dima.

I said, "Do you know that I'm a believer?"

"I know," he said.

We agreed to meet, and I explained how to find me. He wasn't ready to repent, but this was an answer to prayer. I simply see how many people need salvation. People wallow in sins for various reasons. But only one thing is important. Only God can save them.

I ask that you pray with me for the salvation of these men, and please pray for my personal testimony.

With respect,

Igor Fomichov