

COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
ACTIVITIES IN THE RUSSIAN SPEAKING FIELD

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Dear Friends,
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Some interesting developments to report.... I just returned from two months in Russia during which we worked on renovating the apartment that we purchased to support the St. Petersburg Society. It turned out to be a rather large project. We began removing wall paper and the old (really old) toilet and kitchen equipment. It soon became evident that we had to remove everything: Walls, floors, ceiling..... everything. It was important that we did this because there was a small lake of standing water under the wooden floors due to a leaky sewer pipe. This moisture had caused considerable damage to the wooden floors and walls. When we had everything back to the brick walls surrounding the space we then prayed to find an honest contractor to finish the job. We were led to the perfect person; honest, hard working and efficient. Work started right away, and when I left there was only one inside wall left to be installed and finish work: Tiles in the bathroom, wall paper, etc. I am waiting to hear that all is complete.

Even more interesting is how the money came to finance the renovation. I left Olympia with only \$3, 511.00 and some personal money. The first phase of the renovation, plumbing and main floor cost \$4,960.00, so I loaned \$3,000.00 to the project to get it going. I wrote home to send me whatever contributions had come in and an anonymous donor loaned us another \$3,000.00 to be paid back if and when we can. The Mother Church heard that we needed funds and made a generous contribution, an association donated \$1,000.00 and a friend in Germany also sent us \$3,000.00. The most interesting part of all was that the money would come sometimes within the hour that it was needed for the next batch of materials. When I left we were short \$200.00 which we were sure the contractor would forgive us. It was a wonderful demonstration. Now we need to buy and install the kitchen cabinets, stove, sink and refrigerator and whatever furniture will be necessary to make the apartment rentable.

As we worked on the apartment we kept getting different estimates of the amount that we could receive in rent. We were advised to do a quality renovation so that we would get good renters who would not take the furnishings and disappear. It is now also standard practice in Russia to furnish apartments for rent. We were advised that it would be very difficult to rent it without furnishings and that the rent would be very low. The last estimate we got was that we could probably get three or four hundred dollars a month. This would provide considerably more than the Society needs to pay for its monthly utility bills and condo fees. The last night there I attended a board meeting and

asked them what their plans were if there was extra money. The came up with a contract that they all signed in which they spelled out how the money would be used. After paying the expenses of the Society they would put the money in the account we have in the Dresdener Bank and the money would be used to pay back the loans we made and then to support activities and groups in the Russian speaking field. I was deeply moved when I heard this because there are several small groups getting started now that need help and there has not always been funds to help them. For example, a group can not get registered if they do not meet in a public place which they, as yet, can not afford. Groups are starting in Vladivostok, Almata in Kazakhstan, Kherson and Kiev in the Ukraine, and there is an on-going group in Ukhta (The location where the early Christian Scientists were interned by Stalin in 1930). Two of these groups are discussing applying to become Christian Science Societies. I can see now why it seemed important to purchase the apartment, and why everything flowed so harmoniously during the whole process of purchase and renovation.

While the renovation was in progress I bought two small study tables and built book shelves and a bench to cover two large heating system valves and made a study area for the Reading room just behind the sales area. I also installed some coat racks in another small room and fixed the locks on two cabinets so that we can now lock up valuable items. We also now have a beautiful grand piano, donated partly by Cornelia Schacht in Boston, and someone saw it through the window and came in and asked if we needed a pianist. We have a beautiful readers desk and on the wall behind the it are the words: "GOD IS LOVE" in Russian. "ÀÉ Öěíú ãÀÉÇú" Our Church is really complete.... And really beautiful. I also learned this trip that we are in an historic building that is called a 'monument to architecture'. The blessings continue.

Forgive me for running on... It comes from the excitement of all that is happening and gratitude for how it is happening. The members of the St. Petersburg Society send you their love and thanks for all that you have done for them and they also send you an invitation to come and visit them and share their beautiful church home.

Sincerely and Gratefully yours,

Bill Arnesen, for the committee and for the Society

This is the outside of our church.... A truck had just backed into our sign, but it is fixed now.