

COMMITTEE TO SUPPORT CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
ACTIVITIES IN THE RUSSIAN SPEAKING FIELD

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Dear Friends,

February 16, 2002

Some of you may be familiar with the above committee which has been gathering funds over the past few years to help the Society in St. Petersburg, Russia purchase its own church space. After the purchase we reorganized the committee to support everyone in the Russian speaking world in their efforts to obtain a better understanding of Christian Science, and now a new opportunity has presented itself: The Annual Meeting of The Mother Church in Berlin next June.

In 1989 The Mother Church (TMC) organized the Hamburg Youth Meeting for Christian youth of all denominations. Some of you may know that three young people from St. Petersburg, Russia, made it to that meeting in Hamburg, loved what they saw and upon their return began to gather in the home of one of them to read the Christian Science Bible Lessons on Sunday mornings. This small but inspired act provided the nucleus for the Christian Science Society that is there today. Who knows what will happen when the Berlin Annual Meeting brings together students of Christian Science from all over Russia and the former Soviet Republics. Many have heard of Christian Science from short wave radio broadcasts and written to the clerk's representative in St. Petersburg for copies of Science and Health. Thousands of copies have been sent to these people or sold. Many of them live in remote areas and feel disconnected from church in general and TMC in particular as they are struggling to assimilate the ideas from Science and Health. The Annual Meeting could provide the inspiration they need to move forward in their understanding of Christian Science and to unite.

To give you some perspective on the development of Christian Science in Russia: In 1993 Hildegard J. Arnesen began spending six months each year in St. Petersburg and the small group began to expand and rented space in a school for their meetings. A little later some German visitors gave them money to establish a reading room so they could become a Society. The financial situation in Russia prompted the group to ask Hildegard to keep the money in an American bank till they could find a space. I wrote to TMC about how to do this and they said the money would be best kept in Hildegard's association account and that we

should broaden our perspective and think of purchasing a church space. Hildegard asked some of us in Olympia to set up a committee to handle the money and other donations which were coming in; hence the existence of this committee. It took several years of prayer and searching, and we now have a beautiful church and reading room space in a good location in St. Petersburg. Hildegard has lectured in many places in the Russian speaking world and groups have been forming. There are recognized Societies in Riga, Latvia; in Almaty, Khazakstan and in Kherson, Ukraine. There is a group in Ukhta in Northern Russia, in Arseniev just north of Vladivostok, in Kiev in the Ukraine and a group about to reform in Moscow

Some members of First Church, Berlin, in preparation for the annual meeting, are actively seeking places for our Russian friends to stay and a committee has formed to obtain donations from Christian Scientists in Europe to help interested parties attend the meeting from those republics outside of Russia which used to be the European part of the USSR. Our committee is working to obtain funds to help those in the countries mentioned above. The Mother Church has said that if enough Russian speakers are at the meeting they will provide simultaneous translations in Russian.

If you wish to help us with this project, tax free donations may be sent to: Association of the Students of Hildegard Arnesen, at the above address. The money must be in St. Petersburg by the end of April to give them time to get visas and make travel arrangements. Let us know if you would like to be informed about future progress and projects. One of our future projects is to have more of Mrs. Eddy's writings translated into Russian. They only have the textbook and a few articles now. We got a call this morning from First Church, Nurenborg, Germany telling us they want to send us money for translations. Another foundation in Germany has sent us money for this work. The enthusiasm coming from Germany is a joy to experience! It seems that the annual meeting is already bearing fruit.

Thank you all for your financial and metaphysical support,

Bill Arnesen, for the committee.