

Committee to Support Christian Science
Activities in the Russian-Speaking Field

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Dear Friends,

There is much to report! Since some of you are hearing about this Committee and its activities for the very first time, we are providing you with a little background. (Old friends, please bear with us.)

Our Committee was established in 1996 when the newly formed Christian Science Society in St. Petersburg received a large donation from friends in Germany towards establishing a Christian Science Reading Room. Given the shaky Russian economy and questionable banking practices at that time, they asked Hildegard Arnesen CSB, a practitioner and teacher serving in the Russian-speaking field, to take the money to the US for safe keeping. Out of this need was born this Committee which, at The Mother Church's suggestion, began operating under the umbrella of Hildegard's Association so that donations could be tax deductible. Boston also suggested the Society set its sights higher and consider purchasing a space for a Reading Room and a Church. In support of this activity, we let friends know about these aspirations which resulted in a generous outpouring of money. Eventually the society found a beautiful, well-located, commercial site and with the help of the Committee was able to raise the \$80,000 necessary to buy it. Later, when the property proved difficult to maintain financially, contributors again came forward with the money to purchase an adjoining rental property. This apartment now provides enough money to meet expenses and even a little extra to help other groups in the Russian-speaking field get started.

Although initially set up to help the St. Petersburg Society in its quest for a Reading Room and church home, the Committee's work has since expanded to include other support for the Russian-speaking field. For example, last year, when it was announced that the 2003 Annual Meeting would be held in Berlin – and that it would be translated into Russian – the Committee mobilized support from its contributing friends to donate money to a fund in Germany set up by Christian Science Churches and friends in Germany and Switzerland to help bring to Berlin a large delegation from Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia and Poland. Those attending gained a much broader view of the Christian Science movement and came away greatly inspired by the experience. A special Wednesday evening service held in Russian for these cherished guests lasted over two hours and there were many heartfelt and tearful expressions of gratitude.

The Committee has now broadened the scope of its activities even further. So far, Russian readers have translations of *Science and Health*, a hymnal, several special printings of *The Christian Science Herald*, and a few articles from periodicals. The Mother Church has also translated the *Church Manual* into Russian, but availability is limited. So in an effort to share more widely the "light and life" of Mary Baker Eddy with the Russian-speaking field, the Committee is spearheading an effort to translate one of Mrs. Eddy's biographies into Russian – hopefully by next year. Permission has been granted from the publisher to translate: *Mary Baker Eddy: Persistent Pilgrim* by Richard Nenneman, and the translator will visit Moscow this summer to investigate publishers. If the book is printed in Russia, it will be more affordable for Russian readers. Contributions

from a foundation in Germany have already provided enough money for this translation and we are now saving for publication. If all goes well, we hope to have more works about and by Mrs. Eddy translated.

And you know, it seems like almost every day a new opportunity to support this field presents itself. For example, in February a group in Kherson, Ukraine contacted the committee for support in procuring a church home for what will be the first Christian Science Society in the Ukraine! They had received some money from the St. Petersburg Society to rent a space and ended up finding a very fine space for sale at a reasonable price. The Committee was able to provide about half of what they needed, and the rest came from a personal loan and some spontaneous contributions from friends. They bought the space and although some renovation is needed, we can all be sure that this "right idea" has come with its own source of supply. The enthusiasm and gratitude expressed by the group in Kherson is supply enough for us in the Committee.

Many of you are probably aware of the changes taking place in Boston, as The Mother Church and the Christian Science Publishing Society begin "taking steps to bring expenses into balance with current levels of revenue and contributions." (Walter Jones, Treasurer). As a result, The Mother Church was recently obliged to sell its last short-wave radio station and all CSPS-funded short-wave broadcasts were halted March 1. The short-wave broadcasts for the Russian-speaking field have been moved to a station in Germany, to be funded privately. A group of dedicated Christian Scientists in Hamburg have taken over this project and our Committee is being asked to help. We've enthusiastically added this to our portfolio and our Metaphysical Committee is prayerfully supporting it. For the rest of this year there are enough funds donated by German Christian Scientists to continue broadcasting one program every other week – down from thirty per week. These broadcasts are very important for the work in the Russian-speaking field, as this is how most Russian seekers first learn about Christian Science. Here is a quote from a letter received from a Russian *Herald* short-wave listener. It exemplifies the great potential for this important work. "While listening to short-wave radio, I accidentally tuned in to a Christian program (the Russian edition of *The Herald of Christian Science*) which talked about *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. Since I've been interested in Christianity for a long time, I found myself intrigued with the program. While listening to the program the most amazing thing happened: I experienced healing of a condition that had troubled me for a long time! Then it became clear to me that I absolutely had to obtain a copy of *Science and Health*." And, we have just learned that there are 20 people in L'vov, Ukraine that heard of Christian Science from the short-wave radio broadcasts and requested Textbooks. Genadi Scherbaniov, the clerk's representative in Russia, sent them textbooks and told one of them, a physician, about the others. She contacted all of them and they want Hildegard to give them a lecture and show them how to conduct services. Hildegard will give a lecture and she and Genadi will conduct a service for them. We must help these broadcasts to continue!

As The Mother Church realigns its *Manual*-based activities to better meet the demand of the seeker in the 21st century, there are indications that this Committee may be able to take on more responsibility implementing some of the projects typically funded by Boston in the past. We have been commended for our work thus far, so to better position ourselves to continue this good work we have decided to incorporate as a non-profit, tax-exempt foundation and to broaden the scope to include Christian Science

activity in the Eastern European Region (e.g., did you know that Latvia has a recognized Christian Science Society but no textbook? They must translate every service). We are praying for guidance as our horizons expand, holding to an inspiring statement by Mrs. Eddy: "Soul has infinite resources with which to bless mankind..." which prompted the name for the foundation: THE SPIRITUAL RESOURCE FOUNDATION.

If appropriate, would the churches that receive this letter please post it where it may be read by all, or perhaps even share it at a membership meeting, as First Church Olympia has done. If anyone wishes to contribute financially to any of the above projects, please make checks payable to "Christian Science Association of Hildegard Arnesen, CSB." And to all of our friends, who have helped us in the past, please accept our heartfelt gratitude for all of your financial and prayerful support.

If you would like to receive future newsletters please let us know. We will not send them to you unless you request them.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

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