



The Spiritual Resource Foundation

Supporting Christian Science activities in the Russian-Speaking Field

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Dear Friend

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Thanksgiving, our much loved holiday, has come and gone. We are still counting our blessings. Shifting our focus to scan the familiar landscapes of Russia and the former Soviet republics: Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Georgia, we pick up the signs of Christian Science activities within this still Russian speaking world. We say, "still", because a window of opportunity for sharing Christian Science is closing. A new generation growing up in the republics is reclaiming its mother tongue; in the foreseeable future it will no longer be able to study the Russian translation of *Science and Health*. This is something to think about. Highlights we would like to share with you are as follows:

Lecturing and Manual-based Activities: Dr. Hildegard Arnesen, CSB after 14 years of service, opted for semi-retirement from the Russian-speaking field, when Marie Helm, CSB a practitioner from Alaska, agreed to take up the work in this promising field. Marie has since been appointed a teacher and lecturer. Like Hildegard before her, she recently traveled thousands of miles to Astana and Almaty in Kazakhstan, Yerevan, Armenia and Tbilisi, Georgia, delivering lectures and holding *Manual*-based workshops, helping the various CS groups to establish and maintain a Christian Science presence in their communities.

Moscow Book Fair: In September the capitol held its prestigious International Book Fair at the Exhibition Center, where the St. Petersburg Christian Science Society has staffed a booth for the past four years. The Mother Church has been underwriting the cost for the exhibit while The Spiritual Resource Foundation pays staffers to work in the booth. As in years past, the exhibit was well-received: 47 copies of *Science and Health* were sold and 60 given away together with a hundred Russian *Heralds*. The fair is one of the most successful events in Russia for sharing Christian Science with the public. A steady stream of visitors stopped by the booth to inquire about *Science and Health*. Several medical doctors were interested; one wanted Marie Helm to lecture at his medical institute in the near future. Handouts invited the public to Marie's lecture at the fair grounds. The lecture was well- attended.

Slavic Legal Center: This not-for-profit organization of Moscow lawyers provides free legal services to all religious denominations upon request. It is also known for winning occasional legal disputes in court between religious institutions and the government. One of its lawyers is a member of the Religion Committee in the State Duma (Russian parliament). The St. Petersburg CS Society has benefited from their services on a number of occasions, such as in drafting documents for its official registration and in receiving legal advice when needed. It has been the privilege of The Spiritual Resource Foundation to make occasional donations to this organization. The Center's library, alongside other religious literature, displays a copy of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy. It is obvious from conversations with some of the lawyers that they are knowledgeable about its content. The Spiritual Resource Foundation has also presented them with

"Soul has infinite resources with which to bless mankind" – Mary Baker Eddy

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three copies of the newly published book by Professor M. Krapivin of St. Petersburg State University, entitled *The History of the Followers of Christian Science in Russia, February 1917 – 1935*. Professor Krapivin, who specializes in Russian history, based his book on archival research of the KGB files in St. Petersburg and Moscow. In conversation with Hildegard Arnesen, he told her he was drawn to the subject, because in his search of the files he found more information about Christian Science than about any other religious denomination, which seemed odd considering its relatively small number of adherents in Russia. Professor Krapivin's research and the publication of his book by the St. Petersburg University Press were financed by a grant from The Spiritual Resource Foundation. A translation of the book is in progress.

Historic Mother Church Board Forum in St. Petersburg The Board scheduled their Forum for the day after Hildegard Arnesen's Association so that many people would already be in the city. In town meeting fashion, they touched on subjects of interest to attendees and answered their questions. A group of 65 had come from as far as Vladivostok and Magadan in the Far East, the Komi Republic near the Urals and from Kazakhstan, 200 miles from the Chinese border. There was a strong showing from Ukraine. A handful came from Riga, Latvia, and a single American delegate from the Republic of Georgia. The Georgian delegates from Tbilisi, whose trip was to be paid by The Spiritual Research Foundation, had been refused visas. A current political crisis involving Russia and Georgia may be the reason. The rest were from St. Petersburg.

Many expressed gratitude for the help received from The Mother Church, Hildegard Arnesen, Marie Helm and The Spiritual Resource Foundation. The rest of the meeting was devoted to what the Christian Scientists would like to see happen in terms of new translations of Mary Baker Eddy's writings and the publication of a regular Russian *Herald*, etc. The Board explained that while all requests for new translations are considered carefully, they must be weighed against the needs and wants of the entire field, which consists of members and branches in over 100 countries. A request was also made for reactivation of the *Herald* Shortwave radio programs, which had been such a successful medium for sharing Christian Science outside cities where CS activity already exists. As a step in progress, the Board shared that a special committee had been formed whose sole purpose is to focus on the international field and its various needs.

The meeting with the Directors could be summed up, in abbreviated form, in the words of one enthusiastic attendee who wrote that all who attended this historic meeting regard it as an event of outstanding significance. For the first time a delegation from TMC represented by all 5 directors visited Christian Scientists in Russia. The St. Petersburg church was filled to capacity, a great sight to see. The feeling of a special holy day and of the ascendancy of Christian Science prevailed and was felt by each person who had the privilege of attending this historic event.

Appeal for your donations: Because many more translations are needed than are currently available to help the mostly non-English speaking students, and because of the many ongoing needs in the far-flung Russian-speaking field, for our shortwave-radio broadcasts in particular, (we received this in October from a listener: "I want to worship in your church. What am I to do? I live in Georgian republic.") we appeal to your generosity for donations, perhaps as a Christmas present? With love and gratitude for your ongoing support,

Bill Catherine Ralph Charles Leslie Sonny Josh