

Family Hess

Missionaries to Russia

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Dear praying friends and family: (most of you for some 23 years)- Wow!

It is March 31 - the night of Resurrection Day 2024 and I need to share my heart with you. This past month we had a fire in the bell tower of our church here. The building is 170 years old and is the only church left on Church Street in this little town. In light of this tragic event – there is actually many things for which to be thankful.

First off – no one was hurt. We had eight fire departments come out to rescue the building. It seems that an extension cord must have been chewed into by some wild varmint and then the wire, sometime on Monday morning, March 4. It began “arching,” as they call it, and it got hot enough to start the steeple on fire. Praise the Lord that the church has another small block building across the street where we can meet. I call it the Jr. Chapel. We almost fill it now – with room for about 10-15 more people. Now remember, we only had 12 people here when we came, and today there were 29 in the auditorium. Praise the Lord for His sweet blessing on the work here.

Praise the Lord as well, (regarding the fire). We have been able to be a big witness to our community here and met lots of Restoration folk who, for now, work at the church – a great pool for “fishing.” God has sent us a great crew of workers and directors. I have been receiving an education on the side regarding insurance, church fires, and restoration companies and policies.

We appreciate your prayers regarding this work and the restoration, and honestly, some fixing of major neglect (especially in the wiring and lights downstairs). The electrician called it a nightmare and said that THERE COULD BE another fire. I don't know if insurance will fix what was lacking before the fire or only restore it to its previous state. The electrician said that repairs on the things he mentioned with led lights installed down there would run us about \$1,200 – please join us in prayer for this project to secure safer things for the future in this church.

Ok, another matter on my heart is: We have received a few calls and letters this year (in the last three months) regarding what we are doing now -- So somehow it is still not clear to some what's going on with the Hess' in our current ministry. Let me drop in here what I wrote a pastor in Florida.

Good evening, sir. I know you are a very busy man and so I'll cut to the chase. I was helping the church in NC (People's BC) - and hoping it would work out ...OR to give more time for the war to stop and so we could perhaps get back home. Then, I kept waking up at 3:30 in the morning and the Lord WAS NOT GIVING ME PEACE. (Col. 3:15) I was sure hoping something might work out there: we love the folks, the church needed our help, our family was CLOSE, they gave us a place to stay (in the mission house)... LOTS of pluses, but NO PEACE. My thoughts kept coming back up to this little church up here in PA (close to Erie) that was about to close its doors and it's the last Gospel witness in this town. I couldn't get these folks off my mind. So...long story short, after visiting again, we eventually moved NORTH - 10 hours north. That brings us to where we are now. In our Russian ministry - well, I didn't want to leave. My heart is still there. I do 4 services a week with them. They need a national pastor and we pray towards that. In the meantime, I do what I can. I cannot leave them without leadership. I love and soooo miss those folks. If possible that's where I would be today. The Lord has, through BIMI AND OTHERS, made it clear that we needed to move on for now. So honestly – this is all I know. I am bearing my heart with you. I so want the Lord to use us to revive

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