

## Tartu Academy of Theology

Tartu Academy of Theology, or simply TAT, is a Strategic Ministry Partner of East European Missions Network. The Academy is located in the Estonian city of Tartu.

TAT was founded in the Autumn of 1992 with the financial support of a group of American pastors who had visited Estonia earlier that year. TAT worked as an independent Christian college until 2013 when it merged with the **Theological Institute of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church** (Seminary). It is now a separate department within the Seminary, maintaining the TAT name and identity. As the result of the merger, a single strong Christian college was created to prepare Lutheran pastors, as well as to train Christian lay leaders and specialists to serve as Pastoral Care Givers and Counselors, Christian Youth Workers, Chaplains, Christian Family Therapists, etc.

Additionally, the merger has provided for better stewardship of gifts, as the two institutions now share both professors and administrative costs, resulting in a more fruitful preparation of pastoral students and church workers at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Already we are experiencing exciting results as enrollments increase and successful accreditation has been achieved.



*Graduation class of 17, June 2016.*

## History **Pastor Eenok Haamer,**

**founder of TAT** and a pastor's son, grew up during the Soviet occupation, where he witnessed firsthand the suffering of the Estonian people at the hands of the Soviet Army. But even as the Soviets hunted Eenok and tried to wipe out Christianity in the nation, he began to have a vision for the future. God showed him that once their fervently prayed-for freedom would return, there would be a great need to educate Estonian men and women so that they would be able to carry on God's work and clearly communicate the principles of the Bible.

The vision for a new school began to take shape and with initial financial help pledged by 8 pastors from the USA; TAT was founded in the fall of 1992.



## Tartu Academy of Theology Estonia

[www.tatest.org](http://www.tatest.org)

### Mission

- \* To build up the Christian Community in Estonia.
- \* To offer Bible-based education.
- \* To value each student's personal relationship with God.
- \* To train students in applying theological knowledge in practical experience.

### Key Facts

- \* Average annual student enrollment is 25 during last years.
- \* 135 students (demographically equivalent to a U.S. college of 32,000 students).
- \* Merger with Lutheran Seminary provides for better and stronger stewardship of gifts.

### Estonia

- \* Located in Eastern Europe
- \* Bordered by Russia on the East
- \* Population of 1.3 million
- \* Area 17,000 sq miles
- \* Only 20% of the population identifies as being "religious"
- \* The largest denomination is Lutheran
- \* Suffered for 50 years under Soviet occupation during which time Christians were persecuted
- \* Regained independence in 1991



## Impact on Society

**Graduates of TAT are working in a wide range of fields:**

- \* Teaching religion and ethics in the public schools
- \* Serving as Ministers in the Estonian Lutheran Church and other denominations
- \* Engaged in Pastoral counseling and chaplaincy in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, Defense Forces etc
- \* Teaching Sunday school in local congregations
- \* Serving as Youth workers in churches, community organizations and local government programs
- \* Working as Writers and producers in Christian and public media

## Today

**TAT and the Seminary have:**

- \* 135 students
- \* Full accreditation
- \* Bachelor programs in theology:
  - \* Ministry
  - \* Chaplaincy (hospital, prison, army, police)
  - \* Pastoral Care and Counseling
- \* Master program with two curriculums in theology
  - \* Master of Theology
    - \* Ministry and Chaplaincy
    - \* Pastoral Care and Counseling
    - \* Diaconal work
  - \* Master studies in Christian Culture
- \* One year internship for pastors before ordination
- \* Continuing education opportunities for about 400 participant each year in the following areas:
  - \* Christian Youth Work
  - \* Christian Media
  - \* Church Musician
  - \* Pastoral Care and Counseling
  - \* Chaplaincy
  - \* Family Therapy
  - \* Diaconal Work
  - \* Administration of Congregation
  - \* English Bible Camps

## Vision for Development

- \* Our own facility for current needs and expansion (September 2019)
- \* 200 students (long term)

## Challenges We Face Today

- \* Estonia is one of the most secular countries in the world.
- \* Only 20% of Estonian people identify as "religious".
- \* Church membership declines annually.
- \* Tuition fees cover only 20% of TAT's budget. Because of very low salaries students are unable to afford higher fees.
- \* Classroom space is inadequate to meet current needs.



## Facilities

TAT's current location is presenting a major obstacle to continued development. With only two small classrooms (one that accommodates 16 students, the other only 12 students), two offices and one small (110 sq. ft.) library-storage, there is no room for expansion. Beside of that rooms are cold in the winter, and ventilation is totally absent. Current financing prevents us from seeking better facilities.

## Students Say

**Heidi** – TAT did not only provide the education but also the community who prayed together and taught me to rely on God. As time went by, I found myself getting deeper and deeper into care of soul, where I discovered the whole new world: kingdom of God revealed.



**Kai** – My time at TAT have only strengthened my desire to work with people, specifically as a pastoral care giver and counselor. Thanks to my studies, I feel that God has blessed me and I can share it with others.



## Students say

**Tiit** – Eenok Haamer's inspiring memories of bygone times, and deep, unwavering faith in Jesus Christ have made the Academy both an educational institution as well as a kind of church.



**Kristjan** – I have been working for years in an orphanage and have learned much from the children. I believe I have learned more than I am able to teach them. I learned to experience God. My wish is that God's will, not my will, be done in my life. Training at the Academy has opened my mind and heart and it has woken me up. I often give thanks to God for connections have been experiencing with professors and students of the Academy. God's grace is holding that school.



## To Donate

Gifts may be made through:  
**Charity Lutheran Church**  
120 Aspen Ave.  
Bismarck, ND 58503

Make checks payable to Charity Lutheran Church designating "TAT" in the memo portion.

**All contributions are tax deductible.**

You can find alternative giving choices at  
[www.tatest.org/to-donate.html](http://www.tatest.org/to-donate.html).

## More Information About TAT

Go to our website [www.tatest.org](http://www.tatest.org)

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## Partners in U.S.

**East European Missions Network (EEMN)** has worked in close partnership with TAT since our beginnings in 1992. Their support, together with the faith and vision of the leaders of TAT, has brought others from the USA to assist in prayer, teaching, and finances.

**Bob and Patti Nordvall** continue through EEMN to serve as ambassadors for TAT and the Estonian Church, leading short term mission teams and partnering



with pastors and church workers in Estonia. Together Bob and Patti visit congregations in the USA bringing encouragement, inspiration, and support for missions while sharing Eenok Haamer's vision for TAT and the building up of the Estonian Church.

## Leadership Today

The school established by **Pastor Eenok Haamer** as the result of a vision from God and the inheritance of his father is being carried forward today by Eenok's youngest son, **Pastor Siimon Haamer**, who serves as Dean of TAT. One of the first graduates



of TAT in 1998, Siimon continues to expand the work begun by his father. Eenok continues to serve as the spiritual leader of the school, as well as to teach various courses.

**Pastor Ove Sander**, Rector of the joint school, studied at the American Free Lutheran Seminary, located in Medicine Lake, Minneapolis.



**He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.**  
**Philippians 1:6**