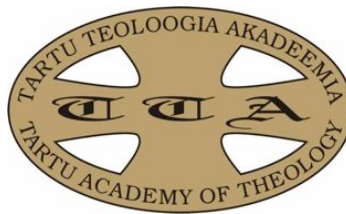


# Tartu Academy of Theology

Tartu, Estonia  
 Newsletter, March 2014



Partnering with East European Missions Network



**TAT rooms from outside.** We are renting rooms on the ground floor of the building and all windows of our facilities are seen on the picture.

*Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

Psalms 62:2

## Accreditation in Process

Together with the Theological Institute, we have been working hard for the last year to organize our study programs and plan ahead for the upcoming accreditation process. We know from past experience that the standards for accreditation are incredibly high, and it is not an easy thing to obtain, so we have put in much effort and focus to be prepared for the assessment. I am so pleased with the constructive and collaborative teamwork of our staff and students, which has been a crucial part of reaching our goals, along with the continued fellowship of prayer that has accompanied all our endeavors.

On March 12<sup>th</sup>, a six-member

accreditation team visited our school. We had supplied them with detailed documentation in advance of their visit. In one day, the experts met with our team of school administrators, teaching staff, students, alumni, and representatives of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. We will receive their decision by mid-May, but the early response of the evaluation was very positive, and we are hopeful we will get the best results possible. They were especially impressed with how positively the joining has affected the two schools and the synergy achieved in our collaboration. Some reviewers expressed doubt about the financial forecasts, but had to admit that within the last two

years, the numbers show a clear increase. We trust God, with the help of all of you who are so concerned for the future of Estonia, that we will be able to make those forecasts a reality.

So we confidently continue our work. Those positive developments are also reassuring for our current students, as well as new applicants. We hope the number of students continues to grow, as well.

We are experiencing God's guidance every day, and we are grateful for that, along with all your intercession!

Siimon Haamer  
 Dean



### CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

At the end of 2013 we received one more transfer which perfectly balanced our last year's budget, but there was no surplus.

Quick financial update of TAT

Total budget of 2014	\$ 187,300
Income during 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2014	\$ 37,914
Budget of 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2014	\$ 45,786
Balance of 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of 2014	\$ -7,872

Though we have **deficit \$7,872**, we are trustful to God and continue working in good faith. From past experience, we can expect more income during rest of the year and especially in Autumn.

May God reward according to His mercy to all those who have donated!

### SCHOLARSHIPS

We are glad and thankful that we have been able to continue with the scholarships funding. For the school year of 2013-2014, we have already received five scholarships. These were named in the September and December Newsletter, but for today we have received one more:

**Grace Foundation** (Destin, Florida) – 1 scholarship with 1 month internship in Grace Lutheran Church in Destin during Summer 2014.

The official tuition fee for one year is \$1,850 USD. Often our students are not able to pay that amount and we have to find ways to decrease their payments, and we hope to get more scholarship funds during upcoming years. But the fact is the tuition fee does not cover all the costs, and according to the budget of 2014, **the actual cost per student is \$5,300.**

If congregations or individuals are considering scholarship funding then there are two options:

- 1) either giving based on students official tuition fee of \$1,850 USD or**
- 2) giving based on the actual cost per student, that is \$5,300 USD.**

We are very thankful for all your support!

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Donate Mail a check to EEMN office, specifying in the memo portion or on an attached sheet of paper the designation of your donation to Tartu Academy of Theology. All contributions are tax deductible.

## STUDENT TIIT

Having studied at the Tartu Academy of Theology almost two years now, I can say honestly that sense of home and belonging are the keywords that best characterize my school. By adding fellowship, care, charity, tolerance, patriotism and love of wisdom, we get a sense of the strong foundation which TAT has relied on for more than 21 years.

Eenok Haamer, who has given life to this school and is its soul and spiritual leader, is tireless, youthful, and understanding. His 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. The viability of TAT was evidenced in the joining with the Seminary, which created a certain synergy and as a result, both educational institutions got a breath of new life — and in doing so, neither of the two schools have lost their unique face.

How and why did I come to study at TAT? I guess it was God's will that He showed me strongly only after many years. In my youth, I studied to become a veterinarian. I have also worked as a policeman, and today I own a small company that sells office supplies. The desire to study theology and counseling at TAT became a reality after years of sprouting in my soul. The decision to study at TAT was partly due to the good reputation of the school and recommendation from many friends who are grateful for the Academy for their good education.

What will I become after graduating from TAT? If everything goes as planned, I should graduate next year. I hope, however, that my desire to study won't disappear, and that I will be admitted to the Master program. I would like to become a chaplain in the prison system. I am aware that the work with prisons won't be easy, but I have a strong belief that no person is inherently bad and often the mistakes that we have made drive us to search for God. I believe in the victory of goodness, and I want to make my contribution to that victory, with the help of God, of course.



Two pictures of the current facilities of TAT.

## TAT's Current Facilities and Plans for the Future

Since we have managed to achieve stability and set clear goals for the future, we need to think seriously

about the physical location where we carry out our academic work. For 10 years now, we have rented rooms for TAT, and these have barely fit our needs, and in fact have been the cause of much criticism.

At this time, we feel that our current location is presenting a barrier to our development. We have only two lecture rooms (one accommodates 18 and the other 10 students), two office rooms and one small 110-square-foot room for the library. Ventilation is completely missing, and in the majority of the rooms it is not possible to open the windows because they may fall off. During the winter season the rooms are cold. Currently we are using about 1,450 square feet.

Our goal is to move to a new location no later than the next academic year. Currently, we do not have a concrete option, as we lack resources for a major move and certainly don't want to compromise funds meant for teaching. Our current estimates do not allow for any additional expenses. However, we would like to share with you the different possibilities:

### Option 1 – Renting rooms

Look for a suitable rental space in Tartu, which meets the minimum requirements, and remodel it to suit our needs.

### Option 2 – Our own small building

Buy a home that needs repairs, approximately 2,500-3,000sf, that would be possible to make changes according to our needs. This would give an opportunity to have accommodation for the students and foreign teaching staff, as well as facilities for pastoral care related services for the residents of Tartu and Southern Estonia.

### Option 3 – The house of the Lutheran Church St. Peter congregation in Tartu

I wrote extensively about the plan to build the rooms for the Academy on the top floor of the St. Peter congregation house in the 2012 June and September newsletters (these are available [www.eemn.org](http://www.eemn.org)). Since it is a large and expensive project, and we cannot take on any financial obligations, we had to give up this plan. Since the renovation of the house is planned in phases, the construction of these facilities (which might have been used by the Academy) would only be done at the final stage. It might take years. And even if it would eventually materialize, we could still be there only as tenants, because the congregation has decided that no part of the house is to be sold.

### In conclusion

Currently, the most important task for us is to focus on academic work and the development of content of the institution. Finances that we can use at the moment are primarily intended for investing in people. We are considering the options for new facilities from this principle, but the decision will depend on many factors. What is clear is that we need to create better conditions to work and study, in order that we do not limit the opportunities for development or perhaps even discourage prospective students.

We are grateful for your ongoing prayer support as we seek the right solution.

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