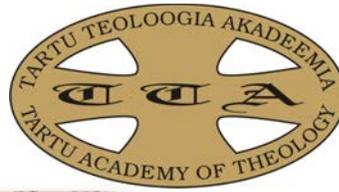


Tartu Academy of Theology

Tartu, Estonia

Newsletter, September 2016



Partnering
with
**East
European
Missions
Network**



Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you.

Genesis 26:24



36 new students were admitted in August of 2016 (some are missing from the picture).

Largest Number Of Students Ever!

Each new academic year brings new people, new opportunities, new hopes, and new prayers. As an educational institution we experience great joy in God's blessings through a large number of new students. For several years we have had this pleasure, but this year we have one of the largest admissions ever – this fall, 36 new students began their studies: 25 at under-graduate and 11 at graduate level. We rejoice in God's mercy and grace. God has given us so much and with it He has also given great responsibility: to teach and guide these people. We are co-pilgrimage for one another, so that we may grow together in faith and guide the Estonian nation in looking up to God.

This year August was full of events. From August 16th to the 19th I had an opportunity to visit Denmark. Since the beginning of the 90's TAT has had a very close relationship with people and different organizations in Denmark, but during the last decade we have not met together very often. I was very happy to meet our old friends

again and thank them for their prayers and support. I was also able to say thanks to Ringkøbing Y's Men's Club for their regular support for TAT.

Under the leadership of Bob and Patti Nordvall two Friendship English Language Camps (both one week long) were conducted by short term missionaries from the United States, one in Kuressaare, situated on an island of West-Estonia and the other in Tartu. To read more about this, please visit the EEMN [homepage](#). Such a wonderful camp has taken place every year for ten years. Thanks to this event the bonds between American and Estonian people have become stronger.

September 29th through October 9th I will have an opportunity to visit the USA again. The main objective is to participate in the annual LCMC National Gathering in Denver, which takes place October 2nd through the 5th. On Wednesday noon, I will be the keynote speaker at the East European Missions Network Denver event

at the Crowne Plaza Convention Center. It begins right after the LCMC National Gathering closing worship. Come and learn how to be part of building and equipping the Body of Christ in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. I invite all who participate in the LCMC conference or happen to be nearby at that time to come and enjoy the event.

I am very grateful to Brian and Barbara Felt, who once again have taken care of my flight tickets and to the congregation of Bethany Lutheran Church, McCallsburg, Iowa, which covers my accommodation costs during the LCMC Gathering.

God has blessed us and we pray for His blessings to continue!

Siimon Haamer
Dean



CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

Throughout the summer our budget deficit has increased and by September 25th it was \$56,150. Because our income is generally lower in the first half of the year, we have tried to make the budget flexible, so that we can postpone some expenses, if necessary. Now the deficit is already too big and we are not able to meet our obligations. We are of course hopeful that together we can stop the deficit from increasing and that by the end of the year we will be able to meet all the needs. This September the tuition fee was raised 10% (from \$ 1,900 USD to \$ 2,090 USD an academic year), slightly increasing the income from tuition.

Please consider becoming part of the TAT Matching Program. Find more information on our webpage by entering <http://teoloogia.ee/wb/pages/en/extras/newsletters.php> into your web browser or by clicking [here](#).

Quick financial update of TAT:

Total budget for 2016	\$ 208,850
Income during Jan.1st – Sept 25th of 2016	\$ 98,313
Budget for Jan. 1st – Sept 25th of 2016	\$ 154,463
Balance on September 25th of 2016	\$ -56,150

Thank you for your continued kind support, encouragement, and faithful prayers. May all of you be rewarded by God according to His mercy.

East European Missions Network

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Phone: 505-990-1639

Web: www.eemn.org Email: TAT@eemn.org

To 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 VOICES: MERJE

God's ways are unfathomable, and also marvellous. Looking back at the road travelled in my life, I realize how He has guided me. Amazing, how one situation has led to another, and how everything has been on the way towards something.

Nine years ago, having spent many long months with my child in the hospital, this borderline case made me yearn for a good word and deed by a fellow human being. A few years later, this experience led me to understanding that I myself could fill this gap. So, in the autumn of 2014, I opened the door of TAT to begin studying Pastoral Care and Counselling. This institution has given to me a significantly broader meaning for pastoral care and counselling: it means taking care of others' and also my own spiritual needs, encompassing theological and psychological knowledge. But first and foremost, this means meeting other people in front of God, listening and understanding him or her as well as respecting his or her needs.

Based on the experience of a personal crisis, I see my future pastoral work based on counselling. I believe this approach is very important and specific for me. Sharing my story with people of similar experiences became the first lifeline that helped me back to the surface. Having survived the crisis with God's help, I can be an encouraging example to others. Despite the traumatising incident, and the profoundly disabled child who came into my life, God has helped me to re-shape my life as normal and rewarding.

I do not think that the past ordeal in my life was given to me so that I would become a good pastoral caregiver and counsellor, but I believe that God has guided my way to pastoral care and counselling so that I could understand my own incomprehensible sufferings and the suffering of others. Pain and loss do not mean God has abandoned you, but that the hope He offers provides meaning to all suffering and loss that is otherwise incomprehensible.



Merje with her son.



The Georgia LCMC Fellowship Supports TAT

At the LCMC Gathering last year, TAT gave a compelling presentation showing the decline since just prior to WWII of both Christian and particularly Lutheran believers in Estonia. It was crushing to think a totalitarian and atheistic country could sweep in and trample a free Christian country like Estonia almost destroying all vestiges of the Christian church and more importantly the Christian belief in the hearts of the population.

That presentation was shown at a subsequent Georgia Fellowship meeting. Everyone in attendance was struck by the decline, and the discussion following centered on how we might help. All Christians are given a direction through the Great Commission to help others make the transition to that narrow door we know as Jesus Christ. We need to do that in our local communities and also when and where possible in communities like Estonia.

Unless they lived through the Communist takeover in Europe and recently arrived in the US, most Americans have no real concept of what it means to have the way you live and your foundational beliefs crushed. All Americans are born into a country with freedom to assemble and freedom to believe as bed-rock rights. We do those things without even thinking what it would be like to not have them. When we think of having those rights taken away it's easy to think there is no way that could happen. Then we hear of places like Estonia where it has.

The good news for Estonia is freedom has returned, but the terrible impact caused by those years remains and has to be rebuilt. Should we help? Absolutely! Can we help? Certainly we can! We can pray for the people of Estonia and for organizations like TAT, but it is imperative that we also act. Christian organizations like TAT will never receive support from non-believers, so those who know the message of the cross must stand up and be counted.

Our Fellowship voted to support TAT. During the last quarter of the year, each congregation will have free will offerings and events like bake sales with a goal of raising at least \$533. Why that number? Martin Luther would be 533 years old this year. Watching the percentage of believers begin to climb back to pre-WWII levels and knowing we had a small part to play in that climb will be the reward. We believe that the Lord will use this and perhaps the help of other groups to make known His free gifts in Estonia.

Charles (Chuck) Hunsaker
Coordinator of the Georgia LCMC Fellowship

EEMN 2016
DENVER
LUNCHEON
EVENT

WEDNESDAY, OCT 05 @ 12:30PM
AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LCMC ANNUAL GATHERING

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Pr. SIIMON HAAMER from ESTONIA

LUNCH & BEVERAGES PROVIDED FOR THE FIRST 40 ATTENDEES!

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