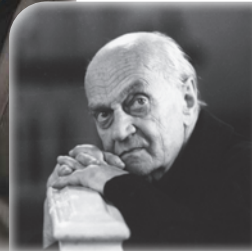


TARTU ACADEMY OF THEOLOGY & HOME OF HOPE

Christian Outreach in Estonia

www.tatest.org/campaign



PARTNERING WITH



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Three generations of Lutheran pastors. Brothers Markus, Naatan and Siimon and their father Eenok Haamer. Grandfather Harri Haamer in a small photo.

Generations of Continuity

Although Estonia was occupied for 50 years after WW II by the aggressive, atheistic Soviet Union, we have deep roots of Christian identity. Tartu Academy of Theology (TAT) was established in 1992 but there is a much longer history behind the scene. This is one family's story of challenges, sacrifices and God's blessing throughout a century. The story also includes the suffering of one nation.

Three generations of Lutheran pastors have been raised up from my family. My grandfather, Harri Haamer, was a Lutheran pastor. He lived through an 8-year experience in a Siberian labor camp because of this. My father, Eenok, at 85 years old, is still serving three Lutheran congregations. He needed to hide for almost 6 years in the forest and lived in an underground bunker because he was the son of a pastor. Despite these hardships he became a pastor. My two older brothers and myself are pastors.

Estonia regained independence in 1991, and Eenok, a year later, established the Christian college, Tartu Academy of Theology. During these 28 years, we have trained hundreds of Christian leaders for Estonia. We didn't have a permanent home and we've worked in very limited rental spaces.

I worked 15 years side-by-side with my father until 7 years ago when he turned leadership of TAT over to me. A couple of years ago I was under strong pressure because the rental facilities of TAT were very poor and didn't at all meet our needs. We had a decision to make: whether to vanish slowly and finish our activities or to

take a great leap of faith. Trusting the Lord and following His guidance, the vision of Home of Hope was created. In the spring of 2018, \$125,000 dollars was raised in six weeks. So, we had the down payment money and we needed to decide whether to begin this 2 million dollar project. Trusting the Lord, I invested myself totally. That means if this project fails, I am forced to sacrifice everything I own.

God has made this project a reality. Home of Hope was dedicated in December of 2019 and since then we have experienced great blessing and have achieved amazing results despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The results are presented on the following pages.

Now I'm looking to the future and I'm very glad that our family story is continuing. Mattias, the son of my older brother, joined our team last fall and is working with me as my assistant. He comes with a great amount of energy and new ideas. He is the fourth generation carrying on the legacy of our family. Mattias is 23 years old and is currently studying marketing. He is a very devoted Christian and Christian youth work is his passion.

You may watch the videos about the story of four generations at tatest.org/videos.

We are not making short term plans. Our goal is to proclaim the Word of God in our country, which is claimed to be one of the most secular in the world, for generations to come.

We are joyful for all that has happened and the good results but we have a great burden on our shoulders. So far, we have

raised almost \$750,000 for Home of Hope but we need to raise 1.5 million dollars more in order to pay off the mortgage loan. We need help to lift this burden so we can focus on our mission work.

I'm very thankful to our friends in the States as they have launched the **Bringing HOPE TO ESTONIA Campaign** with a goal to raise \$750,000 by June 30th, 2021. \$113,500 is already raised and we are calling people to sacrificial giving. We ask you to pray about what a sacrificial gift for Home of Hope would be for you. More information about this campaign is available at tatest.org/campaign.

With our life and work we proclaim the living God who is our only hope.

Siimon Haamer
President of TAT



Eenok, Siimon and Mattias Haamer.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF TAT & HOME OF HOPE DURING ONE YEAR

Bible School

On September 21 we launched Home of Hope Bible School. Interest toward this was unbelievable. We were hoping to have 20 participants but we had **110 people attending**. We were able to establish campuses and we have three partner congregations where about 20 people gather to watch live-streaming every Monday evening. We are so grateful to God for this great blessing.

As fellowship is an important part of this Bible School, we had not planned to offer web-based lessons but this became an additional option. Thus, we have video recorded and live-streamed all lessons since the beginning.

Demand and hunger for the Bible school course in Tartu causes us to be very devoted in finding more ways to reach out to Estonians and share knowledge of the Bible. We are developing



new plans for this coming autumn.



24/7 Pastoral Care Telephone Line

The Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs decided to finance and launch, in June 2020, a 24/7 pastoral care telephone line. Tartu Academy was asked to initiate and run this operation. We are happy that financing is continuing through 2021.

The first six months of operation the line has been more actively used than the Ministry of Social Affairs expected. People

really need our help. We have received **7000 calls**. 40% of the calls are about anxiety and loneliness. 7% are individuals planning to end their life and we are their last option. Many of them have become regular callers.

We are truly thankful for this opportunity and also happy that we are able to offer employment to our alumnus.

Youth Activities

It has been our dream that Tartu Academy of Theology could offer activities for youth. The first 27 years we worked with very limited space and did not have enough human resources to organize youth work. But Home of Hope has basically changed everything. With this crucial step we have stepped into what looks like a different world. Now everyone in Tartu knows where we are located as we are almost downtown and next to the main street of Tartu with a big lit-up sign announcing our presence.

In today's world young people are looking for a welcoming and attractive environment. Home of Hope definitely offers that.

In September and October, we began offering regular youth events and in total we have **70 plus participants** in the various events. For most, this is the only opportunity to be part of Christian youth work because they don't have youth groups at their local churches. Around 10% of the participants are not yet connected with a church. We are already considering a



plan for this fall of how to develop a Bible School specifically for youth.

As a starter for our youth activities, August 3-5, 2020 we held a **Youth Bible Camp** with 14 participants. The topic was Hope. SONetwork short-term missionaries from the US couldn't travel to Estonia because of Corona virus. Therefore, we used the connection via Zoom for three hours each day. The remainder of the time we filled with a variety of interesting activities.

A Youth Evening

Held every last Sunday of the month with prayer, singing, discussion and introduction of a different topic.

Target group is secondary and high school students.

A Social Evening with Board Games and Christian Films

Held every second Sunday of the month with prayer, board games, films and snacks.

Target group is primarily secondary and high school students but might also include college students.

The Union of Evangelical Students

Tartu University, Estonia's oldest and largest university (est. 1632) is located in Tartu, a city of 100,000 inhabitants and about 20,000 students. There are various student organizations including the Union of Evangelical Students which has an interdenominational approach.

This Union has their meetings every Wednesday at Home of Hope.

Worship Night

Held every third Wednesday with live music, testimonies, prayer, fellowship and snacks.

Target group is college students.

Scout Troops

Some Scout troops are gathering regularly at Home of Hope for their meetings.

www.tatest.org/campaign

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Bachelor and Master Degree Studies

Nine students graduated in June 2020. Four of them from the bachelor program and five from the master program. Most of them are already working in their chosen specialty: two are chaplains, one in the prison and one in a hospital, three are pastoral care givers with the pastoral care telephone line and at the pastoral care center. In the fall of 2020, one of the graduates entered a year of internship in order to become a pastor in the Lutheran Church.

One of our major tasks is to train pastors, chaplains, pastoral care givers, Christian

youth workers, etc. Currently we have **130 students** and we were very glad to be able, in August of 2020, to admit **32 new students** together with the Lutheran Seminary: 15 bachelor students, 11 master students and 6 in the church musician one-year program.

During the first half of last fall, we were able to have the normal study processes but COVID-19 cases increased in Estonia in November and we were forced to continue with distance



learning. We won't halt our studies. We hope we are able to gather back with onsite classes again in the spring.



Continuing Education Opportunities

Home of Hope has great potential for hosting seminars, trainings and conferences with video conferencing and recording capabilities. Because of COVID-19 we were not able to work in full mode. Nevertheless about **400 people** visited our facility to attend various seminars and conferences. Based on feedback of visitors, Home of Hope is the coziest conference center in the city!

Christian Radio

The Christian radio studio and office is located at Home of Hope. The broadcast area is **1.5-2 million** square miles. The mission of the radio is to broadcast life-changing radio programs proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout Estonia, Eastern Europe and portions of Russia. Every Sunday there are six



services from various churches on the air. According to feedback, non-Christians are also listening because this is the only Estonia-wide radio station producing and broadcasting programs that nurture people's hearts.

Pastoral Care Center

Based on the enthusiasm of students and alumni of Tartu Academy we launched the Pastoral Care Center in the autumn. Estonian people are very much in need of spiritual help but many of them don't know where to find it. Often, they are hesitant to go to church and that's why we need places that support people in their spiritual struggles outside of Church buildings. The Pastoral Care Center is able to offer that opportunity and, at the same time, provides a coordination center for Estonia's wide network of pastoral care givers.

Because of the pandemic and the restrictions limiting indoor meetings, we offer pastoral caregiver walking sessions around the city. That has been quite popular and **56 people** have taken advantage of these counseling sessions and have been helped.



Spiritual Mentoring

Currently we are building up the mentoring system in the Estonian Lutheran Church to support our pastors in their challenges. Our main focus is on young pastors who have recently graduated from the seminary or are still studying.

Home of Hope rooms are multipurpose and there is always the possibility of finding a place to meet. We are hosting pastors group meetings and also private mentoring sessions.

HOME of HOPE Rental Income

Home of Hope income for the first year was **\$35,077 USD**. We are very satisfied with this result, especially because most of this time we have been under COVID-19 pressure. In the future we will have better opportunities and we are expecting to have an annual income of **\$50,000 USD**.

Testimony of Robert Bible School team member



My name is Robert Bunder and today I have the opportunity to share the story of how God found me.

I was born in 1998 to a non-Christian family. I was raised by my mother. I have never met my father. During the time I grew up, I did not have any connections with God or church. I did not go to Sunday school and I did not have a single Christian friend.

I first encountered Christianity when I started reading history books at the age of 10. I was back then, and I still am, very interested in history. But my impression of

Christianity was of something aggressive, bad and wrong.

I was a very troublesome boy at school. I had lots of problems. I bullied other students, I did not obey orders and I had bad friends. The way I see it right now everything was going downhill for me.

But at a point, things changed for me. I do not remember the exact breaking point but I started to pay more attention in school and I lost my bad friends. The teachers noticed that I was good at history and they channeled my interests. I won competitions and by the end of primary school I was one of the best students at my school.

And I felt that this change, all these good things, I did not do it alone. It was not only my skills and ability. Someone was helping me. Someone closed all the wrong roads and guided my steps. I started looking for that mysterious helper. I visited different churches and got interested in the Bible and God.

At one point, I felt that I had to make a choice. Do I give my life to the Lord? It was not a conversion experience, more like an inner voice inside me. I decided to follow the Lord. Then started an amazing journey which still continues. I met my wife at church and we have now been married for 2 and a half years. We have a beautiful daughter. I also recognized that the Lord was calling me into the ministry. Right now, I am studying theology in order to become a pastor in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. It has been a blessing to be part of the team that organizes the Home of Hope Bible School. But most important, although I have never met my biological father, I now have a Heavenly Father who loves me very much.

My story is about someone who was very far from God, who did not know anything about God, but who the Lord still found. God bless you all!

Testimony of Agne Bible School student



My name is Agne. I'm a 38-year-old Home of Hope Bible School student.

When I first heard a radio advertisement about the new Bible School, I felt a strong desire to take part in these studies. I felt a need to know more about the Bible that has been changing the lives of so many people in the world and has been an inspiration for them.

In my childhood I attended Sunday School and I was confirmed and baptized when I was 15. However, I didn't practice my faith after this for decades.

I'm amazed how I have been inspired by the Bible School and today I can say that I have experienced a new awakening.

I have found my home church at Mustvee where Eenok Haamer is pastoring. I yearn to know more about the Bible and to go deeper in faith. Therefore, I would like to continue my studies at Bible School next year.

Testimony of Eva-Maria Participant of youth activities



My name is Eva-Maria, I'm 15 years old and I come from a Christian family. My home church is St. Peter's in Tartu. I used to go to church every Sunday and attended a Sunday school when I was younger.

My personal faith has grown a lot in the past 6 months. Christianity has always been my own inner topic and I don't talk about it with everyone. That being said, I can open up if I feel that people around me are sensible and supportive.

In my everyday life I have moments, where I see God more, and other times when I see Him less. There have been many times when I feel that it's hard to go on alone, and in those times, God seems to be so far away. Deep down I always know that He is there for me... I never forget to thank God, even when everything doesn't go as I expect or plan.

Last summer I went to a camp organized by the Estonian Lutheran youth organization and probably thanks to that camp, I have been growing fast in my faith in quite a short time. I find more joy from little things and get to meet wonderful people. At the same time, I always feel like I don't deserve it.

When Christian youth activities were launched at Home of Hope I began to participate. I like to be together with Christian youth.

I am in 8th grade at St. Peter's Lutheran Church school and one of my school tasks for 8th grade is a creativity task. Since this summer camp left a big mark on my heart, I felt that I wanted to organize an event with the same type of content and meaning.

My ideas and prayers turned into a reality and on December 20th, 2020, I organized a youth Christmas service at my home church. Mattias Haamer helped me a lot with this. Different young people talked about their faith, thoughts and feeling. We also had a worship band to lead us in music.

After the service I felt that God had blessed me and protected me so much.

Knowing that there is someone to rely on in good and bad times is encouraging. Even when sometimes we might lack faith ourselves.