



October 2018

Dear friends,

Let me begin my prayer letter just thanking God for our new students at Kyiv Theological Seminary where I am working. This year we have sixty students entered our seminary on bachelor programs and the same number on church-based programs. So currently we have 306 students on BA programs, more than 200 students studying on church-based programs. The latter is with the Church Ministry Institute based in our Seminary, partner-institution with our Seminary and with a high level of integration. There are also 42 students on two MA programs. We are very thankful for such numbers of students and are praying that the Lord would enable us to serve those students in such a way that their lives would be greatly affected so that they are better equipped for the work of spreading God's kingdom. The new students are so eager and so impatient to see immediate results from their studies for their ministry. It takes almost one year to explain to them that, in order to serve better, they have to be better prepared- and this takes longer than they tend to think. I can wholeheartedly agree with S. Hauerwas, one of the modern theologians, who noticed once that seminaries are in constant trouble. They are in trouble because of the pressures of the churches to 'dumb down' the Seminary curriculum to make seminaries more responsive to pastoral care. This is disastrous - he states - because the challenges confronting the church in our society demand more, not less, formation in the intellectual skill the church calls theology. How true it is! Fourth year students usually quickly agree with this truth, but first year students still need to learn it.

Two more prayer requests as to my Seminary work. Firstly, we are trying to improve our pastoral care of our students. We need to organize this Seminary ministry as best as possible. Everyone on Seminary faculty must be involved. To organize this work involving many people means a lot of administration. Our schedule and syllabus have to be reorganized and changed. It is quite a project! We started it in the previous academic year and we are planning to finish it this year. Secondly, please pray about our plans as to a new Masters program. We have two Masters programs of MA level. We would like to open a Masters program of MDiv and ThM level. It is a long term project of course: to create the curriculum and prepare courses, to find professors with the necessary qualifications, to prepare any necessary text books, to name just a few tasks among the most important ones. Related to this is the issue of my qualification. To be an Academic Dean in requires a qualification of PhD. Therefore, it is time for me to think seriously about my further studies. The natural choice would be to enter ThM course run by Pastor's Academy (based at London Seminary) as they will count the course I completed at London Seminary as MDiv. I'll try this year to familiarize myself with all necessary academic and financial requirements as to admission to this ThM course.

To end my letter, I'd like to share some personal and church prayer requests. As I wrote previously in the EMF prayer diary, my wife applied for a job in one Ukrainian Bank. She was interviewed and unfortunately did not succeed (the thing is as soon as our Ukrainian employers get to know about the existence of little ones, they become very slow to accept a potential employee). Since a salary of a Seminary worker at Baptist seminaries is always a matter of jokes amongst the very workers of these seminaries, we would still appreciate your prayers to find for my wife some job. The things in our church going well. I lead two groups: one is for preparation of deacons - we meet two times a month, and another is for church leaders to improve preaching skills. In November I am planning to start at my home a Bible study evangelistic group.

There is one newly converted family – we would like to start this group with them and invite also people who are not Christians to join us.

Thank you very much for reading my letter and hope that you join me in my ministry through your prayers! May the Lord richly bless you all! With love in Christ,

Vitaliy & Lyuda Maryash



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