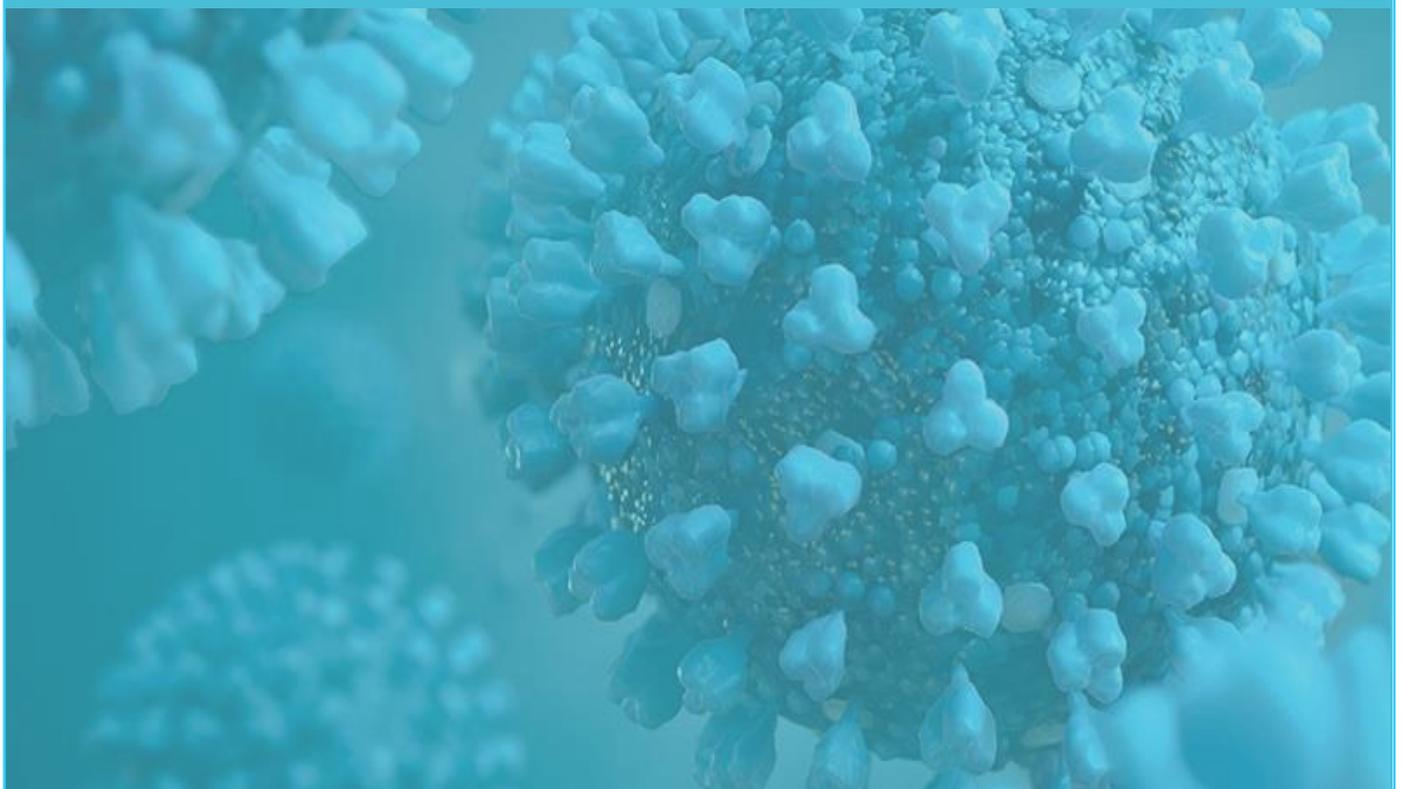


**MISSION
CRITICAL
CONCERNED
COMPASSIONATE
HOPE-FILLED**



2020 Case for Support

During the COVID-19 Pandemic



The radical starting point for fundraising is prayer and gratitude.

CAMPAIGN PRAYER

Lord, we praise your Holy Name.

Grant us the courage to do your will.

Help us share your love and the power of the Gospel with those we serve.

We dedicate this campaign to making disciples of all who experience

Your grace and creation.

Lord, may this project be blessed.

*Guide our plans, our steps, our giving and our words
as we face large tasks with high hopes.*

Lord, please continue to preside over this ministry.

Bless it and expand it.

Help us continue to change lives in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary's RESPONSE TO CORONA VIRUS 2020 Case for Support

Suddenly...

New strides planned for 2020 to advance the Seminary's mission and impact were clear, and, then, suddenly they weren't.

A global, novel virus that keeps us contained in our homes – maybe for months – is already reorienting our relationship to government, to the outside world, even to each other. Seemingly in one moment, the world is unfamiliar, unsettling and we are left asking: How many may die? What changes can we expect to see in our country, church, and world in coming months? How long will isolation last and how deep will be the societal and economic impact? Where is the bottom?

This is an extraordinary time, with a degree of uncertainty and loss we can't begin to comprehend.

Crisis leadership is about simultaneously acting fast *and* smart in response to rapidly shifting realities. With little time for deliberation, the BTMS leadership team monitored the evolving situation in Estonia, the Baltic region, and the world. Early in the conversation, the team's sense is that Coronavirus will change the world permanently.

Few experiences can prepare a team for the agility or adaptability necessary to navigate the unknowns of a global pandemic, but Baltic Methodist's leaders realize that challenge also presents opportunity.

*Committed to continually evaluate and adapt to a rapidly shifting situation, the Seminary leadership team's focus is **concern** for its family and stakeholders, **compassion** for the suffering, providing **hope** for a vibrant future, and the school's **mission critical priorities**.*

Insights with Impact

COVID-19 is changing the world. Following are some shifts in thinking identified by Seminary leaders that are shaping our future...

1. Disruption caused by the pandemic will lead to a more vital future.
2. The pandemic is affecting our collective notions of what is possible. We are forced to revise our very conception of change. It is a verity that all change is met by equal resistance, so culture shift must have one of two motivators: a vision so compelling that its promise leads people to change, or a catastrophe so pervasive that people are forced to change.
3. Loyalty to mission rather than loyalty to culture calls for listening to our common sense, our imaginations, and our eccentricities. A more expansive and braver approach to everyday existence is now crucial so that we don't fall in line with past habits or answers that are no longer as effective or as relevant.
4. Religion during quarantine will challenge conceptions of what it means to minister and to fellowship. It will expand opportunities for those who are not of a local congregation to sample sermons from afar.
5. Trust is crucial to good governance. To retain the public's trust in this exacting environment, BMTS will focus on mission, demonstrate accountability, and achieve results.
6. People are finding new ways to connect and support each other in adversity, and they are more conscious of interdependency and community. Increased love of community will be one of the benefits as we rethink the kinds of community we can create through technology and our devises.
7. Technology already provides tools to help us thrive through this adversity. Coronavirus is forcing many institutions to go virtual. Not everything can become virtual, of course, but many artificial barriers to moving more of our lives online are being removed. People are learning the difference between having to commute for an hour or working more efficiently at home, which was already an option.

Summary of the Seminary's Response to Crisis

Immediate Action Steps

- 📌 As global concerns escalate, BMTS is carefully monitoring the situation in Estonia to ensure students, faculty, and staff are cared for, no matter what happens.
- 📌 When the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in early March, everyone on campus were taught prevention measures and effective hygiene. For instance, hand sanitizers were quickly placed in the building.
- 📌 On March 24, all instruction switched to online learning using Office 365, Teams, Moodle, Tahvel, Big Blue Button, Panopto and other technologies.
- 📌 BMTS continues to go above and beyond with complying with all government directives and advice through this crisis. The projected reopen date will be monitored and evaluated in conjunction with ongoing guidance provided by government authorities.

Current Operations

- 📌 The Seminary continues to deliver **quality theological education online**. Faculty and staff are diligently working to make the transition as smooth as possible.
- 📌 Study materials and assignments are created in **three languages**: a labor-intensive process involving many people and much communication.
- 📌 While maintaining social distancing and health standards, a reduced staff comes into the **office** when absolutely necessary.
- 📌 Employees with the capability to do so, **work remotely** to carry on the operations and mission of the Seminary. Additional assistance and equipment to facilitate remote work is provided within available resources.
- 📌 Staff **coordinates** distance learning, stays up to date on all developments, and continues the long-term development and strategic planning necessary for BMTS to emerge stronger.

- 📄 Faculty and translators are effectively **partnering** to teach courses online. New skillsets are being learned and additional technologies embraced.
- 📄 The **transition** to online delivery comes at a cost. Additional equipment and increased online services are being purchased. Nobody knows how long this will last, is this a passing blizzard, a winter season or a small ice age? It seems to us, that in order to go through this, we should all have a jacket.
- 📄 Being **good stewards** of all resources, BMTS is reducing costs where possible and trying to stay within our budget.

Other Contingencies Being Considered

- 📄 Because of the expected economic impact and accompanying uncertainty about one's financial health, there may be **fewer incoming students** in the fall.
- 📄 Some **students may drop out** because they do not wish to take online courses of study.
- 📄 Some students may experience financial difficulties that affect their ability to afford tuition payments. Increased scholarship support and **flexible tuition payment plans** are necessary.
- 📄 Even if instruction could reopen in small groups, international students may still be **unable to travel** to Estonia and decide to put off studies.
- 📄 There is a very real chance that the **economy will weaken** leading to lost jobs, shortages of goods and services, an increase in investment timidity, and decreased contributions from United States donors due to the substantial number of philanthropic appeals for local and national relief.

Revised 2020 Goals

2020 Strategic Goals

1. Ensure **students**, their families, and through them, the churches and ministries they serve are safe and supported, particularly in an environment when the need for spiritual giving, compassion, and connection are heightened.
 - A. Provide students training and technical support for online courses.
 - B. For students who have lost their jobs, pay them to utilize their computer and language skills for translating study materials.
 - C. Offer flexible payment plans for tuition.
 - D. Offer opportunities for prayer and spiritual support.
2. Protect **faculty, staff**, and their families, and, as much as possible, give them freedom from fear. Continue to pay salaries and keep expectations clear that the Seminary's mission continues, albeit in new and creative ways. Encourage self care to avoid burnout and loss of mission critical staff.
3. Ensure that students continue learning online and third-year students graduate. Support and establish **online instruction** for as long as necessary. Provide proper IT support and training for this transition.

2020 Fundraising Goals

BMTS **visionary budget**, which includes some critical improvements necessary for keeping up with improvements to meet the accreditation standards, is **\$279,000**. To meet this budget, \$200,000 must be raised through philanthropic means. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, our development goals have changed from visionary goals to emergency response necessities.

Philanthropy (gifts and grants) makes up nearly three quarters of the Seminary's annual income. The Seminary's basic, pared-down total **operational budget** for 2020 is **\$214,000**. This operational budget would keep the seminary functioning.

In order to continue operations in light of the serious challenges we are facing, we MUST:

1. **Raise a minimum of \$160,500** of the \$200,000 fundraising goal in contributions and grants from individuals, groups, local churches, and foundations **by December 31, 2020**.
2. Provide a Monthly Giving Opportunity: For our faculty to teach and our students to learn, the Seminary must attract **at least \$13,375** in contributions and grants each month.
3. Approach all fundraising **with concern and compassion**. Baltic Methodist's supporters, its past donors, are now faced with increasing requests for assistance from families, communities, and their local churches. Before making gifts, economic uncertainty will give many donors pause out of fear of an unknown financial bottom.
4. Offer opportunities for people who seek ways to contribute gifts. In times of crisis, **people want to help**. The act of contributing provides individuals and organizations a sense of progress and release from feeling helpless. While no one can control a pandemic, we can have collective impact.
5. When appropriate and considering our donors' other obligations and commitments to many worthy causes, we will invite people to partner in our vision that is fruitful, well-articulated, and timely. **BMTS is mission critical for a wide range of missions and ministries in several countries**. People count on the Seminary's commitment to teach through this crisis and emerge from the experience a stronger educational institution.

2020 Fundraising Priorities

COVID-19 RESPONSE EMERGENCY FUND	\$50,000
Assistance to students in crises needing additional financial aid	\$20,000
Support for faculty and staff giving online education.....	\$13,000
Hardware, Software and any other technological equipment needed to resource online instruction growth	\$12,000
Developing Library Online resources	\$5,000
SCHOLARSHIPS	\$100,000
(Salaries for faculty and staff, including benefits, are partially paid out of this fund)	
Alexander Kuom Theological Education Fund.....	\$76,500
3 Estonian Pastor Full-Ride Scholarships..... (3x\$4,500)	\$13,500
Full-Ride Scholarships for Mission Critical students	(2x\$5,000) \$10,000
CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE	\$50,000
Rent.....	\$21,474
Office expenses and communication	\$5,500
Translation and other technology equipment.....	\$3,300
Furniture inventory.....	\$2,500
Other costs (faculty continuing ed, international collaboration, membership fees, marketing, business travel expenses).....	\$17,226
2020 TOTAL Philanthropic Support Goal	\$200,000
2020 Minimum that MUST be raised to stay operational	\$160,500

Monthly goal: \$13,375 - \$16,667
Weekly goal: \$3,344 - \$4,167
Quarterly goal: \$40,125 - \$50,000

Questions & Answers

Q

How long will protective isolation last for the Seminary?

A

On March 12th the Estonian government declared an **emergency situation until May 1st, which is now extended until May 17**, at which point the government will reevaluate the situation. The Seminary will take this crisis day by day and week by week.

Q

What will graduation and student admissions look like?

A

Our faculty are working actively with the students who are in their final year and we anticipate that they will all be able to complete their studies on schedule. The commencement ceremony, however, will likely be held in August.

We do not know how the situation will affect applications or the start of the new academic year which typically is the last week of August. Seminary leaders will continue to monitor developments and follow the government's instructions. If teaching in the classroom is still not possible, the Seminary will continue to offer quality teaching online.

Q

What will happen to staff and faculty?

A

BMTS has a strong moral obligation to stand by faculty and staff. While dealing with many challenges, this is an opportunity to display solidarity, resilience, and innovation.

Q

What comes of BTMS mission, development and fundraising goals?

A

The BMTS mission is more relevant than ever. Staff and faculty are helping local churches and the community, clergy and lay leaders are asking for online

courses about how to serve their congregations during isolation, and Seminary equipment is being used to broadcast services and keep people connected.

First, we must be sensitive to all the pressures donors are experiencing. BMTS will continue to invite potential donors to give to our vision of fruitfulness and to our mission that is fruitful, knowing that some past donors may not be able to give right now or may not be able to give as much as in previous years.

Q *Is there a silver lining to this crisis?*

A Estonia is much better prepared than most of the world for online education. BMTS faculty and staff are learning how to take advantage of Estonia's technological strength and doing so in three languages! For instance, upgraded Wi-Fi, installed just weeks ago, has been essential in this transition. This is a massive leap forward.

God has provided us with creativity and ability to emerge from the pandemic with a stronger and more vital future.

Q *How can I help?*

A There are many ways to help the seminary through this time. Please include this ministry in your prayers. We trust on God to lead us through difficult times. We also welcome support. As you are able, please make a donation.

Q *Can I get updates?*

A BMTS website is available in English also www.emkts.ee. BMTS rector also provides updates about seminary operations through **Prayerchain** newsletter. Use this online form to **subscribe**: <http://eepurl.com/qmrLY9>.

How To Give?

GIVE ONLINE

Through UMC Global Ministries <https://advance.umcmmission.org>
Search for project: Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary Scholarships
Advance Special Number: **15021B**

WRITE A CHECK

Please make check payable to ADVANCE GCFA.
Write **Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary Scholarships Advance 15021B** on check Memo Line. Mail to:

Advance GCFA
P.O. Box 9068
New York, NY 10087-9068.

Or, make check payable to WORLD METHODIST EVANGELISM.
Write **Gift to Baltic Methodist Theological Seminary** on check Memo Line. Mail to:

World Methodist Evangelism
P.O. Box 8142, Lafayette, IN 47903
3072 Hamilton St, West Lafayette, IN 47906

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Thank you for investing in education of future church leaders!

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