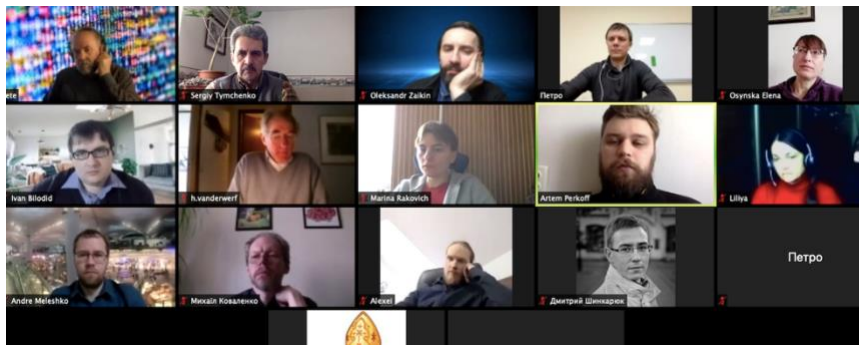


Dear friends and partners in ministry: Greetings from Kyiv!

It was 25 years ago last month that our family moved back to Ukraine after studying in Denver Seminary and then working on the religious visa. I am really excited about what the Lord has been doing in our lives in Ukraine through our partnership in the Gospel! It would not be possible without your prayers and support. Let me give you a short update on the current work of REALIS and our family.

The new reality of living under COVID-19 restrictions has not changed our vision, though it prompted us to understand it from a new perspective and gave us a new sense of urgency. It also brought some significant correctives to the way we run our programs and, most importantly, has opened new doors for our ministry. There is no doubt that God is working powerfully in the midst of multiple local crises as well as in this global crisis that we are all experiencing together.



Our new **Digital Theology program** has been a success! It is incredible to see how much more relevant this program has become during a time when so many churches have recognized the need to understand and practice new digital tools in their

ministry and everyday life. Some of our program participants are software developers, others are pastors, missionaries, and even Orthodox priests. It was very natural for us with this group of students to switch to online education when the quarantine forced everyone to work from home.

The “**Preaching Club**” started by REALIS has also become very active since the beginning of the COVID-19 quarantine. Almost every Monday evening we meet online with a group of young brothers and sisters who want to learn to preach. It has been very rewarding to see their excitement of working with the Word of God and preaching it in various settings to both believers and seekers.

During the quarantine we were approached by leaders of two groups of churches with a request to provide education and training for their new generation of leaders. Currently we are working on putting together a curriculum called “**Ministry and Leadership**” that would fit the needs of both groups. The main focus of this program will be using the Word of God in daily life and ministry. We plan to start classes this October and teach it both online and face-to-face.

Our international **research project “REACH Forgiveness”** is now going through its most important stage. With over 600 participants we are studying how practicing the principles of forgiveness helps people heal inner wounds and cope with pain in their lives. Participating in this project has given many believers new tools to minister to others. For non-believers, it has given

them a chance to think about true values in life and consider joining a local group of forgiving people who were forgiven by their Savior.

Due to the quarantine, this stage had been delayed for a few months while we adapted our research tools to online work. Unexpectedly, working online has been no less engaging or exciting. We have developed connections with many of the participants. Instead of working with people who live in one or two locations in East Ukraine, moving our project online has allowed us to work with people from many cities and small towns.

Here are some of the responses from those who completed their participation in our research:

*"Thank you for inviting me to participate in this project!!! It was very helpful to think about this topic and draw conclusions!!! All the best!!!!"*

*"Thank you so much. I learned a lot for myself. And I took advantage of using [ these tools] some time ago. The project is very, very useful. I was very pleased to take part in it."*

*"Thank you very much; I managed to rethink my grievances!"*

I would love to tell you also about our counseling ministry but will save it for next time. Instead, let me tell you about our **family**. I really enjoyed working with Katya on our forgiveness research project. With her experience as director of global digital marketing in Switzerland, she has offered first-class expertise in moving our research online. However, she is already on her way out of Ukraine and now will bring her talents to the US. She was accepted to work on her MBA at Rochester University with an almost full scholarship and plans to leave as soon as her visa will be ready. Meanwhile, Ilya has been accepted to Tufts University, but he and Nathalie plan to go there early next year. He is working again at Kyiv Post, keeping all Ukrainian and international news under his control (you can trust this media outlet while Ilya helps the chief editor with his responsibilities!). Irina and I are realizing that our house, which has been youthful and full of energy for the last few years, might become much quieter in the next few months. And since we are already sharing our thoughts, photos, and emotions with our "American children," Masha and Michael, in a big family text group on WhatsApp, we are afraid that next year we will lose our hearts in the US almost completely. Thankfully, we will still have Andriy and his gentle fiancée Mariana around!

As all our long-distance travel plans were cancelled this summer, Irina and I enjoy weekends on the charming and clean Desna River – an hour's drive north from Kyiv. We would love to hear from you. And if you want to know about our current needs, we can tell you: we need to get a newer car as our old Skoda is no longer reliable for any trips further than the Desna River. We saved some money so we are hopeful: an additional 3 or 4 thousand dollars will make our dream a reality!



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With much thanks for your prayers and support,  
Sergiy and Irina

