

April 17, 2021

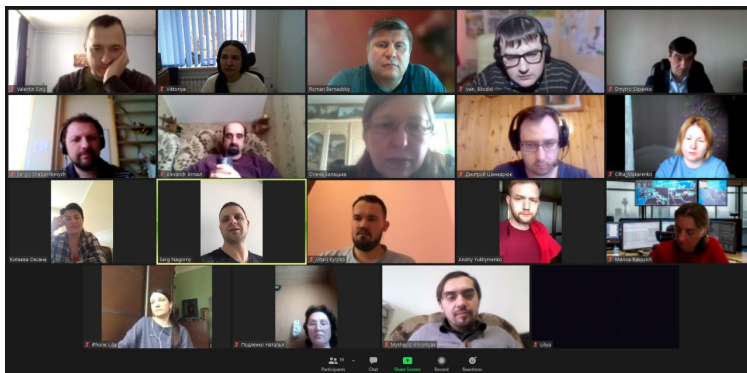
Dear friends,

This is a letter with three prayer needs relating to (1) a threat from Russia, (2) REALIS team members, and (3) our family plans.

1. You probably know that the threat of a large-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine has increased dramatically in the last few weeks. Russian forces on the Ukraine border are much larger than they have been at any time since 2014 (when Russia annexed Crimea and part of Ukraine's eastern territory). On Ukraine's north-eastern border alone, Russia has placed at least 110,000 troops, according to the most recent report of the Ukrainian Minister of Defence. We are very thankful for the support expressed by a number of countries, especially the USA. Yet we understand that in case of an invasion, the situation will be not easy at all. Please pray for God's protection and His influence on minds and hearts of political leaders in this difficult time.



2. Thanks to all of you who prayed for the REALIS team last week when we welcomed an online visit from the EAAA (Euro-Asian Accrediting Association). This introductory visit went very well, though instead of three days it lasted five days. As a result, REALIS and its graduate educational programs were thoroughly examined, many good recommendations were given, and we received a year to make adjustments in order to fit the standards of the EAAA. Of course, we got both compliments and criticism. For example, we were praised for having a high-quality board of trustees and for being innovative and relevant. However, we were criticised for not filing all regular formal discussions of our lecturers, for not



developing a wider network of supporters, and for not investing more in our building and library. The REALIS team is both encouraged and stimulated to work on strengthening our organisation and its performance. And in addition to gaining many good and practical recommendations, I think we may have gained a few good partners in the ministry of the Gospel!

Currently, we continue with our Leadership in Ministry and Digital Theology programs. We pray for a new director for our Christian Counseling program that was put on pause. We plan to restart our Socio-political Ethics and Theology program this year. And the REALIS team gained a new lecturer/researcher - Anastasiya Salnykova. She has PhD from Vancouver

University, is a specialist in Political Science and Conflict Resolution, and is a member of our church.

We need prayers for our staff members: Sergey and Elena Svechnikov (husband and wife), two of our counsellors who currently have Covid with pneumonia, and Ludmila Sprynsian, our researcher who had Covid one year ago and still struggles with its consequences.

3. Iryna and I are very excited to visit the USA in April 25 - June 5. Thanks to the kindness of our friends in Peoria, we will have a car to travel to Salt Lake City, where Masha and her husband, Michael, live, and maybe some other destinations. We have three main goals: (1) to visit our children; (2) to visit some of you - our friends and partners, and (3) to get vaccinated while we are in the States. The situation with Covid is becoming very difficult in Ukraine; there are only five fully vaccinated people in the whole country! Please pray for us as we travel after a long quarantine in Kyiv, having worked mostly from home. Pray especially for Irina, whose health has made flying more and more difficult for her over the years.

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

