



AUGUST 2020 NEWSLETTER



The Preaching, Singing, God-fearing Stunt Pilot

By Tom Smith, ITEM Executive Director

In *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis writes that Sarah Smith is “one of the great ones you never heard of” for “fame in this country and fame on earth are two quite different things.”

Some day in the heavenly country, Lord willing, you will meet Algimantas Kvedaravičius, pastor and leader in the Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania, and he will make you think of Sarah Smith.

He was born March 10, 1942 in the village of Sližiai in northern Lithuania. His family were members of the Evangelical Reformed Church into which he was baptized in 1942 and confirmed in 1958.

After high school, Algimantas studied physics at a university in the Lithuanian capital city of Vilnius, which led to a 30-year career working for the Venta Microelectronics Scientific Research Institute. In 1972, he earned a PhD at the Institute of Electronics in Moscow.

He taught at the Institute of Polytechnics in Kaunas, published 26 scientific articles, earned patents on three inventions, spoke at 12 scientific conferences (including at Cornell University), supervised student research and published a textbook on the “production of silicon integrated schemes.”

When Lithuania declared its independence from the Soviet Union, Algimantas got involved. He received a state medal for his efforts.

In the early 1990s, Algimantas became active in the life of the restored Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church. He was a chairman for the elders of Vilnius’ parish, and later his duties involved membership in the Synod Collegium responsible for church administration.

He worked on the restoration of church property as well as the revitalization and registration of the parishes. Algimantas was one of the main people to get the Vilnius’ Evangelical Reformed church building, which had been turned into a movie theater by the Soviets, returned to the believers.

In September 1995, he was ordained as pastor in the Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church. He became the Synod Collegium’s vice president in 2000. In 2002, he was ordained as senior pastor for the Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church. Two years later he became General Superintendent of the church, a position he held until he died in April.

After starting his ministry in the church as a lecturer, he studied theology via correspondence with the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia’s John Knox Theological College. Then, he studied ancient languages at Klaipeda University (Lithuania). In 2006, Algimantas graduated from the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary (Riga, Latvia), receiving a Master of

Theology degree. Among his other works, Algimantas translated poetical texts from Hebrew and published collections of sermons, psalms and songs.

Algimantas led a full and robust life. He was an acrobatic stunt pilot, had a ham radio hobby, performed in a wind orchestra and also sang in choral groups.

Pastor Kvedaravičius was a tireless fighter for the true and pure faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to which he gave everything, including his very self. Frequently interviewed by journalists, he was the public face of the Protestant community in Lithuania, which makes up less than 1 percent of the population. He is survived by his wife Zita, son Vytautas, and daughters Vaiva and Laima.



Working Together in Africa to Build God’s Kingdom

By Tom Smith, ITEM Executive Director

This summer, ITEM has been discussing ways in which we can work with six other ministries to provide reformed theological education in West Africa. While ITEM is not currently working in West Africa, we are looking to begin work in Liberia in the near future. Each ministry has its own niche. We humbly admit that each is limited, and we also acknowledge that more can be done for God’s glory when we work together.

Questions being discussed are:
What types of training are we doing and where?

- What makes our program distinct?
- What obstacles and challenges are we facing?
- What help do we need?
- What resources and help can we offer to others?
- What are the best ways to foster collaboration?

ITEM is one of the few organizations providing college- and seminary-level training to church leaders. We have great instructors and modules we are willing to share with others.

One of our biggest needs is for recorded lectures to make available to not only in West Africa but in all the fields we serve. Please pray God blesses these ministry discussions. Scripture indicates God wants his people to work together and not be divided. As Psalm 133:1 says, “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”

Prayer Requests

1. Will Hesterberg is teaching Biblical Leadership in late July and early August online to three sites in India.
2. Abraham Kogo from MINTS will teach Church History for ITEM at All Nations College in Kenya, Aug.17- 21
3. Rev. Juan Patt, Belize site director, is recovering from prostatitis.
4. COVID19 is ravaging Cochabamba. Hospitals and morgues are full. People wrap up the dead and leave them on the streets to be eventually picked up by the city. Most travel is prohibited other than to buy food. Site director Rev. Gerson Cruz breaks the law to deliver food to students and families in dire need.
5. Our Philippines partner, SMO, is struggling to find effective ways to do ministry with students due to COVID19 lockdown restrictions.

How to Contribute

In the U.S. send contributions to ITEM, PO Box 31456, St Louis, MO 63131 or at www.ITEM.org through PayPal.
Email Executive Director Tom Smith at tomsmith@item.org or call 717.640.6268

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