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Serving Christ by equipping pastors,
teachers and lay leaders in Reformed,
Biblical doctrine in Central and
Eastern Europe and the former Soviet
Union

NEWSITEMS

Fall Edition

NICK VOGELZANG, FRIEND AND CO- WORKER

A TRIBUTE TO REV. NICK VOGELZANG

By Dr. Gerard Van Groningen,
ITEM President-emeritus



Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matthew 9:37-38

We were in Calvin College and Seminary during the years of post World War II. We were older by eight to ten years than most of our classmates. Nick had a hardware business background and I had an agricultural business background. It was during our "bag lunch" hours in the college science room that we shared our hopes and concerns as aspiring ministers and missionaries.

During the years 1955-1995 our paths crossed a number of times. On our way for a second term of missionary service in Australia we spent a day in Salt Lake City in the home of missionary Nick and Kay Vogelzang. We struck a responsive chord as we chatted and fellowshiped. During 1971-1983 our paths intertwined again. Nick was pastor in the Sheldon Christian Reformed church and I was teaching at Dordt College (Sioux Center, IA). Nick was an enthusiastic friend and encourager. We kept in contact while he served in various congregations in the West. I served as professor of Old Testament Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS., 1980-as President of Trinity Christian College and after 1984, as adjunct professor of Old Testament theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. During these decades we learned to appreciate each other as men, and our families, as willing and ready servants of the Lord and as obedient servants of the Lord who had commissioned his servants to go out and preach the gospel.

It was during the time I was teaching at Covenant Seminary, 1985-1998, that we resumed our correspondence. He had begun his efforts to bring the gospel to communist Russia and began the program he entitled "Christ for Russia." His newsletters, describing his efforts were enthusiastic reports of the Lord's blessing on his and fellow workers' efforts in the Soviet Republics – Russia and Ukraine. I was impressed but did not consider participating directly with the "Christ For Russia" project since I was involved in an educational project in Brazil and teaching almost a full load as adjunct professor of Old Testament at Covenant Seminary. But Nick was not to be kept at a distance. While planning to visit a granddaughter who was studying at Saint Louis University, Nick and Eleanor (his first wife had died) inquired if they could be guests in our home.

Harriet and I readily agreed. In the living room of our home in St. Louis we were convinced that we should join in the work initiated by Nick and his fellow workers. I agreed to serve as president of the "Christ for Russia" project provided Nick and Eleanor would continue as enthusiastic participants in the developing work in Eastern Europe. I requested Dr. R. David Ludwick to assist. We traveled to Denver, where Nick was residing at the time and were formally inducted as leaders in the "Christ for Russia" organization.

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NICK VOGELZANG, FRIEND AND CO- WORKER

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David Ludwick and Jonathan Taylor (ARP), who agreed to work with us, made a visit to the places where Nick had initiated contacts of evangelism. Various programs of outreach were established. Nick correctly felt that, as he was an initiator, others should serve effectively as developers. In that role a number of us, St. Louis residents, took up the challenge to spread the gospel and teach the life-giving truths to eager ears and hungry hearts in various areas of Eastern Europe.

Nick has been translated to glory. He has indeed been a warrior for the Lord in His Eternal Kingdom. Yes, as a warrior, he did great work as an initiator, establishing projects and programs that others could develop.

To God be the glory.

**Dr. Gerard Van Groningen,
October 2006**



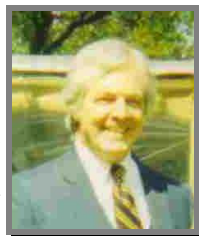
The work started by Rev. Vogelzang continues to grow. International Theological Education Ministries, Inc. is now working with a Reformed group in Lithuania (to the left: Rev. Algimantas talking to one of the people living next to his house where he was born).

Picture to the right shows an annual village festival on Pentecost five hours of songs and poetry south of Vilnius, Lithuania. Below (left): graduation day at Kiev Bible College. Below (right): Kiev Sunday evangelical outreach in a Ukrainian village of 100 where the gospel has never been heard before.



ONE OF US

*By Dr. R. David Ludwick,
ITEM President*



Some time is spent in our youth chasing dreams, some time is for reality (not as is evidenced by what we see on TV, the reality shows). Nick Vogelzang was "one of us!" He was visionary, he loved people, and he loved serving them, but he served our God. He was also a salesman. A persuader, a friend, and an encourager to me and to, dare I say, hundreds of others.

On one occasion when we were talking I told him, "If only you had one of the straw sailor boater hats, a cane, a striped blazer and white pants, you could be the quintessential "Barker for God." He laughed and chided me for putting him in such a category with God. I recall also talking to him about his retirement and how he would miss "going on the road", visiting with the people, sharing in the life conversation of a large group meeting and all the fervor and

intensity of a man driven by Christ in service to Him in the moment of one-on-one small group conversation.

Eleanor is a gracious complement to all that was good and zealous in Nick. She was indeed a completer and the gift of God to him and for him. She exemplifies the woman in Prov. 31 to all who knew her or ever entered her countenance.

If one could say, "I knew him well, but I did not know him very long," it would be a testimony to his gregarious guileless pursuit of the work our Father gave to him in his call to the ministry.

Hallelujah Amen!

David Ludwick, October 2006

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS

The following is an excerpt from an interview of Rev. Kristofer (K) and Jone (J) Holroyd by Dr. R. David Ludwick, President of I.T.E.M. (D), conducted on 25 October 2006

D. Born and raised in Wyoming?

K. That's right, Cheyenne, Wyoming, home of the world's largest outdoor rodeo.

D. With a background like that, how did you come to be interested in missions?

K. I have always felt a call to ministry, since High School anyway, and after avoiding your invitations to teach in the Ukraine for 2 years, I finally gave in—my life hasn't been the same since.

D. That sounds very "trip the light" fantastic, but some truly intense introspection and examination must have occurred during those times...?

K. It happened while I was in Romania. I have never felt a sense of fulfillment like I did when I was teaching there. I knew that I was doing what I was called to do, what I was created to do.

D. Since the day that you realized that your life was to be changed forever (because of missions), what has He done to assure you of your call?

K. Well, first, I met my wife (Jone, a native Lithuanian). We met during my first trip to Lithuania at the church in Vilnius. She was the children's Sunday school teacher, and during my visit, she was my translator.

D. With whom will you be working in Lithuania?

K. I will be working with the local denomination—the Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania, currently composed of 14 small congregations and 2 pastors—to help rebuild the church in Vilnius, the capital city of Lithuania, through preaching, counseling, teaching, mentoring, and more. In Vilnius, I will be working with Rev. Algimantas Kvedaravicius, the President of the Synod Collegium.

D. Who is Algimantas?

K. Algimantas was a physicist for the former Soviet Union, who later trained and worked in the United States (he was instrumental in the development of nano technology). Due to the liberalization of the church in Lithuania, he left his work as a physicist and became an ordained minister in the Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania. His zealot work for the purity of the church helped lead to a division in the denomination in which the liberals and the conservatives went separate ways.

D. A scientist! Now a theologian and pastor? Doesn't that give you cause to pause?

K. Not really. His zealotness for the church is clearly demonstrated in his tireless efforts for the church, and his love for God and the purity of the church is clearly demonstrated in his passion to study the word. I am privileged to

work under his tutelage.

D. I anticipate that you will go on for graduate study in order for you to meet your mission mandate involving seminary-level teaching.

K. It has been my understanding that ITEM requires my continued education. Therefore, I have enrolled in a program out of Heverlee-Leuven, Belgium through which I expect to finish both my Th.M. and my Ph.D. I recently began the Th.M. work and expect to finish by spring of next year, after which I will begin my Ph.D. work.

D. What is your mission mandate?

K. To help God's people to know Him more and to love Him better.

D. What will you be doing with regard to language studies?

K. My greatest asset for language studies is my wife! In her I have a live-in tutor. Though tools for learning Lithuanian are sparse in the U.S., I have been able to find a grammar book. In addition, my wife creates more homework assignments and tests for me. I also expect to utilize some of the classes available in Lithuania for non-native speakers to learn the language.

D. Will you teach and preach in Lithuanian?

K. I expect to preach and teach Bible studies in Lithuanian; however, those in Lithuania, and the administrators of Baltic Reformed Theological Reformed Seminary in Riga, with whom I will be working—have asked that I only teach "classes" in English. Until I'm more comfortable with the language, I anticipate my priorities to be: 1) learning the language—maybe up to 60% of my time the first year; 2) personal preparation for the ministry, personal prayer and study; 3) classes and meetings other than in the pulpit.

D. Will there be opportunities to interact with the other students, professors, etc? What about family obligations?

K. Family deserves, for sure, to be in a top position even though I realize that ministry responsibilities will compete for that position intensely. Other activities like the politics of the church, evangelism, Bible studies, etc., rank thereafter according to need, opportunity, and availability to meet those needs.

D. What will you be doing specifically within "the church"?

K. If by the church you mean, what I will be doing within the edifice...I will be preaching, teaching, counseling, discipling, and whatever possible and practical to increase my knowledge of the language and culture.

D. Do you expect to have a bigger family?

K. We do, we are only waiting for Jone to finish her school. She has a year and a half left for her Bachelor's degree.

D. How long do you expect to do this kind of work?

K. I am at God's disposal! Where He leads we will go!

D. What will you study pursuing educational degrees in Belgium?

K. My area will be the Old Testament, and I expect

to write my dissertation on Speech Act Theory in the prophetic books (studying things like illocutionary acts and the conditionality of the prophetic messages of judgment).

D. What about the liturgy of the church?

K. They still use the original liturgy of the 1600's, so to Americans it looks very Roman Catholic.

D. What do you mean by that?

K. Robes, scripted prayers, strict adherence to a church calendar, more formal than our most conservative or traditional worship services. My wife and I attend Covenant Presbyterian Church, which has a fairly traditional style of "high worship," here in St. Louis, but when we were visiting a more contemporary church—with praise songs and a praise band—she was very disturbed. When I later asked her what was wrong, she said, "I thought the Covenant Church was contemporary!"

D. "Robes!!!!" You mean black, with lots of buttons down the front? White color tabs sticking out of the top?

K. Yes, and they wear a gold Huguenot cross around their neck, without which, you may not preach.

D. What about cost of living? Is there anything comparable in the U.S.?

K. Not really, the standard of living in Lithuania is quite a bit lower than in the U.S.

J. Americans have no idea what "poor" is. When I arrived in America, I didn't see anybody that I would have said is "really poor." Even the "homeless people" wear such nice clothes by comparison to the people we will be serving.

K. As to cost of living, Jone and I will be living on less than I make at McDonald's working full time now.

D. You commented when we were "off the record" about having the possibility of twenty seminary students graduate at the same time and that they would be unable to preach because they would be without the chain and cross of the office. This seems to go hand in hand with the cost of living as the reason for the absence of the cross would not be lack of qualification, but simply the cost of a brass Huguenot cross.

J. I am not sure, maybe as little as \$25-50!

D. Is there anything else you would like to add?

K. While my title is designated "Scholar in Residence," I will be involved in virtually all aspects of ministry: training, administration, teaching, preaching, discipleship, and wherever I'm needed in the churches in which I am serving. I look forward to corresponding with anyone interested in our work and who would come to help, to teach, to work in camps, anything at all. Also, please help spread the word about this work; we are available for presentations in your churches, Bible studies, small groups, etc. We would love to share more with any who are interested.

D. Thank you.

October 25, 2006

MISIJA LIETUVAI

“Mano tauta sunaikinama, nes jai stinga papinimo.”

UPDATES

Praise God! Praise God! Praise God! Jonė has received her green card! Thank you so much for all your prayers and encouragement. Jonė and I are so thankful that we get to stay together as we finish raising support. After she received her green card, she joined me at McDonald’s. It is nice having her at work with me, she works the same shifts I do, and it gives her another opportunity to continue to develop her English speaking skills. Taking orders from such a diverse group of customers really helps her learn the different accents in our language. This job is also Jonė’s first job, so she welcomes your prayers.

You can continue to praise God with us: Sunday, October 15, I was ordained. Being ordained was a very humbling experience: to think that I am considered an elder of the church is a grave responsibility. I am immediately aware of my inadequacies and worthlessness, but I am also exceedingly joyful that God has counted me worthy of this calling.

Jonė continues her translation of the Westminster Confession: she recently finished chapter 5. She and I also continue to proofread the Shorter Catechism, and are currently finishing our final edit. Here is a small sample: K: Koks žmogaus svarbiausias tikslas? A: Žmogaus svarbiausias tikslas yra garbinti Dievą ir amžinai juo mėgautis (Q. What is the chief end of man? A. Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever).

As far as support raising: after our trip out West, we have begun to hear back from churches and families, and our level of support continues to grow. We have broken the 25% mark for pledged monthly support, and we eagerly await to hear back from more families and churches with whom we spoke. Please continue to pray for our financial support: pray for God’s provision for this work in Lithuania; pray that God will provide more opportunities for us to speak to churches and other groups; pray that our financial goals will be met, and pray that those goals will be met quickly so that we can return to Lithuania. Please especially pray for God to provide for our monthly support. These next few months we will be concentrating our support raising in the Missouri area, so please also pray for us as we write, call, and visit local Missouri churches: please pray that God will grant us opportunities to share the work He will do through us, and pray that God will raise up churches, groups, and individuals to support us both in prayer and financially.

Finally, please continue to pray for Jonė and I personally. Support raising can be very difficult and frustrating, and there are often very low points emotionally and spiritually. It is very difficult some days to go to work at McDonald’s, when we know we have been called to vocational ministry overseas. However, we know that God has called us to work here for a time, and McDonald’s has been very good to us. In fact, we are currently talking with the McDonald’s in Lithuania to see if I might work there part-time to help supplement some of our income.

Thanks for all your prayers and support.
Kristofer and Jonė Holroyd

NEEDS

Pray for us as we write, call, and visit local Missouri churches: Please pray that God will grant us opportunities to share the work He will do through us, and pray that God will raise up churches, groups, and individuals to support us both in prayer and financially.

Pray for financial support: please continue to pray for God’s provision for this work in Lithuania. Pray that God will provide more opportunities for us to speak to churches and other groups; pray that our financial goals will be met, and pray that those goals will be met quickly so that we can return to Lithuania. Please especially pray for God to provide for our monthly support.

Pray for our translation of the Westminster Confession and its publication.

Pray for Kris’ study of Lithuanian: Kris continues to study Lithuanian; pray that God will give him aptitude for these studies, and pray that he will learn quickly and that he will be diligent in his studies.

In case you were wondering: I hold to the system of doctrine outlined in the Westminster Confession of Faith. I believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the infallible, inerrant Word of God, the only rule to direct us how to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. I believe that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and that without sin. Christ’s perfect—sinless—life, His substitutionary death on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave three days later provides for our salvation. Our being born in sin—the sin of Adam imputed to us—leaves us dead in our trespasses, unable to do anything to merit salvation. But God, by grace through faith, makes us alive in Christ, giving us salvation though we were enemies of God by imputing the righteousness of Christ to us. We respond in thanksgiving by living lives obedient to Him, eagerly awaiting Christ’s return.

Kris Holroyd, October 2006

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