

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin – June 2010

I was privileged to receive a visit from Gordon and Carol Sawatzky recently. I am pleased to be able to announce – that Gordon has agreed to join the advisory board of the *Alliance for Vulnerable Mission*! Gordon has had long and varied experience of mission in Africa, including 10 years of aviation followed by various assignments in difficult countries such as Sudan, Congo etc. He is a missionary with *Africa Inland Mission*.

I gave the link to an article in the last bulletin, but want to make further reference to it now. It provides many amazing insights into issues of language and translation especially to the African context that should be a MUST for our subscribers to read. It is not an easy read. It is written by a competent linguist who has done careful research. This paper identifies an enormous and destructive communication gap between official languages used to communicate development (the same could be said of mission) and local African tongues. It goes on to examine the nitty-gritty of inter-cultural communication, and then recommends a means known as *Konon* to bridge the intercultural gap.

http://www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/06_4/bearth15.htm

An article by Adegaju describes how African languages are increasingly ignored and sidelined in Nigeria, even though the academic linguists agree that their use is essential! Adegaju asks ‘why’ this is happening. Even church goers prefer to attend English language services so as to practice their Western-linguistic skills ...

<http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol2no3/EmpoweringAfricanLanguages.pdf>

Richard Tiss heads an organisation with some similar aims to the *AVM*, called *Wiconi International*. *Wiconi* aims to remove barriers to and build bridges with indigenous Indian peoples in North America. “We carry a hope and a vision that the possibility exists to experience a better life in our broken world. As we seek to live and walk among the people in a good way by following the ways of Jesus-- affirming, respecting and embracing the God-given cultural realities of Native American and Indigenous people, not rejecting or demonizing them, we believe we will bring words of hope and life!” says Richard. See:

<http://www.wiconi.com>

Dambisa Moyo has achieved fame for promoting a case against aid which echoes much of the message of *AVM*. For her personal web page see <http://www.dambisamoyo.com/> and for reviews of perhaps her most famous book ‘Dead Aid’ see <http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/economic/moyod.htm>

Please join in the Lausanne conversations! These are already very active on the web. There are MANY excellent conversations about mission going on at this site. A good place to start to explore, is at the *AVM* site: <http://conversation.lausanne.org/groups/view/1024> Here’s another conversation that will be of interest to VMers. Dewi Hughes in this post says: “So I asked why a local man was preaching to his own people in a language they could not understand. I’m prepared to admit that my memory of that whispered conversation may not be very precise by now but the answer to the final question is indelibly burnt into my memory: ‘He’s been to theological college!’” See:

<http://conversation.lausanne.org/conversations/detail/10036>

A conference / seminar with the title: *Colonial Missions and Postcolonial Missiologies* is to be held from 28th to 29th October 2010 in Atlanta. Anyone interested see <http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=308183614498> for details.

Hosting communities may not be able to refuse short-term mission's trips, according to Vinoth Ramachandra's blog entitled 'Who Says "No" to "Mission Trips"?' Find out more at <http://vinothramachandra.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/who-says-no-to-mission-trips/> (also reposted as a Lausanne conversation).

I hope to meet new and old faces during my 'tour' of missionary and theological training colleges later this year. See <http://www.vulnerablemission.com/jim-harries-travel-2010/> for details. Please contact me if you would like us to meet. 'Welcome' to some of the sessions.

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