



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

www.vulnerablemission.org

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

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Volume 10, Number 4.

Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM



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The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages some missionaries from the West to engage in their ministries using local languages and resources.

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[See here for details; UK conference Vulnerable Mission: what it is, and why we need it](#)

[All Nations College, Hertford, 31st May to 2nd June 2018](#)

- [An interesting Letter from Africa by the BBC: In defence of aid workers' lives of luxury.](#)

The letter cites Elizabeth Ohene: “It took a while but I came to the conclusion once conditions exist in a country for aid agencies and peacekeeping forces to arrive, it became a playground for all kinds of people. The only remedy is to make sure your country doesn't have a war, a famine or any crisis that would invite the aid and peacekeeping industry.”



The Pneuma Review

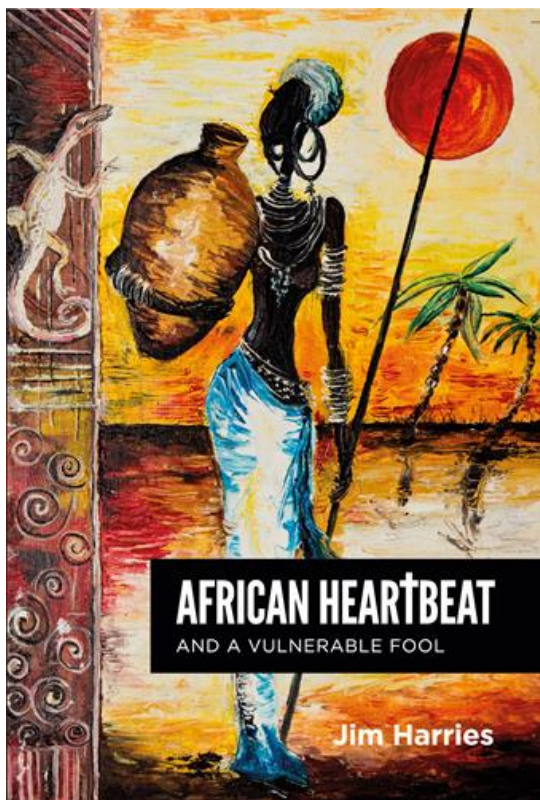
Journal of Ministry Resources and Theology for Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministries & Leaders

- [Pneuma Review is looking for writers on ecclesial and theological topics. See here for details from them.](#)

- **‘Cultural Metaphors and Development’** is the title to this recently published article by Jim Harries. Posted in WCIU Journal here (see the various responses already posted to it in the journal.) Here is part of the conclusion to this article: “Bringing sustainable change requires a transformation of and not merely a bypassing of a society’s language(s). Hence development intervention into Africa that is to be sustainable must be administered using African languages. As European thinking has been transformed by the adoption of the metaphor of “life as a journey,” and other metaphors arising from long and deep exposure to the Christian Scriptures, the best thing we can do to encourage sustainable socioeconomic development in Africa is to promote faith in the same Scriptures in their languages in their communities.”
- See this article for an amazing **synopsis of higher education in today’s ‘global south’**, with a focus on a university in Vietnam.

Ha, Phan Le, 2018, ‘Higher Education, English, and the idea of ‘the West’: globalising and encountering a global south regional university. *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 2018.

Editor’s comment: As a Christian, I have to be amazed at how much of the rest of the globe is desperately seeking to emulate structures that Protestants built to the glory of God.

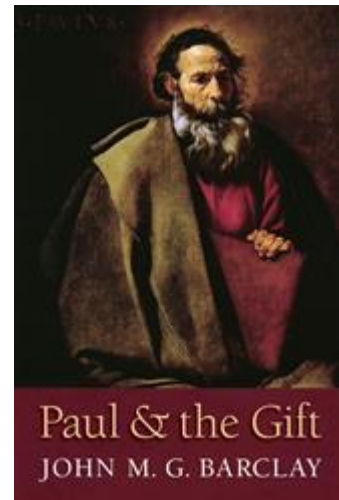


- [See here for a new review by Beth Snodderly of the novel *African Heartbeat*.](#)

Here is part of Beth’s review: Presenting “novel” concepts in fictional form is a good way to get past peoples’ initial resistance to some of the “vulnerable mission” thinking Jim Harries has been trying for years to get across to Western mission agencies and workers. The descriptions of the people and surroundings are compelling. Through interesting dialog and circumstances we learn about the dilemma of a white missionary, Philo, wondering if he should do things the African way along with the humble acknowledgment that he doesn’t know the answers. Many interesting adventures illustrate the African way of life in contrast to the missionaries’ comfortable, more luxurious lives.

- Papers presented at the recent (November 2017) AVM conference in PA, USA, are to appear in the latest (April 2018) edition of global missiology. See globalmissiology.org any time after the 1st of April ...
- **Discussions on ‘faith and thought’** tend to centre on Western people and Western wisdom. Here is a challenge to that in a short article written by Jim Harries in *Faith and Thought*, that points the reader to the UK conference on vulnerable mission coming up soon at All Nations Christian College. It is entitled [‘Faith Thought Science Secularism and the Gospel of Jesus in relation to Mission to Africa Today’](#).

- This book is creating considerable stir in theological circles: Barclay, John M.G., 2017, *Paul and the Gift*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. [The first chapter is available freely over the internet \(e.g. as a kindle-sample\)](#). As Barclay looks at gifts in the ancient world, then how our understanding of gifts has changed into modern times, he at the same time gives a helpful vista on how gifts are understood and might be received in the contemporary majority world. His historical analyses explains the ‘peculiarity’ of Western approaches to gift giving. Barclay in effect addresses many of the reasons why the AVM advocates that some missionaries to the majority world use only local resources (not foreign gifts) and languages in their ministry. (Money given to the majority world to promote aid and development is of course received as ‘gifts’.)



- Why does an African want to learn about African Traditional Religion from a Westerner? The answer to this and other queries, can be found in this article by Jim Harries entitled: ‘[Overcoming Invented Ogres: African Traditional Religions and World Religions in African Christian Perspective](#)’ (Published in the *Evangelical Review of Theology*.) The paper advocates for “advocates for education rooted in indigenous rather than Western ways of understanding.”)

- **Consultation:**
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- 8th to 10th June, Minneapolis. Please pray for a consultation being arranged to be held in Minneapolis, USA, 8th to 10th June 2018. It will be an exploratory / collaborative meeting of VM board members and others who are not explicitly committed to AVM, drawn from those who came to Trinity in November 2017. We'll be looking for ways to widen the awareness of VM principles in the U.S. setting.
- **A summary of the November 2017 consultation, *Moving Beyond Post-Colonial Dependency: Developing Sustainability through Vulnerability*, held at the Trinity School for Ministry in PA, can be found [here](#).**
- **Advance notice:** Please note that the April 2018 edition of *Global Missiology* (globalmissiology.org) will be a special edition devoted to vulnerable mission, especially containing papers presented during the 2017 consultation in the USA.

Vulnerable Mission: WHAT IT IS, AND WHY WE NEED IT



Mission Conference

may 31 - June 2
2018

allnations
training for mission

hosted at
All Nations Christian College
Easneye, Ware, Herts
SG12 8LX UK



Frank Paul
Argentina/Germany



Deborah Bernhard
Germany/Thailand



Dr. Jim Harries
East Africa

Vulnerable Mission is a means of Christian outreach using the language and resources of the people being reached.

£ 179 early bird rate
£ 199 after 30 April
F/T students pay 80%
conference@
vulnerablemission.org

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Conference: Vulnerable Mission: what it is and why we need it.

All Nations Christian College, Ware, Hertfordshire,
31st May to 2nd June 2018

HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday 31st May.
17.00 hrs Arrival
18.00 Introductions
20.00 'What is vulnerable mission?'

Friday 1st June.
9.00 hrs Keynote paper, Mission in the Chaco, Argentina, Frank Paul.
11.00 Ignoring Advice: implementing Vulnerable Mission in Africa. Jim Harries.
14.30 Group discussions.
16.30 Mission Today, and Vulnerable Mission, Richard and Louisa Evans (provisional).
19.30 Panel and Questions. Harries, Paul, Bernhard.

Saturday 2nd June.
9.00 hrs A paper on South Africa, Marcus Grohmann.
11.00 Contextualization as vulnerable mission. Deborah Bernhard.
14.30 Seminars – various topics.
17.00 Departure.

VULNERABLEMISSION.ORG

Provisional

Bios of our **guest speakers**, for the conference '*Vulnerable Mission: what it is, and why we need it.*'

Conference to be held at All Nations Christian College, UK, May 31st to June 2nd 2018.

Deborah Bernhard

Deborah has lived in cultures other than her own for over 20 years. Every place she's lived she has learned the local language. In her church planting work in Thailand among the Shan people, she used only local language and resources in her work. She found herself on a discovery of also using only local culture. Questions of "what does Jesus and his church look like in the skin of the local people and context?" led her to discovering barriers to the gospel and seeking to overcome them. Realizing that the answers require some paradigm shifts in the way we do mission among Buddhists, Deborah and her husband Jens have committed themselves to learning more about the local context, understanding barriers to the gospel, and sharing with others specific ways of overcoming them. Deborah is an Associate Certified Coach with the International Coach Federation, and coaches missionaries in SE Asia. She and her husband also lead groups of practitioners who are seeking to see Christ in the local culture, and are writing a book about following Christ in the context of Buddhist traditions.

Frank Paul

Ute and Frank Paul have three children. They belong to OJC, an intentional interdenominational community in Germany - sharing life, daily work, resources (see: www.ojc.de). Their vision focuses on living and offering (mainly) to young people: friendship, a place of belonging, and a sense of direction in Jesus Christ. For 18 years Frank and Ute lived in Argentina - a few years in the slum areas of Buenos Aires (www.kairos.org.ar). Afterwards they joined an international team of fraternal workers who were accompanying independent indigenous churches in the Chaco area in northern Argentina. Frank, fluent in Toba and Spanish as well as German, is a board member of the AVM-Alliance for Vulnerable Mission (www.vulnerablemission.org) that encourages others to lean on local strengths, resources and mother tongues.

Jim Harries

Jim, is the chairman of the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission), that advocates for use of indigenous languages and resources in ministry overseas. Jim has a PhD from University of Birmingham, UK. He has lived and worked in East Africa since 1988, engaging indigenous and other churches with bible teaching using the Swahili and Luo languages. Jim, who is single, has been looking after orphan children in his African village home since 1997. He has published many missiologically related articles, and eight books, including *The Godless Delusion* (2017), and a novel, *African Heartbeat* (2018). Jim recently spent 10 weeks visiting 15 seminaries and Christian universities in the USA and Canada. Jim, who also speaks German, was born and raised in the UK. He attended All Nations in 1992/3.

"Why should a missionary be vulnerable?"

(This is not about mission to vulnerable people, or vulnerable children, but it is about the need for a missionary to the majority world him/her-self to be vulnerable.)

Vulnerable to what? Vulnerable to failure. Vulnerable to getting 'hurt'. Vulnerable, like, sensitive to what is going on. Vulnerable like - what you do won't work at all unless local people invest their time, energy, and money into helping you ...

How do you become vulnerable?

1. Use their language. If you use their language, you will start to hear their criticism as they intend it. Then, in due course, you might learn how to function according to their social rules. Then God might be able to use you to reach them with the Gospel in a way that makes sense to them.

2. Don't use outside money to subsidise what you are going to do. That is - even if the people you are going to work amongst are poor. That way you won't buy your influence. You'll have to sweat for it.

Who does vulnerable mission? Our focus is on helping Westerners to do vulnerable mission as a means to reaching people in the majority world.

Why do we need vulnerable mission? So as to be able to listen to the heart of people in the majority world. So as to share the Gospel of Jesus, meaningfully.