



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

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Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

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Volume 13, Number 2.

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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The next UK-AVM conference is to be held at All Nations Christian College, Hertfordshire, 12th to 15th September 2021.

[Details here.](#)

[Registration here.](#)

General information at www.vulnerablemission.org

Potential speakers please tell me of your plans asap, so that we can include you in PR materials for the conference (jim@vulnerablemission.org).

Please suggest contributions to this Bulletin, to jim@vulnerablemission.org

Contents

Conference details 3-5

Governance by Scorn, Fear to Avert Disaster: a Christian
Missiological Review,

“Religion in Africa is in many respects becoming religion
without belief and community again.”

Frank Paul’s monthly news email

‘Comparative Bible Study, Genesis 10-11: an approach from
Argentina’.

6-7

Conference.

18th January 2021

All Nations Christian College, UK, 12th to 15th September 2021

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Vulnerable Mission: English and Dollars Powering Ministry, Good Idea?

We urge some missionaries to practice their ministry using the languages and resources of the people they are reaching. This will honour the indigenous. It is a Christ-like starting point for sharing the Gospel in contextualized ways.

We will be discussing issues such as:

- Practicalities and ramifications of use of indigenous **languages** by Western missionaries.
- How does **translation** to and from an indigenous language affect missionary work?

- While **finances** are needed for mission work, how can one ensure that finances do not dominate?
- What **good practices** are there to ensure a missionary remains vulnerable in their local context?
- How to engage in mission without exuding (excessive) **power**.
- What **organisational structures** enable vulnerability on the side of Western missionaries on the ground.
- What help can we offer **churches who want to engage directly in cross cultural mission** to avoid pitfalls of power.
- **Tentmaking** and **business as mission** models that leave the Westerner vulnerable. (Can the **commercial** world engage in mission without promoting 'evils' of capitalism?)
- When the uneven spread of wealth is itself an injustice, how can one use one's surplus to enact global **justice**.
- How can mission agencies promote vulnerability, when dominant models of understanding presented by a vast **global media** are rooted in **positivism and liberalism**?
- Is vulnerability the key to **contextualisation**?
- Theology traditionally draws strongly on **metaphor**. However local metaphors from the majority world are unfamiliar to the Westerner, and vice versa. How can one then engage in theology interculturally?
- Where **politics and 'religion' are not separate categories**, missionaries need to be careful not to get bogged down in unanticipated conflicts.
- Is **miracle** a post-enlightenment category? Is '**magic**' a normal aspect of life? What does this imply for cross cultural missionary engagement?
- Does the **introduction of outside technology** result in exploitation and enslavement? or liberation?
- **Globalisation** as a force that cripples the periphery. How can the voices of those at the periphery be heard, and their dignity guarded?
- When **short-term mission** has become **poverty-tourism** intended to adorn facebook pages with images of charity – what is the way forward?
- Can Westerners relate to **non-Western missionaries** without dominating them?
- The bible is God's inspired book, but theological training is dominated by **Western curricula**. Are there alternative paradigms for local-context training of Christian workers?

Conference Details

This will be a three-day residential conference. It will be held in the English country house at the attractive rural location of the UK's premier missionary training college, near Ware in Hertfordshire. Full cost will be £300, or early bird £260.



Conference sponsors:

<p><i>Alliance for Vulnerable Mission</i></p> <p>vulnerablemission.org</p>	
<p>All Nations Christian College, Easneye Ware Hertfordshire SG12 8LX Tel: +44 (0) 1920 443500 Email: info@allnations.ac.uk</p>	

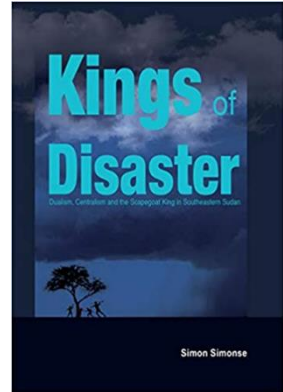
Jim Harries, PhD.
Board chair, Missionary in East Africa

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Frank Paul (Germany)	Peter Stagg (UK. Finance)
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- For a copy of the call for papers for the above conference, go [here](#).

- [Governance by Scorn, Fear to Avert Disaster: a Christian Missiological](#) Review, by Jim Harries, of Simonse, Simon, 2017, *Kings of Disaster: Dualism, Centralism and the Scapegoat King in Southeastern Sudan*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.



Jim shares: This book “sets the scene for a powerful impact the Gospel can have on African community. While perhaps unable to overthrow the binds of Satan from whole tribes in one move, the Gospel could draw first a small, then a growing congregation, into seeking for a life of love in imitation of Christ. Eventually, alluded to by Simonse and grossly evident in other parts of East Africa and beyond, a growing proportion of people giving allegiance to Christ weakens the binds of Satanic bondage, such as the belief that human Kings produce rain. That will not constitute the end of profound challenges. Scorn never entirely disappears. Old habits die hard. To love in Jesus’ way is far from easy. Simonse’s book gives a for, and just a few sneak peeks into what might be an after, to anyone seeking a ‘for and after’ of what the Kingdom of God in African community might look like.”



- Hermen Kroesbergen has written a fascinating article, that seems to speak volumes in favour of vulnerable mission, although he never mentions vulnerable mission. The article is entitled [‘Religion without Belief and Community in Africa’](#), Kroesbergen has researched this article through the UP Senior Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme, University of Pretoria. He argues that “Religion in Africa is in many respects becoming religion without belief and community again.” (17) Kroesbergen analyses a number of key terms for the functioning of the church, like belief, community, spiritual insecurity. In each case shows that the terms he chooses do not work for Africa in

English. Kroesbergen points to the roots of vulnerable mission in the work of the philosopher Wittgenstein. (To download your free copy of this article, click on the title above.)

- Frank Paul produces a monthly news email, with lots of interesting reports and challenges from around the Christian world. You can download copies of his news from his drop box [here](#). They are eml files, that will open like emails. They are sorted by date.



MINISTERIAL FORMATION

100

World Council of Churches
Education and Ecumenical Formation

January 2003

- Nestor Miguez takes a novel approach to the interpretation of Genesis 10-11, in the light of his experience amongst the Qom people of Argentina. God's confusing people's languages in chapter 11, he suggests, is a way in which God was redeeming people from an oppressive situation in which one language was to be dominant. God, then, is in favour of people's maintaining their own languages. "Differential of tongues" is, according to Miguez' interpretation, "a liberating act" (page 59). This article can be found on pages 57-65 of this free edition of *Ministerial Formation* entitled: '[Comparative Bible Study, Genesis 10-11: an approach from Argentina](#)'.¹

¹ Miguez, Nestor O., 2003, 'Comparative Bible Study, Genesis 10-11: an approach from Argentina', 57-65 in: *Ministerial Formation* 100, January 2003, World Council of Churches.