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During one of the shows, Pastor Sameh Maurice of the Kasr El Dokki Church (the largest evangelical church in the Middle East) and Father Samaan Ibrahim of the Coptic Orthodox Church directly responded to callers living in different parts of Egypt, including Alexandria. Pastor Sameh and Father Samaan encouraged viewers to remember that the Christian message is a message of love and peace.

Pastor Sameh shared that he was

Third World: mission and development

A Briton, Jim Harries, is looking to bring changes into the way development is done.

Jim, who works as a missionary in Kenya, between September and December 2010 had an encouraging reception at Bible colleges and Christian universities in Germany, the UK, Canada and the USA, where he shared his message: encouraging people to do their work in the majority world using local languages and local resources.

Helping in a recession

Jim's message is apt at this time of widespread discouragement and global recession. Some people think that the role of any individual in encouraging Third World development is almost irrelevant in our age. People who can 'help', we are told, are those who are highly technically trained and heavily funded. Development is best encouraged, it is said, by money-oriented projects that help the poor to look after themselves. The number of missionaries going to Africa is in sharp decline. Many of the people concerned for the poor these days communicate using only English and only through their computer with just an occasional visit.

'Use their language', says Jim, along with the members of the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission (AVM), which stands with him on this. Jim explains his reasons in detail to those people who would otherwise prefer to use English wherever they go in the world. Even



Jim Harries

more startling to some is the suggestion by AVM that some workers from the West to poor parts of the world should not raise funds to boost their projects. 'If you can minister without using outside resources, then local people will be able to imitate what you are doing', explains Jim.

'It is important for local people', says Jim, 'to have some Western people be "on their side". That is, those who can identify with problems that people are facing in different parts of the world. You cannot do that if you have money to give out', says Jim, 'because the answer to a donor's question is usually "yes". Neither can you do this using English. If you do not understand people's situation sufficiently well, the help you offer may not be helpful'.

Info: www.vulnerablemission.com

Laos: 11 arrested at gunpoint

Following the arrest of 11 Christians at gunpoint on January 4, three house church leaders remain behind bars for 'holding a secret meeting'.

On January 6, Lao authorities released six of the Christians, including two children aged four and eight, from Khammouan Provincial Prison, central Laos. Two other men were released on January 5. The charge against the three church leaders — Pastor Wanna from Nakoon village church, Chanlai from Tonglar village church and Kan from nearby Nahin village church, all in

Hinboun district, Khammouan province — is a political offence punishable by law.

In December, Wanna informed authorities that church members would gather at his home on January 5 to celebrate Christmas, in line with official celebrations by the government-approved Lao Evangelical Church scheduled between December 5 and January 15. A truckload of district police officers with guns cocked and ready to shoot burst into Wanna's house after dark on January 4, shouting, 'Stop! Nobody move!'

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