



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

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**Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin**

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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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- UK conference planned for December 2019, title:

Title: **Missionaries: aliens, providers, or fellow travellers?**

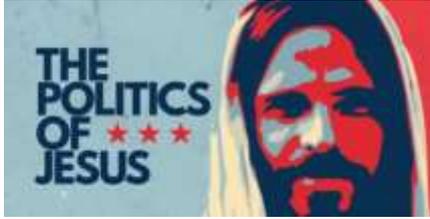
Strapline: Should the majority world be the target of patronage from rich missionaries?

For more details, see call for papers below (and see this *Bulletin* as it comes month by month).

- To be held at All Nations Christian College, Ware, Herts, UK. Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2019 5 pm, to Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019, 1 pm. (see call for papers below).



*Nick Henwood, Frank Paul and Peter Stagg, at the 2018 conference held at All Nations College.*



Craig Greenfield makes some good insights in this blog on the relationship between the [Gospel and 'politics'](#)

Eddie Arthur has published a short article entitled [What Exactly Is Short-Term Mission?](#)

Although he falls one step short of advocating for vulnerable mission as we define it, Eddie's article is very challenging and insightful. "I take it as a given that mission should be carried out in the language and culture of the people being reached," says Eddie.



The Evangelical Alliance in the UK highlights [writing by Marie Kondo, that looks at true benevolence and charity](#), as against a good way of getting rid of an excess of 'things'!



Marie Kondo seems to be revolutionising UK attitudes to charity and benevolence ... maybe there's something of interest here to vulnerable mission? See also this [report by the BBC](#).

## The status of English and Academic Writing – personal thoughts from Jim Harries



*Jim Harries with some colleagues on his current visit to Tanzania.*

I have long pointed to a problem with the use of English in ‘global scholarship. That is, as long as English is ‘controlled’ from the West, the possibilities of what can be done using English are necessarily limited. It has become my conviction, that even in our globalising world, English is invariably ‘controlled from the West,’ at least in its formal usages.

I have been hitting this problem, of the limitations of English, increasingly over the years. Now I seem to have reached a tipping point: the point at which, in order to do justice to the African context I am in, I can no longer write honestly to the West using English. That is, when I endeavour to communicate what is plainly true in East Africa, I find myself beyond the boundaries of acceptability for mainstream English scholarship.

Having said the above, because of the importance that I attach to what I am endeavouring to do, to enlighten English language scholarship about the above problems, I will endeavour to continue writing in English. The problems entailed in doing this have however been such, as to cause me to write more in Swahili. Writing in Swahili also has its problematic: it is very difficult indeed to write meaningfully to people born and raised in a worldview that one does not share. My writing in Swahili can be a little like sending a probe into a dark tunnel! Yet, I have made some efforts. I recently posted two Swahili articles onto academia.edu:

1. [Kiingereza ni lugha itakayotuokoa? Kiingereza siyo lugha ya Mungu.](#) (Is English the Language that will save us? English is not God’s language.) In this article, I point to ways in which in the modern West the English language has usurped the place of the Gospel.
2. [Mitume wa KiAfrika wawe wasikivu – majibu kwa upinzani wa utume wenye usikivu.](#) (African missionaries should be vulnerable – answers to those who criticise the practice of vulnerable mission.) This article responds to certain critiques of vulnerable mission by advocating for ways in which vulnerability is important for native-African missionaries.

## Elder's Council

There is and has recently been significant debate on a bible teaching methodology that Jim Harries started using in Kenya in 2001. We call this method 'elders' counsel.' It is a way of teaching that, even if the tutor is confined to the use of English endeavours to maximise interaction with the local indigenous context. For a description of this methodology see [here](#). A report of how this methodology was used way back in 2001 can be found [here](#).



# Call for papers

## 2019 Conference: Missionaries: aliens, providers, or fellow travellers?

Location: All Nations Christian College, Ware, Herts, UK.  
Dates / times Sunday 8th December 5 pm to Wednesday 11th December 1 pm.

Should the majority world be the target of patronage from rich missionaries?

Submit abstracts asap to [ims@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:ims@vulnerablemission.org)

**Outline paragraph:** Outside Christian workers who build on foreign presuppositions in work amongst indigenous communities can, especially when foreign funded and using outside languages, be interpreted as riding roughshod over indigenous sensibilities. True empowerment of local people requires getting alongside them. This necessitates vulnerability to their position and context. Such vulnerability can best be achieved if one shares the Gospel using indigenous languages utilising local resources.

**We will be discussing issues such as:**

Practical issues: numerical use of indigenous languages by Western missionaries. How does translation into an indigenous language tend from an indigenous language affect the fronting of the gospel and of missionary work in general?

While finances are needed for mission work, how can one ensure that finances do not dominate one's mission work?

What are the good practices that ensure a missionary's vulnerability to local context(s)?

How to engage in mission without exuding (excessive) power.

Organisation structures that enable vulnerability on the side of Western missionaries on the ground.

Helping Churches who want to engage directly in mission cross-culturally to avoid pitfalls of power.

Tentmaking and business as mission models that leave the Westerner vulnerable.: How can the commercial world be used to engage in mission without promoting 'levits' of capitalism?

When the uneven spread of wealth is itself an injustice, how can one use one's surplus to enact global justice.

How do we utilize all global media channels to promote vulnerability in our missionary endeavour?

Is vulnerability the key to contextualisation?

Theology traditionally draws strongly on metaphor. In the majority world, local metaphors are unfamiliar to the West. How can one then engage theology intersubjectively?

When 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' simply a normal prerequisite of human social existence. What does this imply for cross-cultural missionary engagement?

Is introduction of outside technology implicitly exploitative and enslaving? Or is it liberating? How does technology impact vulnerable mission: positive, negative, releasing, enslaving?

How can Global-localisation be a springboard for vulnerable mission?

When short-term mission has become poverty-altruism intended to adorn facebook with images of charity – what is the way forward?

Can Westerners relate to non-Western missionaries without dominating them?

While the bible is God's inspired book, are Western curriculum?