

Jim's Journal

June 2011

Dear Friends,

Welcome to this latest edition of Jim's Journal. This journal contains news of a lot of new developments and changes in the offing. I hope you enjoy the read.

Vacations and Visitors

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission administrative assistant Fiona Adams brought her three children and a nanny on a 3 week visit to Kenya this April. Part of her visit was to me, and included time at my home, a tropical rain forest and a game reserve. In between time with Fiona I attended the first retreat for *Church of God Africa* missionaries that we have had for three years at Malindi on the coast of Kenya. Then old friends Ben and Sally Amos brought their three boys on a short visit to my home. In June I anticipate welcoming Don Olden, elder of *Koinonia* church in Andover, to visit me for a few days.

KIST News

Shortly after sending my last *Jim's Journal* to print Rev. Rod Dormer, the Principal of *Kima International School of Theology*, asked me to consider moving my office off the *KIST* campus and going without any teaching responsibilities at *KIST* for at least the next 12 months. The principle reason for this was a combination of:

1. Gradually rising student numbers (needing accommodation – my house is to be used as part of the boy's dormitory).
2. An administrative decision that no more than two students were to share a room in the dormitory.
3. A surplus of teachers – especially due to an influx of new missionaries from the USA.

After having had an office and house at *KIST* for nearly 15 years, on 7th April I moved into a rented office-cum-house / apartment within the campus of *St. Philips Theological College* 5 miles from *KIST* (about 9 miles from home) in Maseno. I am very grateful to the Principal of *St. Phillips* for opening the door to me to be able to rent this facility while *Kima* tries to build up its physical / building resources. I am glad to be able to take the interim time as a sabbatical in which I engage in writing and research. (See <http://www.vulnerablemission.org/book-writing-proposal-jim-harries/>)

Note that my home continues to be in Yala, and it is only my office-cum-bedsit accommodation that has moved! Please pray for *KIST*, where there are now a lot of new American missionaries trying to find their feet. Give thanks for the interest of the *KIST* Principal in joining me on visiting some indigenous churches in Luoland. Give thanks for the warm welcome that *St. Philips Theological College* is extending to me as 'resident scholar'.

New Horizons

Being released from regular teaching commitments at *KIST* for at least the next 12 months potentially opens up many alternative avenues of Christian service. Some early signs are very challenging, and frankly exciting. In the past I had to turn down invitations to ministry because of my regular teaching load at *KIST*. Now I am able to accept some of them.

Please do pray for another side to this that I need to mention before I go on. Maintaining my regular commitments to *KIST*, meant that I was also maintaining regular weekly commitments to Yala and *Siaya Theological Centre* classes. Now I have decided that I cannot justify blocking other avenues of service just because of some classes in the above places that anyway have very low attendance. Pray that this decision not back-fire – it would be very disappointing if my missing teaching at the above centres should result in a loss of students.

Local pastors and bishops often arrange church weekends, and crusades over weekends. I have often had to refuse invitations to such. I am now accepting more of them. I already have two invitations – one in mid June, and another in mid July. Please pray for wisdom to know how to share in these contexts. Many of these crusades are Pentecostal-based, and the events tend to be very prosperity oriented. How to share the ‘true’ Gospel in such environments in which people are coming for help from numerous problems and especially in order to get money?

I have an invitation to spend a week at *Africa International University* in Nairobi as a ‘visiting scholar’ 17th to 25th May 2011. (*Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology*, is now a part of this university.) I hope to spend time with their post-graduate theological students, especially joining them in their missions and linguistics classes for the week concerned. In addition, I am hoping to have meetings with lecturers at this university, and to spend time in the library doing research. Pray that this be a successful week, and that more such doors may open following this week.

In March 2012 we are to have a global conference on vulnerable mission in Texas, USA. Some of the administration and planning for this is falling to me as AVM chairman (assisted by Fiona Adams our administrative assistant in the *Alliance for Vulnerable Mission*). Please pray that I find the time to do the necessary administration and planning for this, as well as for planning of my furlough (December 2011 to April 2012), and for many other publishing and other projects that I have in process.

I am formally giving the time that I would have teaching at *KIST* over to ‘writing’. I have already drawn up an outline of the book that I intend to write. My provisional title for this book is: *Communication in Mission and Development; post-modern insights in relating to the Majority World* (see above for details).

I am to attend an ‘invitation only’ consultation arranged by the *World Evangelical Alliance* Missions’ Commission in Stuttgart, Germany, in November of this year. This will cost me an estimated £1200. I am grateful for those who are already making commitments and contributions towards the costs of attending this conference. If you

would like to contribute, please go to <http://www.vulnerablemission.org/donations/> for more information on how to do so.

It makes it more difficult to maintain my 'grassroots' presence in Kenya if I am periodically 'jet-setting' to conferences? This leads to the question – of how much international involvement of this nature I should be engaging in? My own view is that there is a DESPERATE need for people to become aware of the importance of vulnerable mission issues, but that I do not want in the process of encouraging others to take VM seriously to push myself out of my own 'vulnerable' position here in western Kenya.

The promotion of our pastor as-was to the level of overseer, means that my home church now has a new pastor. I would love to be as much of a support to him as possible. Church leaders in my home church, and other churches, are keen for me to participate with them in various ministries – including mid-week meetings and pastoral visiting. I am trying to find more time to do this.

Report on Children in my Home

Christine, aged 13, now prefers school-work to play!

Okoth, aged 22, is preparing for his final secondary school exams.

Zachary, aged 15, now at secondary school, has grown tall and needs to study hard.

Michael, aged 9, often impresses me with early signs of maturity.

Doreen, aged 21, first volunteered and is now employed as a clerk in a local hospital.

Ouso, aged 12, has suffered intermittent malaria, but seems to be better right now.

Michelle, aged 15, is now very tall while still so young.

Laura, aged 8, is gaining confidence and is still very helpful in the home.

Stella, aged 17, has a quiet disposition, but also a lot of gifting in singing and other areas.

David, aged 14, has got used to being with us and is improving his behaviour.

Andrew, aged 10, is very happy to be with us, having come from a situation of considerable neglect and little care.*

Paul, aged 8, is with us while his mother recovers from being very sick with AIDS.*

* new since last year. (False names used throughout.)

Furlough

I am due to be on furlough from December 2011 to April 2012. My visits to my main supporting churches are to be as follows:

13th to 18th December – Andover Baptist Church, Andover

3rd to 7th and 9th to 11th January – churches in Germany

13th to 24th January – Norwich Central Baptist Church, Norwich

26th to 31st January – Wantage Baptist Church, Wantage

1st to 6th February – New Farm Chapel, Alresford

7th to 12th February – Andover Baptist Church, Andover

31st March to 5th April – Acomb Baptist Church, York

13th to 18th April – Andover Baptist Church, Andover

Fundraising information

I am in need of above-normal levels of funding to enable me to engage in activities connected with the promotion of vulnerable mission. For details on how to contribute please write to me or go to: <http://www.vulnerablemission.org/donations/>

We are in need of help for editing, publishing and general administrative duties for the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission. Any volunteers, who want to make a difference for world mission, please contact me!

Books out imminently!

Two books that I have authored are due to come to press within the next couple of months. First is a compendium of articles entitled: *Vulnerable Mission: Insights into Christian Mission to Africa from a Position of Vulnerability*. This is being published by *William Carey Library*, an evangelical publisher in the United States. The other is a small booklet that we are self-publishing with Fiona Adams' help entitled *Three days in the life of an African Christian villager*. (To see a listing of my published articles go to <http://www.jim-mission.org.uk/articles/index.html> , for an easy place to start reading, go to <http://www.jim-mission.org.uk/harries-bio.pdf>)

Blog

See this blog, written by the Principal at *KIST* and his wife, Rod and Jan Dormer: <http://dormersinafrica.blogspot.com/>

Two days in the Life of ...

Some people may be wondering how I can teach in Yala and Siaya and be on sabbatical and be involved in Christian ministry all at once ...

11th May, following my daily devotions, I drafted a part of a chapter for my proposed book, at home near Yala. Then went to resolve an issue at the secondary school where some of my children attend, before paying a pastoral visit to a lady who had just given birth, and then spending ½ hour at a funeral. Visited some house-bound old ladies and shared the Scriptures with them, before getting to Yala in time to catch a bus to Maseno. Afternoon and evening (from 3pm on) catching up on administrative work in the office.

12th May began with more office work, then left office about 11.30am. Visited a friend whose wife recently died before doing some shopping and moving by bicycle to Yala. Was able to visit and share Scriptures with a recently widowed lady before afternoon mid-week meeting of my home church, where I was asked to preach. After that and cycling home through a shower of rain, did some reading in preparation for my proposed book before having supper and joining in 'family' evening devotions.

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Global Conference on Vulnerable Mission

Post-colonial mission and development at depth without dependency

The AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission) sees vulnerability in mission as a good thing. It advocates that in key ministry some missionaries or development workers be economically dependent on those being reached. Also – that some foreigners use the language of the locals instead of the other way around. That puts-paid to a lot of western superiority in one fell swoop! Please come and join us to pray, think, talk and explore some more

Dates: Wednesday March 7th to Saturday March 10th 2012.

Location: *Abilene Christian University*, Abilene, Texas, (see www.acu.edu)
- satellite conference to be held at *Cliff College* in Derbyshire, UK on 21st March 2012.

Cost: not yet known, but quite likely about \$100 including meals, plus accommodation.

Programme: Mornings will be focused on the academic / theoretical side of the questions addressed by the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission. The afternoons will be more practical and participatory. We are looking for people who will prepare to share papers in the mornings (with a view to subsequent publication) and to lead seminars and workshops that are to be held in the afternoons.