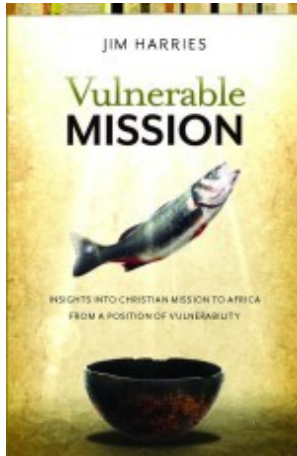
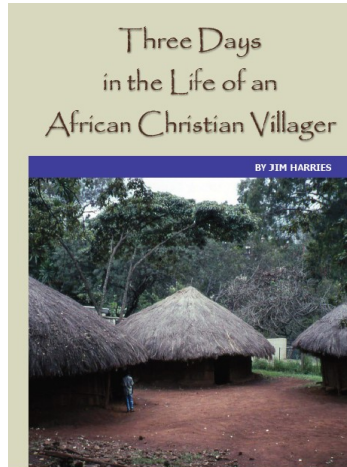




**ALLIANCE FOR  
VULNERABLE MISSION**



**2011  
£10.99**



**2011  
£4.99**

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## News Updates

The children at home were all well when I left Kenya on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Phone-updates continue to tell me that all is well.

My 'new style of ministry', getting more involved in local churches on their terms instead of calling them to Bible classes running in a Western way, seems to be working very well. I have numerous invitations to preach and teach at many churches for many miles around my home. I am looking forward to engaging further in this itinerant ministry that is also an excellent way for me to be learning from local African believers.

I now have an office/small house on the campus of St. Phillips (Anglican) Theological College, Maseno ( <http://masenomissions.org/College.htm> ). The latter are interested in having me teach with them from September. There is also a possibility that KIST will want me back in August, as some of the American missionaries are due to move on. I recently heard that the KIST Principal has resigned. I am not sure what the implications are of his resignation for my role in KIST. I prefer to minister using African languages, I am planning to accept invitations to teach PhD students studying *world Christianity* at a university in Nairobi in October ( <http://worldchristianityaiu.wordpress.com/about/> ).

I find that a lot of my time in Kenya is taken up in administration and writing connected to activities engaged in the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission).

Many of you will know that Fiona Adams has resigned her position as administrative assistant to the AVM. I am very grateful to Cathy Randle (from Andover Baptist Church) for her having volunteered at short notice to take on the coordination of the UK conference in March. Write to her at [cathy@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:cathy@vulnerablemission.org)

## From Europe

I am now writing after almost 1 month in the UK and Germany. I am struck by the positive reception that we are getting for our work in promoting the vulnerable mission principles. Please pray that this continue, and that I be able to engage people appropriately with these important principles for mission (and development) work.

## **Dependency**

Has Western intervention trapped African communities into a position where it is impossible to teach the Scriptures without foreign donors?

A programme to teach the Scriptures must have government registration. To register, one has to have board meeting minutes and a bank account. Registration must be paid for. Where is money going to come from to pay for this before one has any serious interest from people? Yet who will take a project seriously unless it is registered and has an office, phone number, email address?

To register as a 'school' is very difficult. The government wants to discourage the founding of numerous schools. To register a school needs a lot of money. Even to register a school as a self-help programme needs funds.

In order to teach, one must have students. To have students one must have teachers. Teachers want salaries, so students must pay. Students must have a place to which to go at which to be taught. We could call that place a 'centre'. A Bible teaching programme therefore needs centres, but it is hard to get centres without teachers or students, so then we need teachers and we need students, which all need money.

In the end, what we need is money. To provide money, we need donors. There is a white man in our group. Well, what white men are supposed to do is to provide money. They are donors. No other donor will be interested in sponsoring us if we have a white man in our midst who is not coordinating (at least initially) donor activity. (If there were no White men in the group, this discussion actually wouldn't be happening anyway – unless someone had got access to a donor by some other means.)

We could try and raise funds locally, but who will seriously give us money until they see what we are doing, yet we need the money in order to begin doing something. No-one will take us seriously anyway unless they see that there is a foreign donor standing with us.

Conclusion: in order to teach the Bible, you must be in partnership with a foreign donor.

## **Doing It ...**

Someone should tell me if I am wrong ... it seems to me that there's a lot more 'talk' about intercultural mission, than there is 'doing' of intercultural mission.

- Some 'do it' in a foreign language and without much comprehension of the context of the people they are speaking in to, which is shooting into the dark.
- Widely accepted wisdom is that 'they' (locals) are better at doing mission to their people than are 'we' (the foreigners). We don't really know exactly what they are doing. We support them anyway. This is not inter-cultural mission; it is supporting people of another culture financially to do their own thing.

- There are numerous networks and organisations facilitating and oiling the wheels of what they assume is happening according to reports they receive. All these reports come in Western languages. They are designed for consumption by foreigners.

One reason I love to ‘talk about’ doing mission rather than doing it, is because that way I can talk in ‘my way’. That is, ‘talking’ about the other people, is a way of (safely) appropriating them into us and into our control. ‘Talking about’ something is ‘safe’. Doing it is hard.

Most of Western people’s interactions with African people can easily occur with respect to administration, funding, networking, and celebrating. *An actual deep engagement with and challenging of what people believe by westerners in ways that make sense to Africans and is inspired by the Spirit of God and not mammon or statistics – is hard to find.*

I also find such deep engagement very tough! Even when one knows someone’s language, ignorance of a lot of their way of life can still have one ‘shooting into the dark’ in so many ways. Sometimes all our concern with statistics, projects, filling various needs, bangs for bucks, indigenising of mission, networking, and strategies can be excuses for avoiding the hard grind of real Christian discipleship!

Aha, my reader may be thinking, how do you have faith except through works (James 2:24). Yes but, works should make sense. They should be familiar. They should be those that the person in ‘receipt’ of the works can do (imitate). They should be practiced in such a way as to be seen as ‘good’ in that communities’ own reckoning. They should communicate Christ, whereas increasingly what is being communicated by the West is the ‘Prosperity Gospel’.

### **Lieth they?**

A church leader from the UK was disgusted by an implicit suggestion that I made. I had asked him how he could be sure that the African people he was supporting financially actually were holding the preaching-training sessions that he was subsidising. “Are you suggesting that they may be lying” he responded, with anger in his eyes?

A week later I was back in Kenya. I went to a Bible class organised by the bishop of a certain church that he had promised would be held weekly. It was the fourth time (out of about eight) that nobody showed up.

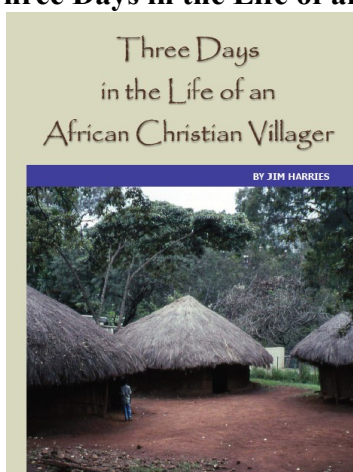
We have a problem. No one is supposed to say anything negative about ‘Africans’ as that could be considered racist. So then – do we all say nice things regardless of whether they are true? Africans may not be ‘lying’ in the normal sense of that word. But they are constantly under pressure to compromise on the truth. Those who put them under such pressure are those who attach strings to donated money. Because I am not sure one can donate money without strings, there is a problem – donors can be forcing African people into becoming liars.

You can't force someone to lie, my reader may be thinking. In the absolute sense I am sure that is right. But you can put them into a fix – either lie, or we stop the money, which in a 'poor' country can mean – lie or die.

## Orthopraxis

A lady called Jean Johnson recently introduced a very interesting angle to our pearl vulnerable mission discussion. When we use the Bible to give us guidance on how to live and go about mission we usually try to be orthodox according to instructions given in the Bible. This she calls orthodoxy. On the other hand, there is also the example that the Bible characters give us of how they live their lives. That is orthopraxis. Is it time that we concentrated more on orthopraxis and less on orthodoxy? Jean gives examples. There are a few instances in the New Testament where financial generosity to the poor is advocated as a kind of ministry (Luke 6:30 "Give to everyone . . .", Luke 12:33 "Sell your possessions and give to the poor." 1 John 3:17 "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need, but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in Him?" etc.). This is what people today interpret as best they can for guidance on how to do ministry in places like Africa. On the other hand, when we look at what people in the New Testament actually do, it is harder to find a role model for the kind of donor relations that are common today. Perhaps when New Testament authors wrote what they did, they didn't exactly mean it as we these days often take them as having meant it?

## Three Days in the Life of an African Christian Villager



Fiona Adams reviewed the text of this book for me. "This book bursts like a breath of fresh air into the reader's mind" said Fiona Adams about this book. "... it gives – a fascinating insight into life in an African village as seen and interpreted by a Christian man" she added. Thanks to Fiona for organising the publishing of this book through authors on line. It is now available even over Amazon! Recommended price. The book, entitled simply *Three Days in the Life of an African Christian Villager*, might help you and others to better understand how the Christian faith is lived in parts of Africa. See

<http://www.authorsonline.co.uk/book/1153/Three+Days+in+the+Life+of+an+African+Christian+Villager/> to purchase from the publisher and <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0755213831/authorsonline-20> to purchase from Amazon. (Also available from the publisher as an e-book.)

## Vulnerable Mission

This book, entitled *Vulnerable Mission*, contains fourteen scholarly articles. I wrote them all over the last 10 years or so. Bargain price as low as £7.99!<sup>1</sup> This is the book that has recently had missions' experts

<sup>1</sup> The price for three or more copies, is £7.99 each. A single copy sells at £10.99.



buzzing, on three sides of the Atlantic. It is an excellent deal for the serious reader who needs a handle on what is happening, and what should be happening, in mission and development intervention in Africa today. To purchase from the publishers go to <http://missionbooks.org/williamcareylibrary/product.php?productid=715&cat=0&page=1>. Those in Europe can order from [veronica@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:veronica@vulnerablemission.org).

### **Third book available soon ...**

Watch this space for the third book that I am having published, that should be available very soon. This book is to be entitled *Theory to Practice in Vulnerable Mission: an academic appraisal*.

### **The Pain of Vulnerable Mission**

Finding the appropriate place for material wealth in human life is an ongoing saga. At my home we are now burning wood for cooking on a stove on the floor without a chimney. This is partly due to the economic crisis. I have just walked three miles, much of it mud, to get home from church as I do not have a car (bike temporarily out of action). Someone who is 'poor' is very easily seen as a failure in the African way of thinking. I seem to fall into the latter category. To many African Christians my apparent poverty, added of course to my being single, makes me a very poor role model for the materially good and prosperous life; no wonder people don't flock to my Bible classes!

Perhaps not everyone realises that the opposite side of the coin to African people's renowned love of material prosperity, is that many African people aspire to follow wealthy role models, and despise poor ones. This can really put a missionary to Africa into a jam. A missionary may think that true faith in Christ has nothing to do with having wealth. Yet in Africa, he will be under pressure; however much a missionary may realise that true faith in Christ should not depend on one's having material wealth and prosperity, he will be under pressure to demonstrate the contrary!

All of the above is in much of Africa connected to what is sometimes known as *Ubuntu*. Ubuntu emphasises communal sharing of possessions. Technically, it obliges people who have 'more' to share with those who have less. The failure to share does not only result in the poor remaining poor, but it is also thought to upset the ancestors who as a result can bring a kind of curse on the whole community. Those who do not share in this way are likely to be accused of being witches, and their failure to share to be held responsible for a community's misfortunes.

Missionaries who are thought to come from wealthy lands can be under especially intense pressure to share in this kind of way. This is what has happened in recent decades, and is still happening. When the missionaries concerned come from capitalistic lands, the potential of their 'sharing' is almost endless. So much so, that if we add the church to other donors from the West, Western generosity has transformed African life. Unfortunately the overall impact of this transformation in making vast societies grossly dependent on aid that they do not control is potentially disastrous.

# *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 7<sup>th</sup> to Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup> 2012.

**Location:** Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas, (see <http://www.acu.edu/academics/cbs/centers-services/him/conference-information.html>.)

**Cost:** \$100 including meals, plus accommodation.

**Programme:** Mornings will be focused on the academic / theoretical side of the questions addressed by AVM (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.

## **UK Conference**

The UK satellite to the main global conference on vulnerable mission is to be held at Cliff college in Derbyshire. The programme will begin on 20<sup>th</sup> March at 3.00pm, and will end on the 21<sup>st</sup> at 4.30pm.

UK conference coordinator is Cathy Randle – contact at [cathy@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:cathy@vulnerablemission.org)

### **Conference and registration details**

Two options available: either Tues 20<sup>th</sup> –

Wed 21<sup>st</sup> March or Wed 21<sup>st</sup> March only.

£5 early bird discount for bookings before end of Jan. 2012.

### Tues-Wed Conference

Arrival: from 3pm on Tuesday; first session at 4pm.

Departure: 4.30pm on Wednesday

Fee: £80 (includes all meals and accommodation on Tuesday).

Wed only Conference

Arrival: from 10am, first session at 10:30am

Departure: 4.30pm

Fee: £30 (includes lunch)

Location: Cliff College, Calver, Hope Valley,

Derbyshire, S32 3XG

[www.cliffcollege.ac.uk](http://www.cliffcollege.ac.uk)

Contact: [admin@cliffcollege.ac.uk](mailto:admin@cliffcollege.ac.uk)

01246 584200

Programme: Evening of 20th – reflecting on the Abilene conference.

Morning of 21st – Papers on vulnerable mission.

Afternoon of 21st – seminars on vulnerable mission.