



This book (published Feb 2016) can be ordered from Amazon or obtained free as a pdf here: <https://goo.gl/EX7wlf>

Jim Harries News and Prayer Letter from Kenya

As I write to attempt to complete this edition of Jim's Journal, I am in the UK. I made an extra trip this year, to be for a total of 7 weeks. There are various reasons for this. They include to do ministry in two of my supporting churches, and to 'catch up' in my understanding of where British people are. (It does seem sometimes that the West is becoming more and more 'different' than the rest of the people in the world.) Having spent the time now, I have in mind to have a shorter furlough when it comes to 2018. I return to Kenya 13th June. In addition to ministering with the churches, I have also been able to attend two conferences, one in Germany and one in UK, where I have been given opportunity to tell about the ministry I do in Kenya, especially focusing on vulnerable mission.

In Kenya I plan to continue ministry primarily in my 'home area' as usual. Unfortunately, when I travel, given the reputation of white people in East Africa, people's expectations that they will get money from me (i.e. a white man) tends to dominate sharing of the Gospel. Hence often my preference for staying in my

home area. I may well share at some pastors' workshops in August, and value prayer as I consider how to do that and how best to prepare.

As usual, this Journal is full of challenging reflections and thoughts about intercultural mission. I hope that you will read some or all of them, and that they will cause you to engage in helpful reflection.

Jim Harries, 4th June 2016



Pastor Rob Hadfield preaching at the W/E away of Andover Baptist Church, May 2016.

Building vulnerable relationship with African Christian communities, in practice

A common perception of Western missionaries in Africa, (rightly or wrongly) is that they can be overbearing. Vulnerable mission 'strips' a missionary of his singular advantages over 'native' pastors. That is, according to the principles of VM, some missionaries should confine themselves to use of indigenous languages, and not buy their popularity using outside resources.

The above strategy still leaves the 'problem' of the pre-existing reputation of a missionary from Europe. The 'issues' of a *Mzungu* (European) tend to arise from Westerners' cultural ignorance combined with their material generosity. A pastor was recently speaking at my home church. He said something like the following: "When a White man joins a meeting of African pastors, you find that all of the pastors and church leaders will try very hard to greet that white man and strike up a special friendship with him. ... [more](#)."

Simple Faith

Some years ago now when I was in Zambia, fellow missionaries used to admire Zambian people's simple lifestyle. One or two of my Zambian colleagues were not too happy with the notion that missionaries found them to be 'simple'.

Years later I am reading a report about the 'simple faith' of natives of Fiji in bygone years. This time is not their lifestyle but their faith that is considered *simple*. I discovered that their faith is considered simple because of the radical way in which they depend on God. Native converts to Christianity are warriors in prayer, who seem to see miracles every day.

So, do I find that African people have simple lifestyles and a simple faith? ... [more](#).



Norwich Central Baptist Church sanctuary

Impressive New Colleague

An Egyptian wrote an email to me some months ago saying he was hoping to come to Kenya. When I reported this to another Egyptian colleague, she said "Really. That would be wonderful. He is a very godly man", or words to that effect. I have since acquired a colleague who is also my Swahili student who also seems to be a saint from Egypt! (Someone who is as keen on learning Swahili very soon appears to be a saint in my book.) ... [more](#).

Giving in to The Force: prosperity gospel re-examined.

There are certain things in African Christianity that Westerners seem to deplore. They are perversions of bottom line bare minimums set by the West. Generally, Westerners find them unacceptable. What should one do, more specifically what should I do, if one of these perceived unacceptable perversions of truth is so central to African Christian belief that the thought that it might ought not to be there would in Africa be considered abominable? [more.](#)

Report on Children in my Home in Kenya (2016)

I currently have 13 children staying with me in my home in Kenya, as below:

Christine, aged 18, a lively, pleasant and conscientious girl having some struggles at school.

Michael, aged 14, now in his final year of primary schooling, it is a privilege to observe as he is maturing quickly.

Michelle, aged 20, has had a very difficult year, hopefully has learned a lot from it, and can be very adult and wise.

Laura, aged 13, unfortunately still isn't doing too well in school, but is a very homely and caring girl.

David, aged 19, has further advanced in his love for football, and in his general level of maturity.

Andrew, aged 14, does not seem to be academically gifted, but is stuck in a system that rewards people who like to read and write.

Paul, aged 12, has a great heart and works hard on comprehending not only school but also life in general.

Alison, aged 13, is facing new things in her life as she goes through puberty, needing guidance and guts.

Yvonne, aged 8, is as playful as ever, but also needing to learn to be a bit more compliant to demands made on her by other 'family' members.

Dusty, aged 8, is a very conscientious lad still revelling in his new found prosperity compared to the life he was living before he came to us.

Diana. Aged 11, a very bright and aware girl, who has learned to keep her sharp tongue in check more than she used to.

Yvonne, aged 8, always number 1 in her class, but something happened this time around we don't yet understand. Very playful!

David, aged 10, quiet, solid, not particularly bright in school unfortunately, but otherwise a good listener.

False names used throughout. In the past 12 months I have brought in no new children, and no children have left.

Two Cruel Obliterations; Europeans of African and Islamic 'problems'

We in Europe have problems. People in Africa have problems. Europeans take their problems with them when they travel to Africa. Africans end up having to deal with them. Africans bring their problems with them when they come to Europe. Europeans refuse to deal with them. Instead, point blank, they deny that they exist. This denial is implemented under a cover of assumed European superiority called *countering racism*. ...

[more.](#)



Some local cattle



some local children

Carrying Pain in your Heart

"Many people are carrying some kind of pain in their hearts" I explained to the gathered pastors, using Swahili. I was the mid-morning speaker, after breakfast on 16th April, at this Pastors gathering in Kisumu city. The Kenyan pastors were attentive. They obviously recognised that phenomenon. "Sometimes such pain arises if someone gossips about us" I added. Now I seemed to be on very familiar territory. Gossip, including unfounded gossip was clearly an issue and a concern. "There are three ways to respond" I said. "These are: defend yourself, fight back (attack whoever is the apparent source of the gossip), or run away. Unfortunately, none of these three are necessarily very helpful" I added. ... [more.](#)

Slave Thoughts

None of us like to be put into positions in which our skills no longer function. We don't like to go outside of our comfort zones, as they say. What about being taken outside of our *competence* zones?

Western / European people tend to consider themselves very capable and somewhat superior to others around the world. That is why when one opens the floodgates, millions of people are ready to take desperate measures to get into Europe. Hence Western nations have blunt and blatant restrictions for immigrants.

On that basis, one might expect other nations to have wide open doors to immigration from the West. ... [more.](#)

Sent by: Andover Baptist Church, Charlton Road, Andover, Hants SP10 3JH

<http://www.andoverbaptist.org.uk/content/view/14/14/>

To: Western Kenya, working in the region of Yala/Maseno with some extended ministry to other parts of East Africa.

c/o Zion Harvest Mission, PO Box 932, Yala, 40610, Kenya

Chairman of AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission).

Professor of Religion, Global University

Email: jimoharries@gmail.com

www.jim-mission.org.uk

www.vulnerablemission.org

Council of Reference: Peter Stagg (Andover), Mike Thompson (York), Jean Johnson (Minnesota), Tim Reeves (Norwich), Rev. Dr. Steve Rennick (Indiana), Colin Morgan (Norwich).

Finance: Peter Stagg, 70 Turin Court, Roman Way, Andover SP10 5LD, UK

email: peterdavidstagg@yahoo.co.uk

Newsletter Distribution: Angela Merridale, 8 Northbrook Court, Northbrook Avenue, Winchester, Hants SO23 0JP, UK Email: a.merridale@btinternet.com Tel: 01962 861231