



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

Conference Announcement

The AVM in conjunction with ACU (Abilene Christian University) are to hold international conferences in the USA and UK in March 2012.

For details go to:

<http://www.vulnerablemission.org/vulnerable-mission-conference-2012/>



Trans-World Radio is co-sponsoring the US conference

- See <http://www.casas.co.za/Papers.aspx?NID=83> for a paper entitled: ‘Realities of African Governance and the Relevance of Higher Education; Problems and Prospects.’ Prah concludes that: “African students must know the world through African eyes and experience. In both teaching and research this needs to be encouraged and rewarded. This approach is not suggested for sentimental or idiosyncratic reasons. It is suggested because it is the only way to develop a higher educational system relevant to African conditions in general and mass democratic society in particular.”
- See also: <http://www.casas.co.za/Papers.aspx?NID=84> for a paper entitled: ‘The Burden of English in Africa: From Colonialism to Neo-Colonialism.’ In this paper Prah tells us that “African elites today encourage the use of English, as language of instruction, with the excuse that preference for English is a means of overcoming so-called problems arising from societal consequences of linguistic pluralism. In fact the real and unspoken reason is the desire to consolidate their own social advantages through the social elevation of the English language, because they already have an adequate facility in the use of the language.” . . . “We do not want to be slaves neither do we want to compete with Shakespeare in his own language. We cannot profitably do this. If we try to do this, we will be perpetual second-rate Englishmen not Africans;

Walter Bagehot's 'unfit men and beaten races.' We want to move forward with our belongings and on our own cultural steam. To do this we must lay down once and for all, the burden of English."

- More interesting papers are listed at <http://www.casas.co.za/Papers.aspx> . For more general information about the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society go to <http://www.casas.co.za/Default.aspx>
- See http://www.unesco.at/news/conference_report.pdf for a report (about 4MB) on a conference on multilingualism that was arranged by UNESCO in 2008. Of particular interest to us is a paper by Neville Alexander from South Africa entitled 'Street and standard: Managing language in contemporary Africa'. In conclusion to this article Alexander tells us: "In a sentence, we are proposing a comprehensive, large-scale, long-term, and systematic intervention on the part of NGOs, CBOs, language professionals' associations (especially in the domain of education) with government support at the national, sub-regional, and continental levels, to create for the conditions and the capacity which will enable the realisation of the common goal of using as many African languages as possible in all the controlling domains (e.g. government administration, law making, big business, education, etc.) within the next two to three generations."
- Jim Harries has just had an article published by *missio dei*. The title is 'Talking for Money: the Donor Industry as Fulfillment of Ancient African Religious Ideals.' See <http://missiodeijournal.com/md-2-2/82> for the article. Here is the abstract: "Certain African stories suggest that outside "aid" received by African people today is fulfilling ancient utopian ideals. It is the actualization of a means of running an economy and society through friendship and relationship—including with the departed. The fiends in these ideals are evil spirits. The utopian ideals being based on "magical" beliefs means that English in Africa is a language of magic. The continuity of this dependency-based self-benefitting system is frequently maintained by the ignorance of Westerners. Creation of dependency on the West is often not a perceived problem for African people. One key to grasping the misunderstandings going on is the realization that, contrary to popular perception, words do not carry meanings. In the present study, for example, English adjusts to local African meanings, which the original purveyors of English then misunderstand. This article advocates that some Western missionaries should attempt to develop a reputation in Africa other than that of donor. They could imitate the ministry of Jesus, who did not function as a "donor." Otherwise, the African church may continue to find that Western money is the bottleneck in all its projects, and the Western church's role in places like Africa may never extend beyond that which it funds."

- Another article by Jim has been published in the *EMQ (Evangelical Missions' Quarterly)*. This is available on-line only to those who have paid a subscription. Bibliographical details as follows: Harries, Jim, 'The Existence of Witchcraft in Africa.' *Evangelical Missions' Quarterly*, 47/3, 290-293, July 2011.
- Robert Reese, one time AVM executive board member, has recently had an article published by *missio dei* entitled *Western Missions and Dependency*. It can be found here: <http://missiodeijournal.com/md-2-2/81> The abstract is as follows: "In the postcolonial era, with the new emphasis on globalization and interdependence, the author reminds readers that dependency from colonialism still exists and hampers the completion of the Great Commission. While interdependence is held to be the solution to global poverty and world evangelization, the legacy of dependency remains powerful. The author examines how dependency works and suggests ways to overcome it in postcolonial missions."
- See <http://missiodeijournal.com/md-2-2/73> for a review by AVM executive board member Chris Flanders of a book that looks at partnership, by Mary Lederleitner. The book itself is as follows: Lederleitner, Mary T., *Cross-Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission*. Downers Gove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010. 230 pp. Mary will be presenting on this topic at the Texas conference.

Yours,
 Jim Harries, (PhD).
 Chairman, Alliance for Vulnerable Mission