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# Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

## May 2021

### Volume 13, Number 5

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Guest Editor: Dr Nick Henwood



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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.



The next UK-AVM conference is to be held at All Nations Christian College, Hertfordshire, 12th to 15th September 2021.

Details [here](#).

Registration [here](#).

General information at [www.vulnerablemission.org](http://www.vulnerablemission.org)

Potential speakers please tell Jim of your plans asap, so that we can include you in PR materials for the conference ([jjim@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:jjim@vulnerablemission.org)).

Please suggest contributions to this Bulletin to [jim@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:jim@vulnerablemission.org)

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All Nations Christian College, UK, 12th to 15th September 2021

## Vulnerable Mission: English and Dollars Powering Ministry, Good Idea?

We urge some missionaries to practice their ministry using the languages and resources of the people they are reaching. This will honour the indigenous. It is a Christ-like starting point for sharing the Gospel in contextualized ways.

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

- Practicalities and ramifications of use of indigenous languages by Western missionaries.
- How does translation to and from an indigenous language affect missionary work?
- While finances are needed for mission work, how can one ensure that finances do not dominate?
- What good practices are there to ensure a missionary remains vulnerable in their local context?
- How to engage in mission without exuding (excessive) power.
- What organisational structures enable vulnerability on the side of Western missionaries on the ground.
- What help can we offer churches who want to engage directly in cross cultural mission to avoid pitfalls of power.
- Tentmaking and business as mission models that leave the Westerner vulnerable. (Can the commercial world engage in mission without promoting 'evils' of capitalism?)
- When the uneven spread of wealth is itself an injustice, how can one use one's surplus to enact global justice.
- How can mission agencies promote vulnerability, when dominant models of understanding presented by a vast global media are rooted in positivism and liberalism?
- Is vulnerability the key to contextualisation?

- Theology traditionally draws strongly on metaphor. However local metaphors from the majority world are unfamiliar to the Westerner, and vice versa. How can one then engage in theology interculturally?
- Where 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' a normal aspect of life? What does this imply for cross cultural missionary engagement?
- Does the introduction of outside technology result in exploitation and enslavement? or liberation?
- Globalisation as a force that cripples the periphery. How can the voices of those at the periphery be heard, and their dignity guarded?
- When short-term mission has become poverty-tourism intended to adorn facebook pages with images of charity – what is the way forward?
- Can Westerners relate to non-Western missionaries without dominating them?
- The bible is God's inspired book, but theological training is dominated by Western curricula. Are there alternative paradigms for local-context training of Christian workers?

#### **Conference Details:**

This will be a three-day residential conference. It will be held in the English country house at the attractive rural location of the UK's premier missionary training college, All Nations, near Ware in Hertfordshire. Full cost will be £300, or early bird £260.

#### **Conference sponsors:**

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission ([vulnerablemission.org](http://vulnerablemission.org))

All Nations Christian College, Easneye, Ware, Hertfordshire, SG12 8LX

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**A note from Nick Henwood, guest editor for the May 2021 Bulletin.**

Dr Nick Henwood, his wife Rosalind and their 2 daughters spent 9 years serving in Nepal with the United Mission to Nepal and Medecins du Monde. During those years they sought to acquire good language skills, and to live and work appropriately in an economically under-resourced context. Returning to the UK Nick, with a colleague Ted Lankester, founded Arukah Network (formerly Community Health Global Network). This network fosters learning and relationships between community practitioners in local Clusters in Kenya, north India and Tanzania.

Ros is Chaplain for International Students at Leicester University.

Nick teaches on Christian Medical Fellowship's annual Developing Health Course – on the Community Health day. He urges participants to re-think healthcare mission. This is an uphill task, as it's hard for medics to shed the "I can fix you" mentality – an attitude that he admits all too easily surfaces in himself too. Nick affirms: "I am increasingly convinced that, to be Christ-like, we'd better leave our English language, our Pounds Sterling, and our overdeveloped self-confidence behind, and engage with people in their language, their context and on their terms."

Nick is a GP in Leicester. He has been a board member of AVM since Sept 2019.

I hope you like the new Mailchimp format. We are always looking for items that you find that would be good to highlight in our bulletins - email them to us.



<https://weamc.global/covid-asia/>

**MISSIONS IN A COVID CRISIS: ASIA IMPLICATIONS**

In Asia, COVID-19 exposed afresh areas of concern, including issues around resourcing, relevance and theology. We need to see an increased sensitivity toward others that results in more culturally-appropriate biblical theologies and practices, that will bless the nations.



<https://vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ems-intro-to-vm.mp4>

In this 15 minute video Jim Harries speaks about vulnerable mission. He claims that "orthodox theology" is often viewed as only existing in English Language. He asserts that theological training should be conducted in indigenous languages to enable linkage with the local context. He urges missionaries to make the choice to live in a vulnerable way.



<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/faith/early-christians/the-church-i-dreamed-of>

### **The Church I Dreamed Of... Against Christian Idol Worship**

**Many years ago** I told a friend I wanted to start a church. It wouldn't have a big steeple with a cross on top; I'd just build a traditional Korean pavilion-style house just large enough to hold fifty or a hundred people. No pulpit, just a wooden floor where we could sit in a circle. We wouldn't have a sign out front advertising "So-and-so's Church" either. We'd call it "The Magpie's House," or name it after a fairy-tale character.

At our church services, we'd just talk about our lives and the Bible. Sometimes

a monk might come over from the temple and read from Buddha's teachings, or the schoolmaster might tell about Confucius and Mencius. On special days like Dano, the rice-planting festival in early summer, we'd roast a pig, share home-brewed rice wine, dance, and play games. When hard times came, we would help each other. That's the kind of church I wanted.

This idea filled me with enthusiasm, and I prayed about it. But years passed, and the church was never built.

But the risk is that Christians gave up our beautiful customs and adopted Christmas as our main holiday, going crazy over Santa Claus, Rudolph, Christmas trees, and Christmas cards.

Click the link above for the rest of this inspiring essay by pastor Kwon Jeong-saeng from Korea.



<https://youtu.be/FFFW2MIZhqw>

**Dr. Andrew Steane**  
**Professor of Physics, University of Oxford**

In London School of Theology Virtual Research Conference, 15th April 2021, Andrew looks at how people of traditional societies<sup>1</sup> can be enabled to benefit from contemporary health science. (Helpful 5-minute video)

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