

[View this email in your browser](#)



www.vulnerablemission.org

Open Access

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin October 2021 Volume 13, Number 10

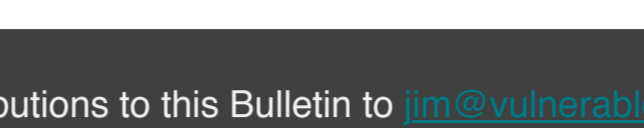
(Archived back-copies [here](#) Subscribe for free [here](#))

Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM

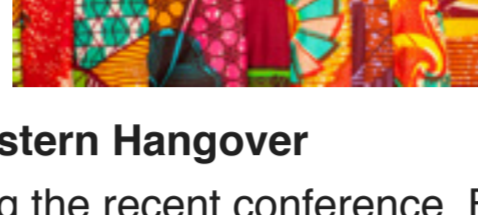


Exec board	UK / Europe board	Advisory Board
Jim Harries	Andy Dipper	Chris Flanders
John Macdonald	Nick Henwood	Stan Chu Ilo
Frank Paul	Peter Stagge	Jay Gary
Daniel Albert	Deborah Bernhard	Jean Johnson

The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages some missionaries from the West to engage in their ministries using local languages and resources.



Please suggest contributions to this Bulletin to info@vulnerablemission.org
This month's contents:
African Christianity's Western Hangover.
Universities and the legacy of colonial epistemicide.
The non-romantic idea of nature in African theology.
No White Saviors.
Upcoming Webinar on Vulnerable Mission, by Jim Harries, with mission-nexus.
Kenya's shelter for suspected witches.
How Western Anti-Racism Harms Africa and How we can do Better.
No Vulnerable Intellectuals.
Andrew Walls.



African Christianity's Western Hangover

One of the people attending the recent conference, Bill Black, has subsequently produced a blog entitled: African Christianity's Western Hangover: Recovering the Original Gospel for Africa's Post-Western Christians. The blog includes his general reflections, as well as a focus on Bill's own contribution to the conference. Bill tells us that he agrees increasingly: "that use of English and the pipeline of Western money is detrimental to true Christian engagement."

<http://onesimusedivivus.blogspot.com/2021/09/african-christianitys-western-hangover.html>

More feedback and resources from the recent UK conference will be made available in subsequent editions of this Bulletin.

..ooOoo..



Universities and the legacy of colonial epistemicide.

This recent article, by Phaedra Haringsma, appears in University World News. This news-service largely presupposing the value of English-medium higher education in Africa makes this contrary-piece particularly interesting. The article is entitled: Universities and the legacy of colonial epistemicide. "Higher education under colonial rule in Sub-Saharan Africa did not have the purpose of improving African societies. Archival research teaches that, across the continent, colonial education either prepared citizens to serve European colonial interests or excluded them altogether," the article tells us.

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20210908100721929>

..ooOoo..

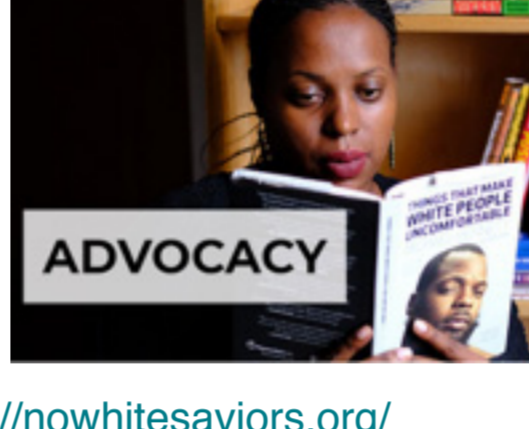


The non-romantic idea of nature in African theology

An article by Hermen Kroesbergen and Johanneke Kroesbergen-Kamps (published in 2021) looks at how the concept of nature is understood in sub-Saharan Africa. As such, it provides yet another concept study, that in practice underlines, as far as vulnerable mission is concerned, the vital importance of the use of African languages in Africa.

https://www.academia.edu/51550762/The_non_romantic_idea_of_nature_in_African_theology

..ooOoo..



No White Saviors <https://nowhitesaviors.org/>

I (Jim Harries) was intrigued to discover this organization operating in Uganda, that considers it's mission to be "making sure that the most severe perpetrators of white saviorism be held accountable in a court of law. There are three primary cases we've been advocating for: healthcare, sex trafficking, and human trafficking / inter-country adoption."

A major case they have taken up, was of Renee Bach: "Bach came to Uganda as an American missionary with only a High School diploma and no formal medical training. She and her NGO, Serving His Children, proceeded to compromise the lives of 100s of Ugandan children. The families who came to Bach for help assumed she was a qualified medical professional and that her facility was registered. We were able to not only spread awareness about the crimes committed by Bach and SHC but also sponsored a significant portion of the legal fees for two of the mothers who lost their children."

(Vulnerable Mission comment from the editor: With DiAngelo, the site points to the uncomfortableness that many Whites feel when critiqued by Africans. As DiAngelo, the origins of this uncomfortableness in blasphemy is not recognized.)

See - The Cause of White Fragility: Blasphemy of the Secular.
https://www.academia.edu/43676618/The_Cause_of_White_Fragility_Blasphemy_of_the_Secular

..ooOoo..



Upcoming Webinar on Vulnerable Mission, by Jim Harries, with mission-nexus.

This webinar, to be held 18th November 2021, is entitled: A Case for the Practice of Vulnerable Mission in Ministry of Westerners amongst African People. It will be at 12pm Eastern Standard Time. (The charge for non-missionnexus members is \$25.)

<https://missionnexus.org/events/#/event/2021/11/18/webinar-a-case-for-the-practice-of-vulnerable-mission-in-ministry-of-westerners-amongst-african-people>

..ooOoo..



Kenya's shelter for suspected witches

A short-video by Deutsche Welle (in English) looks at a camp for sheltering witches in Kenya. (Editor: this is not a situation familiar to me.) What is striking to me, is how the producers of the video re-construct a Kenya as they imagine it once was. I.e. they make no reference at all to Christian activities oriented to countering witch with accusation, as if churches do not exist.

<https://www.dw.com/en/kenyas-shelter-for-suspected-witches/av-59202970>

..ooOoo..

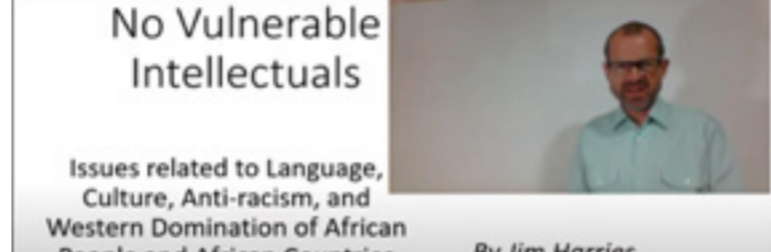


How Western Anti-Racism Harms Africa and How we can do Better.

This most recent of Jim's books (came to press August 2021) is currently available as paperback from amazon, UK. It will soon also be available in the USA, and via kindle.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Western-Anti-Racism-Harms-Africa-Better/dp/1913181642/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=how+anti-racism+harms+Africa+and+how+we+can+do+better

..ooOoo..



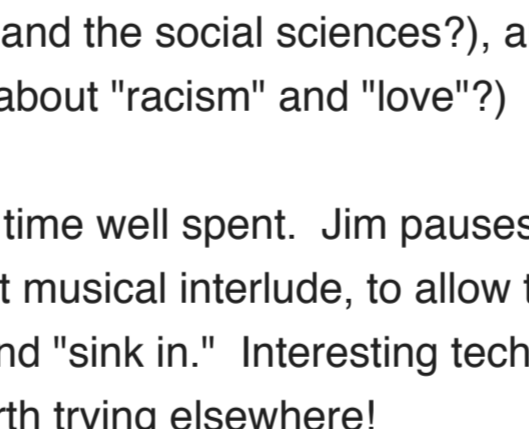
No Vulnerable Intellectuals.

This lecture was to have been presented by Jim at a seminary in the USA, until he cancelled his trip due to corona. Here's a version recorded by video. Comments by a listener: Jim again encourages us to approach mission (and all cultural communication) without so many of our natural assumptions. In essence, he asks us to attempt to "see with fresh eyes, and hear with fresh ears"! This will not and cannot be complete, since we will always be to some degree, creatures of our upbringing, education, and cultural past. But, we can try, and do better than we normally do when we so often arrogantly import our many assumptions from our own past. Jim gives helpful illustrations from economics (is it always important to raise the level of a person's income?), education (how do we frame and express our points of view, particularly in philosophy and theology, and the social sciences?), and interpersonal relations (how do we see and talk about "racism" and "love"?)

Listening to the lecture is time well spent. Jim pauses between every main point and provides a short musical interlude, to allow the thought to be more thoroughly "processed" and "sink in." Interesting technique, maybe more African than English - worth trying elsewhere!

<https://youtu.be/4FMVtrjCW60>

..ooOoo..



On 12 August 2021 the missiologist Andrew Walls went to be with the Lord, at the age of 93. May I take this opportunity to point out one paper he presented about 20 years ago. (By Mark Smith)

Demographics, Power and the Gospel in the 21st Century

<https://www.wycliffe.net/more-about-what-we-do/papers-and-articles/demographics-power-and-the-gospel-in-the-21st-century/>

I copy some of the quotes that may be of importance for us at AVM. In brackets I add some questions / comments:

"Christian advance is not steady inevitable progress. Advance is often followed by recession. The spread of the gospel does not produce permanent gains that can be plotted on a map: "We have done that." Christianity has vulnerability at its very heart, fragility in its expression. It's perhaps the vulnerability of the Cross and the fragility of the earthen vessel. ...

At the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, of which I've spoken, one of the Indian delegates was a young, still not very experienced Anglican minister, V. S. Azariah. ... "Through all the ages to come," he said, "the Indian church will rise up in gratitude to attest the heroism and self-denying labors of the missionary body. You have given your goods to feed the poor; you have given your bodies to be burned. We also ask for love. Give us friends."

What churches in history have had routinely to cope with such persistent horrors of devastation, war, displacement, and genocide, as have those of central Africa and the Sudan? ...

Christianity lives by crossing the boundaries of language and of being. ... Hellenistic believers would now have to find a Hellenistic way of being Christian under the guidance of the Holy Spirit because they had to live in Hellenistic society and they would have to change Hellenistic family and social life, but change it organically, from the inside. The Hellenistic way of being Christian would be different from the Jewish way of being Christian, and yet the two belonged with each other. ... When the Epistle to the Ephesians was written, there were only two major cultures in the Christian church, two Christian lifestyles, the Jewish and the Hellenistic. How many are there now? One of the great tasks of Christian missions in the coming century will be to allow these different Christian lifestyles to grow but to interact because, yes, all these belong together in the body of Christ. ..."

[That reminds me of AVM which is longing for an African / Asian / South American way of being Christian, uninfluenced by Western power and money.] So, the Ephesian moment brings us a Church more culturally diverse than it's ever been before, nearer potentially to that full stature of Christ that belongs to the summing up of all of humanity. But it also announces a Church of the poor. Christianity will be mainly the religion of rather poor and very poor people with few gifts to bring except the gospel itself. ...

[I ask myself: What are the gifts we bring when we go to others? Do these gifts help the local Christians to be a church in poverty?]

As it stands at the moment, the Western Theological Academy represented in our universities and seminaries is simply not equipped to lead in the new world order that the demographics of the Holy Spirit has brought about. ...

[I ask myself: Where is our Western money putting the Western Theological Academy into the forefront? Would less Western money enable the church in the Global South to develop a more indigenous way of theology that can stand the test of time?]

You may want to read the whole article. It is encouraging and challenging to read Andrew Walls' works. Be prepared for challenges.]

Greetings from Mark Smith

..ooOoo..