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Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

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Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM



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**Early bird price for UK conference, 8th to 11th December, ends 1st October.
[Book now](#) to reserve your place!**

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

.....

Someone we hope you'll meet at the conference ... My name is Chris Sadowitz and together with my family we have enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to live as relational disciple makers in Japan under the auspices of The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism sine 1993. Since 2006 I have also served as an adjunct professor for the Asian Biblical Theological Seminary in Chiang Mai, Thailand associated with Cornerstone University of Grand Rapids, Michigan. In this capacity of teaching a theology of church ministry and a history and philosophy of Christian mission courses, I came a cross



a book entitled “ Making disciples one conversation at a time by D. Michael Henderson within which the title of a chapter caught my attention, (Ministry from a position of weakness). Having pastored and youth-pastored for over thirty years in both Christian receptive contexts and Christian resistant contexts, I have noticed a prevalence to borrow methods of ministry from cultures (often cultures of the mind/group). Weakness was not one of those models often borrowed.

Last year (2018) while attending a class at Biola University a visiting professor was lecturing on community development and Christian responsible ministry the name Dr. Jim Harries (2012) and the Alliance for Vulnerable mission surfaced and caught my attention as my previously noted vacuum of weakness was still of concern to me. Most likely the cause of my continued angst resides in the fact that we serve in Japan where the number of Christians has not changed significantly in over 500 years. I constantly wonder and explore whether or not it is my methods that need adjusting. The meager visible fruit coupled with a deep and difficult cultural context exposes my weakness and this continues to draw me back to the theme of vulnerable ministry especially in an Asian context.



[**THE CHALLENGE OF VOLUNTURISM**](#) is the title to this short article by Mark Delaney, who has lived in slums in India with his family for 17 years. He raises some interesting points. He writes:

“It’s so dirty and smelly here! They just need proper flushing toilets!” I was sitting at our home in a north Indian slum, hosting a foreign volunteer. It was exasperating that this young man thought he knew how to fix the many problems in the slum after having been here for a few hours! If he’d listened and learnt for a few weeks before offering “solutions”, he would have realised that the main problem for our neighbours in the slum was ...”

- “...the traditional distinction between theology (which should rightly be named as European or Enlightenment theology) and its privileged position over against so-called contextualised theologies is not only false but dangerous. At best this has been and continues to be an instrument of exclusion; excluding African, Asian and Latin American cultures from serious theological discourse. At worst it is an act of arrogance and even oppression.” [Shared Joe Kapolyo from Zambia in a lecture at All Nations Christian College.](#)



<https://www.arte.tv/de/articles/white-saviorism-wenn-hilfe-nicht-hilfreich-ist> „Wenn es um ,White



Saviorism' geht, prallen auf Instagram und Twitter viele Meinungen aufeinander. Ein Beispiel von besonderem Ausmaß bringt der aktuelle Fall der amerikanischen Missionarin Renee Bach, die ohne jegliche medizinische Ausbildung jahrelang ugandische Kinder behandelt hat und nun von zwei betroffenen Müttern angeklagt wurde. Mit einer Online-Kampagne möchte die Gruppe @NoWhiteSaviors auf die Problematik aufmerksam machen, wenn Privilegierte die Welt retten wollen.“

- [Craig Greenfield compares the Asian and the Western worldview in this blog.](#)

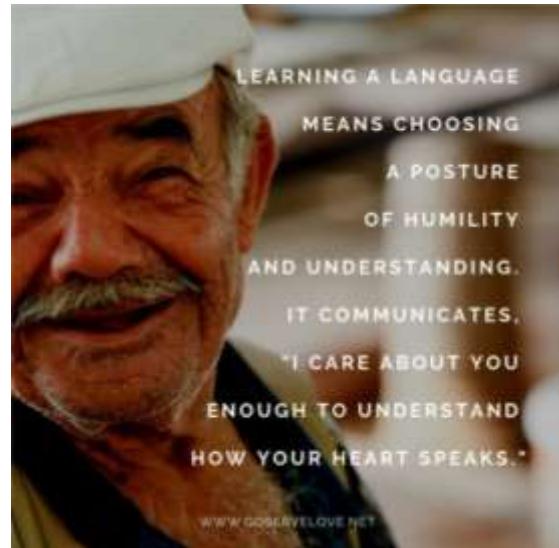


- See this report [here](#) from Stanley W. Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network. Green says: “For the last several decades, Mennonite Mission Network (and our predecessor agencies) have been on a journey to move away from any form of mission characterized by imperialistic and denigrating paternalistic approaches. The title of a text published by three former long-term members of the Mennonite team in the Chaco (Willis Horst, Ute Mueller-Eckhardt, and Frank Paul), which is supported by Mennonite Mission Network, [Mission Without Conquest](#) (also published in Spanish as *Misión Sin Conquista*) captures our commitment to the form of mission in which we intend to be engaged. This alternative mode of being in

mission is to walk in the way of Jesus, embracing weakness and vulnerability instead of with attitudes of superiority. Our priority is to respect the integrity, creativity and dignity of those with whom we work in a spirit of reciprocity and mutuality.”

- Go-serve-love.net are promoting the use of the heart language, see [here](#).

"When we came back to our passport country on home assignment, people were curious. "If Ugandans speak English, why do you spend so much effort on learning Luganda?" It's a great question. And honestly, a lot of global workers didn't share the priority I personally felt for this. Also honestly? It dawned on me that languages came easily to me. But there was a richness I gained that made anyone's effort worth it. I WAS WELCOMED INTO MORE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS. As I learned to converse more adeptly—and by adept, I mean like a toddler says, "I SIT!", or maybe as smoothly as a pirate with a peg leg runs a 5K—I noticed a curious thing: People responded like flowers opening around me. I mean, they lit up. It was like suddenly I was welcomed to a more inner circle. But language learning accomplished even more ..."



Margaret Muthwii

- This [article by Margaret Muthwii and Angelina Kioko](#) is surprisingly honest about the problems associated with the use of English in Africa. The suggestions that form the conclusion of this paper, that a Kenyan form of English should be recognised, unfortunately for various reasons remains totally impractical and undesirable for almost everyone. Instead, Kenyans are taught and are taught in a language that itself has little by way of firm foundation ...

Kioko, Angelina, & Muthwii, Margaret J., 2001, The Demands of a Changing Society: English in education in Kenya today. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 14(3), 201-213.

- This may be of interest to AVM members in the UK: Our Future of Mission event will be held on the 30th-31st October 2019 in the UK. Global Connections is pleased to host this special two-day event exploring how language and power will affect the future of mission. We'll be joined by inspiring author Michael Stroope with additional speakers including Rachel Field and Georgina Jardim, but most importantly, we'll be hearing from you and other attendees as we seek to discern what God is saying to the global mission community. **The theme is Language and Power**, and we are particularly keen to engage with voices that are not usually heard. [Learn more here](#).



Mark Smith, who is planning to attend our December conference, has given us a strong recommendation to read certain **books by David Smith** (unrelated!) who is to speak at our upcoming conference. Here is his recommendation:

"David Smith reads a lot written by Christians from Asia, Africa and Latin America. That influences his missiological writings. He is critical about certain expressions of Western missions, regarding them as too close to Western consumerism." These are the books that Mark recommends:

Smith, David W. 1995. Stairways to Heaven: God in World Religions.
Edinburgh: Rutherford House.

Smith, David W. 2003. against the stream: Christianity and mission
in an age of globalization. Leicester: ivp.

Smith, David W. 2003. Mission after Christendom.

Smith, David. 2011. Seeking a City with Foundations - Theology for an
Urban World. Nottingham: ivp.

Smith, David W. 2013. The Kindness of God: Christian witness in our
troubled world. Nottingham: ivp.

Smith, David. 2016. Liberating the Gospel: Translating the Message of
Jesus in a Globalized World. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Call for papers

2019 Conference: Missionaries: aliens, providers, or fellow travellers?

Submit
abstracts
asap to
ms@vulnerablemission.org

Location: All Nations Christian College, Ware, Herts, UK

Dates / times Sunday 8th December 5 pm to Wednesday 11th December 1 pm

Should the majority world be the target of patronage from rich missionaries?

Outline paragraph: Outside Christian workers who build on foreign presuppositions in work amongst indigenous communities can, especially when foreign funded and using outside languages, be interpreted as riding roughshod over indigenous sensibilities. True empowerment of local people requires getting alongside them. This necessitates vulnerability to their position and context. Such vulnerability can best be achieved if one shares the Gospel using indigenous languages utilising local resources.

We will be discussing issues such as:

Problems and ramifications of use of indigenous languages by
Western missionaries

How does translation into an indigenous language (and from an
indigenous language) affect the handing of the gospel and of missionary
work in general?

What finances are needed for mission work, how can one ensure that
finances do not dominate one's mission work?

What are the good practices that ensure a missionary's vulnerability to
local context(s)?

How to engage in mission without exuding (excessive) power

Organisation structures that enable vulnerability on the side of Western
missionaries on the ground

Helping Churches who want to engage directly in mission cross culturally
to avoid pitfalls of power

Tentmaking and business as mission models that leave the Westerner
vulnerable. How can the commercial world be used to engage in mission
without promoting 'evil' of capitalism?

When the uneven spread of wealth is itself an injustice, how can one use
one's surplus to enact global justice

How do we utilise global media channels to promote vulnerability in
our missionary endeavour?

Is vulnerability the key to contextualisation?

Theology traditionally draws strongly on metaphor. In the majority world,
local metaphors are unfamiliar to the West. How can one then engage
theology interculturally?

When 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' simply a normal
prerequisite of human social existence. What does this imply for cross
cultural missionary engagement?

Is introduction of outside technology implicitly exploitative and
enslaving? Or is it liberating? How does technology impact vulnerable
missions; positive, negative, releasing, enslaving?

How can Global-localisation be a springboard for vulnerable mission?

When short-term mission has become poverty-hunting intended to
adorn facebook with images of charity – what is the way forward?

Can Westerners relate to anti-Western missionaries without dominating
them?

While the Bible is God's inspired book, are Western curriculums?

