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Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

November 2023

Volume 15, Number 11

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Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM.



AVM Board		Advisory Board
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Peter Stagg (finance)	Frank Paul	Dr. Stan Chu Ilo
Dr. Marcus Grohmann (research)	Deborah Bernhard	Dr. Jay Gary
Rev. Dr. John Macdonald		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 jim@vulnerablemission.org

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January webinar by Andy McCullough

Free AVM webinar:

25th January 2024, 14:00 GMT (London Time)

Topic:

Demons come back: Why we're sometimes not as humble as we think we are, and how God can help us to do better

Speaker: Andy McCullough

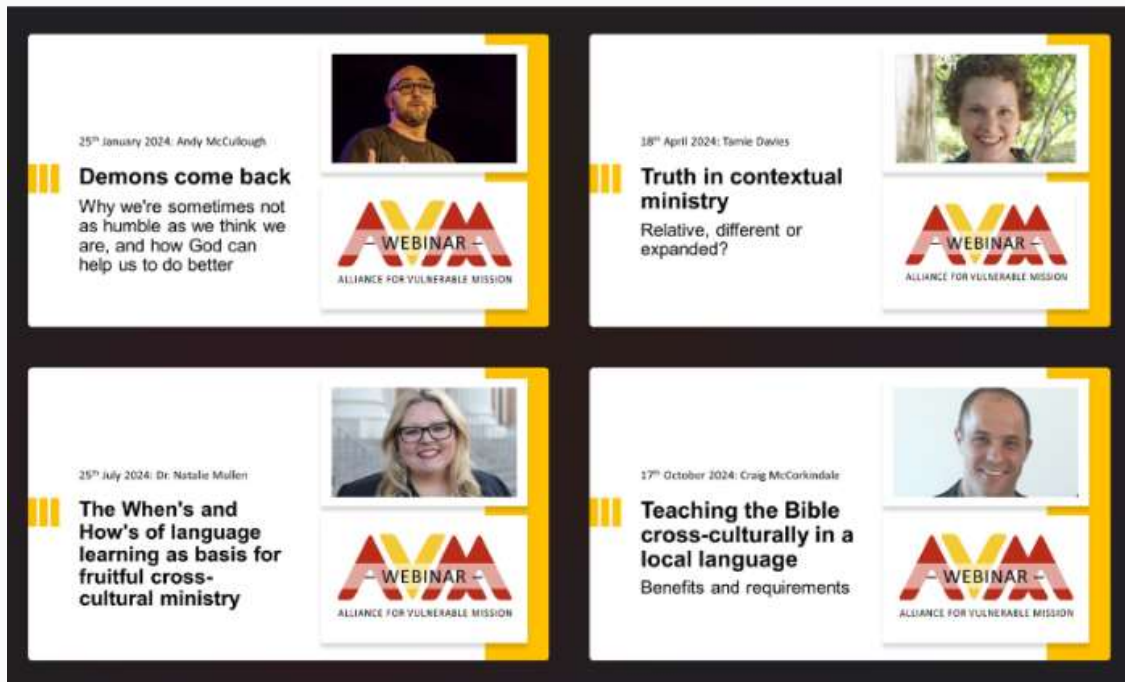
When: Thursday, 25th January 2023.

Time: 14:00 London Time (BST).

Sign up for free using the website below and we will send you a Zoom link.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/avm-webinar-with-andy-mccullough-tickets-736593780827?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

..ooOoo..



Webinar programme 2024: Registration open now

AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission) presents quarterly webinars each year, free of charge. These are available for registration at the Eventbrite page linked below. This upcoming year speakers are Andy McCullough, Tamie Davies, Dr. Natalie Mullen, and Craig McCorkindale. We hope to see you online at these sessions.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/alliance-for-vulnerable-mission-avm-65593048623>

..ooOoo..



Pray for Deborah Bernhard

AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission) board member Deborah Bernhard is currently in Thailand participating in conferences and meeting individuals. Pray for her while she is there to be able to fulfil what the Lord has given her to do and say.

..ooOoo..



Theological Education with an Indigenous Gait, Africa.

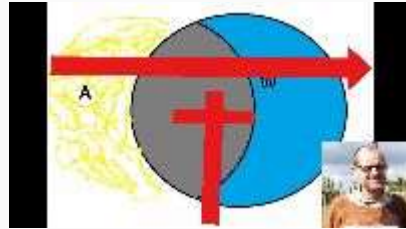
<https://youtu.be/d1rFscHC2zA>

<https://www.emsweb.org/conferences/annual/>

This is the presentation Jim had prepared as 'back-up' for the EMS (Evangelical Missiological Society) conference. The presentation is based on the paper that he gave at the conference, but is not what he actually presented at the conference. Jim demonstrates that serious theological

education in Africa should happen in relation to local conditions, and using indigenous languages.

..ooOoo..



Jim Harries talks of the theoretical foundations underlying his ministry

<https://youtu.be/3lwRmqxIHBs>

Jim, in this talk, articulates a justification for vulnerable mission and explains some of his work in Kenya. It is aimed at an audience at local church level in Southern England.

..ooOoo..



Five Stones Global advocacy on how to *Position yourself for long-lasting impact.*

<https://mailchi.mp/fivestonesglobal.org/new-innovative-online-mission-trainings?e=bbec3b24e8>

“As missionaries ourselves, we know how important, nuanced, and complex mission work can be. We all desire to inspire local disciples to sustain and multiply organically, but it’s so easy to unwittingly export a Westernized version of Christianity that doesn’t thrive in the host cultures. Five Stones Global helps cross-cultural workers avoid these common pitfalls of missionary service that erect barriers to reaching the unreached via our three online, participatory, e-book trainings.”

..ooOoo..



SOAS lecture: Researching Africa in Light of the ‘Religions’ of Anti-racism and Christianity

Link to video recording of lecture pending

Jim presented a lecture at Centre for World Christianity of SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) at the University of London on 18th October. The video of the lecture has not yet been posted, so will be made available in the next Bulletin. It was an interesting event, which we hope will lead to future close cooperation between SOAS and the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission).

..ooOoo..



Marcus Grohmann’s Discussion on: [Paul Planted, Apollos Watered, but God: Vulnerable Weakness in Ministry and Mission](#) (in press)

(The – slightly adapted – response below was given to a potential reviewer of *Paul Planted*, by the research coordinator of the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission, Dr. Marcus Grohmann.)

Dear Reviewer,

Thank you very much for your reply and questions regarding our ongoing discussion.

On the first point - yes, you are right of course regarding Jesus and Paul. When their followers sought honour, their response was not to put themselves under them by giving in to their demands! The new book being produced by the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission) speaks to this very challenge. People in socio-economically difficult contexts are likely to make demands on wealthy donors, Christian or otherwise. Giving is a major part of today's North-South relationships. The book looks at some of the downsides to this (e.g. chapters 8 and 11) and suggests 'vulnerable' ways of engaging that help 'the North' to gain a deeper understanding in terms of culture and worldview, which might include why incessant demands continue to be made.

Regarding your second paragraph, I'd largely be with you. We do want to honor each groups' giftings and assist in addressing weaknesses. One problem in today's time, however, is that often, fundamental equality is assumed and what is lacking is considered to be in the secular realm - training, opportunities, finances. The book encourages ministry workers to dig deeper and to understand why cultures have different 'giftings' and how this relates to gospel exposure (e.g. Ch. 9). One of the book's principal aims is to challenge Western ministry workers to acknowledge, value and enable the appropriation of the gospel according to various peoples' own terms.

Thirdly, again, yes, all should serve one another. This is what we're working towards. The challenge for Christian ministry and secular 'development' intervention is, though, that a) equality is assumed leading to concealing of (cultural) differences that imply different weaknesses and strengths. When an indigenous group of people have these kinds of 'weaknesses', yet they are concealed rather than addressed, this can easily result in ongoing Western/outside dominance; b) in intercultural relationships, often a Western

model of church, education, politics, etc. is assumed as a given or the standard to aspire to, making Westerners blind to what they could be receiving from others (apart from superficial things like different foods) and naive to the fact that their 'superior' contributions may not quite work in other contexts. The in-press book we are expecting to be available soon encourages ministry that leads to deeper knowing of people, greater appreciation for differences and for ways to facilitate the gospel taking root in various contexts that do not require assimilation into a Western standard model, but lead to more equal interdependence (e.g. Ch. 11).

Then of course, the book tries to define some theological foundations for Vulnerable Weakness in Ministry and Mission (chapters 1-5, 12) and speaks about the necessary postures (e.g., Chapters 7 and 10).

We hope these answers help to clarify some of the important issues you picked up upon starting to read the book as you prepare to review it.

Thank you so much.

Kind regards

Marcus

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