



www.vulnerablemission.org

Open Access

Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin May 2025 Volume 17, Number 5

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

Guest editor: Marcus Grohmann, PhD, Director AVM



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 bulletin@vulnerablemission.org

This month's contents:

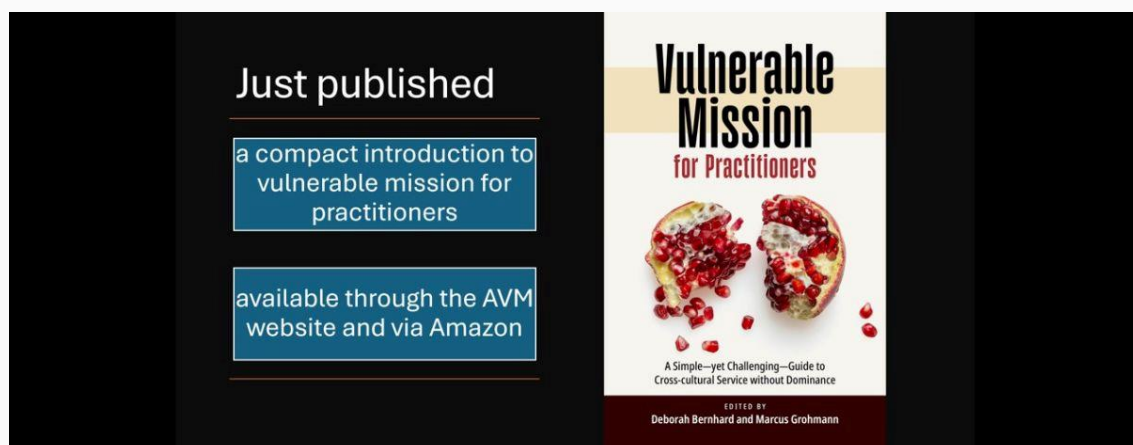
Now published: Vulnerable Mission for Practitioners

- 'Invite to a community of learners!' – Rereading the 'Great Commission'
- Project planning at odds with vulnerable mission?
- Recording of AVM Webinar with Dr. Chris Sadowitz
- Other webinars coming up later this year

Now published: Vulnerable Mission for Practitioners

With contributions by members of the various AVM boards, this book is an introduction to vulnerable mission that is both comprehensive and compact. The short chapters, written in accessible language, present clearly how vulnerable mission differs from other approaches to mission. They explain why (more of) vulnerable mission is important. The book closes with some simple and concrete steps towards more vulnerable weakness in cross-cultural ministry.

The book is available as Kindle version on the various Amazon websites ([USD 5.50](#) / [GBP 4.20](#) / [EUR 5.00](#)) and as paperback and PDF eBook on the AVM website (purely on donation basis). Click [here](#) for more information.



'Invite to a community of learners!' – Rereading the 'Great Commission'

An intriguing chapter in the book 'Mission – still on? Why we need postcolonial perspectives' (edited by Claudia Währisch-Oblau and recently translated into English from the German original) takes a fresh look at one of the most central biblical texts for evangelicals today. It considers the importance given to the passage at different times in church history, problematises its past legitimisation for colonial expansion and seeks to uncover the meaning of the Greek text in the context of the Gospel of Matthew. 'To disciple' thus takes on a new meaning – less hierarchical and more equal – as an emphasis is put on the fact that those 'discipling' others are themselves learners of the Jesus Way.

The chapter is part of a book that is freely available for download [here](#). The chapter reference:

Oblau, Gotthard and Währisch-Oblau, Claudia (2025) "Invite into your learning community!" What the "Great Commission" really says. In: Währisch-Oblau Claudia (ed.) *Mission – still on? Why we need postcolonial perspectives*. United Evangelical Mission, pp. 43–57.

In the [resources section](#) on the AVM website, a slightly shortened version of the original German text is available for download.

‘Invite to a community of learners!’ – Rereading the ‘Great Commission’

Reflecting on foundational mission theology with Gotthard Oblau and Claudia Währisch-Oblau in a chapter from the book:



The purpose and goal of mission is a process of learning and trial and error in the context of cross-cultural, mixed-religious and international encounters, because intercultural learning goes deeper and further than learning in homogeneous groups. Mission aims at learning – not the other way around. Because messianic learning is a never-ending process.

Project planning at odds with vulnerable mission?

How does project planning - which many intercultural workers have to do - relate to vulnerable mission? Mark Smith, currently working with *Results Based Management* (RBM), is concerned that project planning requirements impose outside agendas on local contexts. Could it be that tools like RBM focus too much on what we as outsiders want locals to do, rather than enabling us to interact with them on level ground and follow their agendas (where they intersect with our expertise). If we work with people without bringing in outside resources, they may not even perceive 'a project' but by God's grace allow us to join in their activities as fellow human beings and hopefully as friends.

Mark asks: "Are there people among the readers of the AVM Bulletin (or people they know) who try to work according to the principles of vulnerable mission and have to do project planning? How do you cope with that? I would like to learn from you."

Mark Smith can be contacted via info@vulnerablemission.org. He will also be the speaker at the AVM webinar on 9 October (information and sign-up link below).

Project planning at odds with vulnerable mission?

Discuss with Mark Smith on how to handle *Results Based Management* (RBM) in ways that engage local contexts from a position of vulnerability.

Email:
info@vulnerablemission.org



Recording of AVM Webinar with Dr. Chris Sadowitz

Growing out of Jim Harries' ministry in Kenya, the AVM has mostly promoted vulnerability in mission with respect to the 'developing world' in the Global South. And yet, vulnerability modelled on Jesus' posture of God becoming human, even a slave in our world (Phil 2:5 ff.) means doing ministry in a way that reveals a particular approach that is irrespective of the context. Dr. Chris Sadowitz, missionary in Japan since 1993, explored in a recent AVM webinar how the concrete outworkings of vulnerable mission as defined by the AVM (cross-cultural ministry using indigenous languages and local resources) relate to missionary work in the country of Japan with its high levels of education and income.

Chris Sadowitz, together with Jim Harries, was co-editor of the book [‘Paul Planted, Apollos Watered, but God: Vulnerable Weakness in Ministry and Mission’](#).

You can watch the recording of the webinar [here](#).

Webinar recording available

24th April 2025: Dr. Chris Sadowitz



Serving in an affluent Japanese context

Vulnerable Mission beyond indigenous languages and local resources?



Other webinars coming up later this year:

Is Religion a Western Idea? Some Emerging Ideas on the Khmer Notion of Sasna ('Religion') – 24 July 2025

In September of 2023, the Pew Research Center released a report entitled 'Buddhism, Islam and Religious Pluralism in South and Southeast Asia' which

Sign-up [here](#).



The Alliance for Vulnerable
Mission in cooperation with
Rethinking Forum



24th July 2025; Claire Chong



— WEBINAR —
ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

Is Religion a Western idea?

Some Emerging Ideas on the Khmer Notion of Sasna ('Religion')

Webinar on 24 July 2025

Register now!

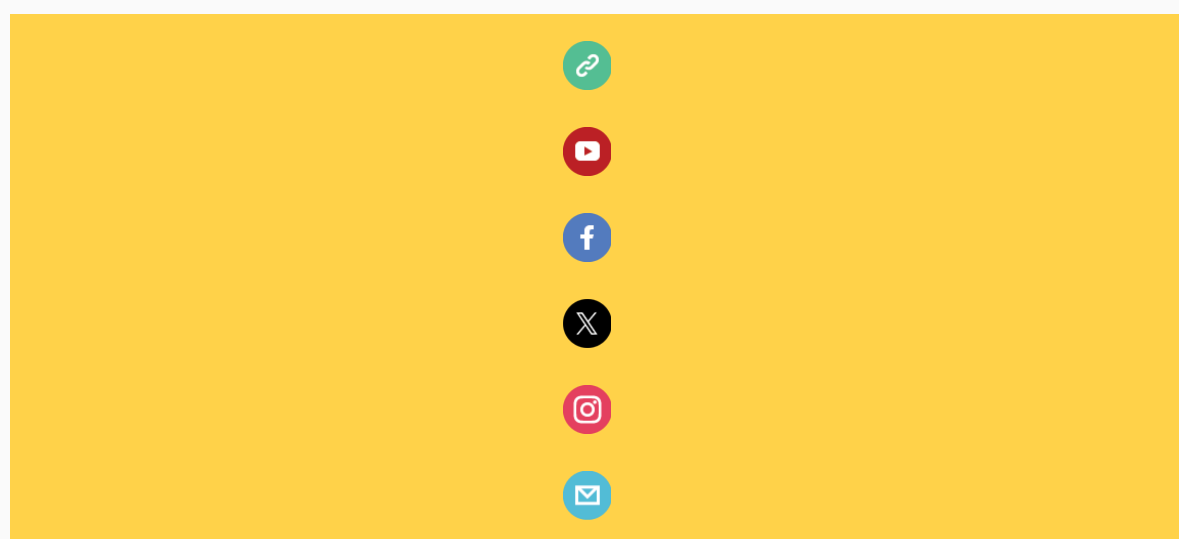
Dr. Mark Smith shares from his work in North Africa and what steps he took towards vulnerability in research.

Sign-up [here](#).

The banner is divided into three main sections. On the left, there is a small logo of three vertical yellow bars. The middle section contains the text '9th October 2025: Dr. Mark Smith' in a small font, followed by the title 'Doing Research in 21st century Africa as a European' in a large, bold, black font, and the subtitle 'A decolonial approach' in a smaller font. The right section features the AVAM logo, which consists of the letters 'AVAM' in a stylized, colorful font (red, yellow, and grey), with the text '- WEBINAR -' and 'ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION' below it. A large, thick yellow bracket is positioned on the right side of the banner, framing the AVAM logo and the registration text.

Executive Board	Governing Board	Advisory Board
Dr. Marcus Grohmann (Director)	Dr. Jim Harries (chair)	Dr. Chris Flanders
Deborah Bernhard (Deputy Director)	Dr. Daniel Albert	Frank Paul
Maria Richter (Secretary)	James Alongi	Dr. Jay Gary
	Rev. Dr. John Macdonald	Jean Johnson
	Dorothea Witte	Rev. Gernot Spies
		Tim Reeves

- Relating to people through their languages and local resources -



The AVM Bulletin is published by Allianz für Verletzliche Mission e. V. / Alliance for Vulnerable Mission (AVM), registered under Association Register Number 14892 by the local court in Dresden. The AVM is represented by executive board members Marcus Grohmann, Deborah Bernhard, and Maria Richter. Contact via phone (+27 81 586 1484) or email (info@vulnerablemission.org).