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Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

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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.

Please suggest contributions to this Bulletin to bulletin@vulnerablemission.org

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Now available on Amazon: Vulnerable Mission for Practitioners



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

Please [watch the video recording](#) of this crucial presentation! On July 24 we hosted Dr. Claire Chong for a webinar about re-imagining mission beyond the western conception of religion. She shared from her PhD research in the Khmer/Cambodian context. We learned that religion, relationships, culture and nation are all bound together in the concept of *sasna*, and that to require people to separate them in order to follow Christ is possibly one of the biggest reasons people don't want to follow Jesus. Westerners often think of religion as a bounded set of beliefs, whereas for the Khmer, it's not based on particular beliefs, but rather actions and practices. She encouraged us to look at how this is consistent with the Bible.



The need to realise our powerlessness in order to do ministry vulnerably through the power of God

This short article by Eberhard Arnold meditates on the [need for human powerlessness](#) in order for God to work powerfully among and through us. God's spirit can help us realise our actual weakness and allow God to dismantle our apparent power so that he we can receive and share God's grace. An extract from the article reads:

"Let us then give glory to God. Let us pledge to him that all our own power will remain dismantled, and will keep on being dismantled among us. Let us pledge that the only thing that will count among us will be the power and authority of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it will never again be we that count, but that God alone will rule and govern in Christ and the Holy Spirit. That means we declare our dependence upon grace. This is the testimony we are required to give."



Vulnerable Mission with Marcus Grohmann

Andy Bettencourt [interviews the AVM Director](#), Dr. Marcus Grohmann, as part of the Missions' Drop Podcast series. Andy asks penetrating questions, what is meant by vulnerable mission, how is the message we have being shared with the missions' community, and many others. Marcus' explanations in return unravel intricacies in linguistic understanding that are often brushed over. Use of people's language in missionary engagement enables people to own what you are sharing, rather than to appropriate it as something foreign. Marcus also explains the importance of reliance on resources of the people you are reaching in preference to outside provision, which can have locals behoven to the missionary in ways that make them into yes-men. Also very intriguing in this podcast, once the formal discussion and questions are over, a small group of young listeners discuss what has been shared and how they see it impacting on their life and ministry.



Religion in Latin scripture

James Alongi, governing board member of the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission) and PhD student at the Dallas Theological Seminary, has written [this short scholarly article](#) that considers the origins of today's term 'religion' in the Latin Scriptures. His conclusion, regarding people of the Majority World today, is that "our thinking about them in terms of 'religion(s)' may not be telling us anything about their beliefs or their faith." "More importantly" James adds; "the methods and resources used to train both missionaries and Bible scholars in their respective disciplines need to be reconceptualized to avoid artificial imposition of Western categories on the epistemologies and customs of people that we hope to reach with the Gospel." This is a short, interesting, scholarly read, rooted in a profound knowledge of the history of the Bible and of Biblical languages. It is a contribution to the debate on the nature of 'religion'. The 'artificial imposition' of this category onto majority world people illustrate the distortions that arise should Majority World people only be heard in translation through English.

6:00 PM - 7:15 PM CST Dinner in Lamb Auditorium
7:30 PM - 8:55 PM CST Welcome & Plenary A in Lamb Auditorium Lifetime Service Award Dr. Jean Johnson - "What A Coup Taught Me About Ecclesiology and Missions"; Respondent: ();

EMS (Evangelical Missiological Society) Annual Conference, 3rd to 4th October 2025

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'What a Coup Taught me about Ecclesiology and Missions', is the title to Jean Johnson's plenary talk at the EMS (Evangelical Missiological Society) annual conference, to be held in Dallas Theological Seminary, 3rd to 4th October 2025. As the Director of Five Stones Global and a coach-trainer, Jean brings 35 years of cross-cultural mission experience, including six years serving Cambodian refugees in St. Paul/Minneapolis, followed by 16 years in Cambodia. In the past 15 years, she has focused on coaching and training leaders to multiply disciples through biblically rooted, reproducible, and culturally effective methods. Additionally, Jean is the author of the book "We Are Not the Hero." Jean is an advisory board member to the AVM. Five stones global , the organization that Jean works with, is a sister organization to the

AVM. PLEASE CONSIDER ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE. James Alongi, AVM Board Member, will be in situ.



The Scripture Engagement Guide

SIL, the Bible translators, are these days very occupied with ‘Scripture Engagement’. Bible translators have realized, that ‘just’ translating a Bible is ‘not good enough’. Expensive Bibles can be produced, and hardly used! This fun to watch and easy to listen to set of videos [outline some major challenges](#) that Bible Translators face to get their Bibles used. The descriptions of the challenges are insightful. They illustrate some of the issues faced by anyone who wants to support communities (in Africa and beyond) through drawing near to them using their own languages. They illustrate some of the kinds of challenges that can be faced by vulnerable missionaries.



Review of: *The Word as word: A Canonical-Hermeneutical Approach to Translation*

One implication of God’s word, the Bible, being transmitted as it was originally, is that new churches who strictly follow the Bible may as a result ignore ramifications of 2000 years of church history. This has resulted in today’s bifurcation, whereby African and other majority world Christianity’s are fundamentally different to traditional (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox) churches. Michael Straus, according to his book as [here reviewed by Ernst Wendland](#) (a Bible translator with deep roots in Africa) wants to tackle this issue, by suggesting that contemporary Bible translations should knowingly incorporate 2000 years of church history into how they translate original Biblical content into today’s languages. (This issue, whereby Majority World churches that follow the Bible are foundationally different in a number of ways to ‘traditional’ churches, is one often recognized by Vulnerable Missionaries. This proposal by Straus is presented in this book review form to provoke thought, and is not necessarily endorsed by the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission.)



Contextualization in Pakistan: Why Has Christian Witness Among Muslims Failed to Bear Fruit?

Aqeel Munawar has [written this frank explanation](#): Missionaries will not get very far in sharing the Gospel with Pakistani people in Pakistan, unless or until they know how to do so while respecting local context. Indeed, Munawar reports, much Gospel effort has had minimal impact. I (Jim Harries) do not think this is an isolated case. Rather, I suspect it is a very common scenario. It raises many questions, including how foreign missionaries seeking to reach non-believers in a particular country, should relate to local Christian believers. This is a scenario that we in the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission see ourselves as endeavouring to address. We ask whether a possibility for use of vulnerable missionaries has been sufficiently explored in Pakistan and other similarly ‘difficult’ contexts?

