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Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin

February 2026

Volume 18, Number 2

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Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Founder, 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

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The Alliance for Vulnerable
Mission in cooperation with



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When the Change Begins in Us

Beyond new skills – a
transformation of perspective



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

Relinquishing control while serving in Thailand (Webinar recording)

A recording of the [most recent AVM webinar](#), co-hosted with the Rethinking Forum, is now available at our YouTube channel.

George M., long-standing cross-cultural worker in Thailand, spoke on practical ways one can make oneself vulnerable to others (and ways we sometimes fail to do so). For example, he emphasised how the dynamics are different when inviting others into our space, vs. being invited into the existing spaces of those we are there to serve. Based on many years of deep involvement and shared life with local communities, this talk is worth listening to!

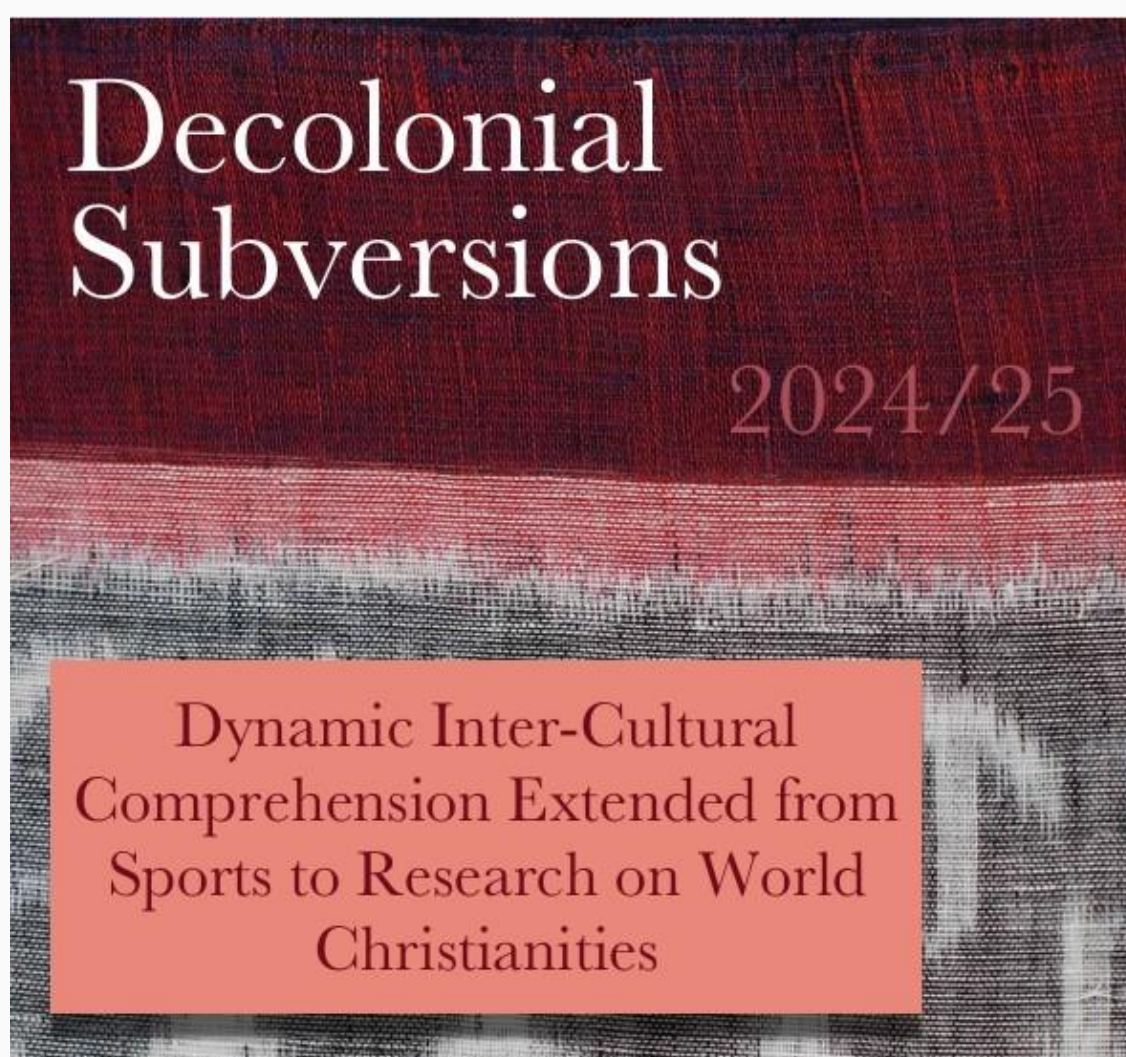
The next AVM webinar will be on April 16, featuring the topic "The Limits of Letting Go: Navigating the complexities of submitting to local leadership in Vulnerable Mission" with Deborah Bernhard and Jim Harries. Sign up at [this link](#).



Rethinking Generosity

The article (click to download) [simply and frankly engages](#) a vital theme for contemporary mission and development work, namely, the need for some missionaries from the West in Africa to avoid being ‘generous’ so as to enable honest learning about and engaging with local mission activities. Here is a summary of the article:

Sometimes, as missionaries, we are not aware of the ways our generosity unintentionally causes problems. Often, providing material resources is associated with power. This disrupts local relationships, even when nothing is said. Sacred power is an alternative to the power associated with material generosity. Giving that focuses on emptying oneself rather than the gain of another reflects Jesus’ generosity. This sacrificial generosity equalizes missionary and local. Its cost is far greater than money and material resources.



Dynamic Inter-Cultural Comprehension Extended from Sports to Research on World Christianities.’

This article is published in: Decolonial Subversions 2024/25, 2-16.

This is [the only peer-reviewed article](#) I have ever seen, that includes a mandatory link to a video, that must be watched as part of reading the article. Jim Harries says: This article builds on my experience with intercultural miscommunication in East Africa. I use an extended metaphor of sports terminology to show how translation between languages is often misleading and unhelpful. Some things just cannot be understood, when the cultural backgrounds are different. In intercultural communication, with sports used to graphically illustrate what happens, the following lessons are learned:

1. One term can have different meanings, depending on the cultural context.
2. Understanding is affected when objectives are different.
3. Translation is unhelpful when the translator is unfamiliar with the cultural context of the language being translated into.
4. What seems wrong in one context, may actually be correct in another context.
5. Initial impressions arising from particular perspectives may be “wrong” but may nevertheless be foundational to what comes later.
6. Unfamiliar processes should be accepted as legitimate as long as the common endpoint remains in view.

This article concludes that a comparison between sports may be a good model to help missiologists and researchers on World Christianities to better understand intercultural communication and research.



Rethinking Mission in the Postcolonial Era

The AVM at the Missiotop Conference in Germany
16-17 January 2026

Conference report: Rethinking Mission in the Postcolonial era

Missiotop is a German network of evangelical missiologists in academia and mission praxis. The theme of their annual conference (16-17 January 2026 at Forum Wiedenest) revolved around current ways of rethinking mission in a postcolonial era. At the centre of discussion were the theses of the 2024 book [‘Mission – still on?!’](#) by Claudia Währisch-Oblau (ed.). For a long time, she served as the head of the department of evangelism of VEM United in Mission (successor of the Rhenish Missionary Society). Her book seeks to raise awareness for the complex and in part problematic history of Christian mission while portraying and encouraging alternative ways of holistically spreading the gospel without dominance. In her keynote talk, Claudia Währisch-Oblau drew attention to the ways the logic of capitalism (which she took as embodying the ancient god Mammon) has shaped our ideas of church, mission and faith, and how this distorts how we and others perceive the gospel. Marcus Grohmann, director of AVM, had been invited to give the second keynote talk. He shared how Vulnerable Mission seeks to humbly reconstruct missional engagement after the necessary engagement with postcolonial critique of mission. At the same time, he showed how Vulnerable Mission not only challenges expressions of mission which dominate through outside funding, foreign languages and ways of thinking, but certain imaginations of postcolonial alternatives as well.

The conference was a fascinating array of perspectives that critically, constructively and respectfully discussed the theology and the praxis of mission – internationally and in Germany – in the 21st century. The AVM was represented by four of its board members which allowed for fruitful conversations with other participants during and apart from the plenary sessions.

Bible translation forum, Germany

29-30 May 2026



Bible Translation Forum, Germany

The next Bible Translation Forum in Germany will be on 29–30 May 2026 at the International Conference Center Karimu (Wycliffe Germany).

Contact Tianji Ma <tianji.ma1309@gmail.com> for more information.

- **Language:** This forum occurs primarily in German though some presentations are in English.
- **Costs:** In addition to the Karimu accommodation costs, there is a **conference fee of approximately €30–50 per participant**.
- **Call for Papers:** Email Tianji Ma with your paper proposals. An annual yearbook is usually published after the Forum.
- **Plenary Speakers:** Each year, the program features around 5–7 speakers covering a wide spectrum of topics. For May 2026, **Dr. Jim Harries** and **Prof. Dr. Gerhard Tauberschmidt**, will be speaking, amongst others.
- **Organization and Intended Audience:** The Forum was originally founded in 2005 by the translator Eberhard Werner. After his passing, Tianji Ma took over the coordination. Tianji serves as a missionary with OMF International and teaches at several Chinese theological seminaries. The Forum takes place annually in Germany and welcomes a broad range of contributions related to Bible translation—exegetical, translational, methodological, linguistic, and more. They especially encourage presentations that are accessible to participants from diverse backgrounds and stimulate discussion. Presentations typically last 50 minutes to one hour, followed by feedback and open dialogue. The intended audience includes anyone interested in Bible translation, both in theory and in practice.



Evangelical Missiological Society 2026

The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages participation in this event. Various regional events also occur in April.

2026 CONFERENCE THEME:
Theological Anthropology for Missional Engagement

October 9-10 2026
In-person and virtual

Dallas Theological Seminary
[3909 Swiss Ave, Dallas, TX 75204](https://www.dts.edu/3909-Swiss-Ave-Dallas-TX-75204)

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

This year’s theme “**Theological Anthropology for Missional Engagement**” is central to missiological reflection and practice, since acts of gospel witness, service, and cultural engagement all rest on assumptions about human identity, dignity, and destiny. In a rapidly changing world—marked by shifting views of spirituality, ethnicity, gender, technology, and ecology—the church must embrace a biblically faithful and missionally engaged understanding of the imago Dei.

At the heart of this year’s theme is the exploration of *Imago Dei* in missional engagement—how human dignity, human rights, and gospel witness flow from being created in God’s image. This perspective grounds reflection on the meaning of being human and how the imago Dei shapes evangelism, discipleship, community, and global mission

2026 Conference – Theme:

***From “the rest” to the “West.”
Global justice, de-coloniality,
and mutuality in Gospel witness***



asm
american society of missiology

June 19-21, 2026
St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA


American Society of Missiology 2026

[American Society of Missiology - Annual Conference Call for Papers](#)

The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages participation in this event.

The theme will be *From “the rest” to the “West.” Global justice, de-coloniality, and mutuality in Gospel witness.*

Join AVM
Webinars in
2026




The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission in cooperation with

22nd January 2026: George M.

When the Change Begins in Us


Beyond new skills – a transformation of perspective



The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission in cooperation with

9th July 2026: Anand A.


Following Jesus as Yesu Bhakta in the Hindu context



16th April 2026: Deborah Bernhard & Jim Harries

The Limits of Letting Go

Navigating the complexities of submitting to local leadership in Vulnerable Mission

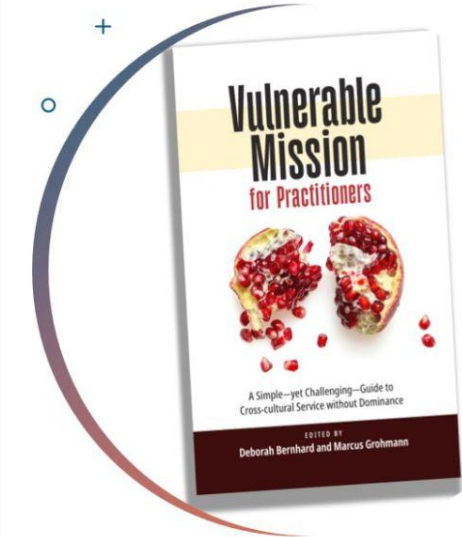


15th October 2026: Anna T.

Serving as alongsiders in the Muslim world

Join the AVM Webinars in 2026

The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission (AVM) invites you to its **2026 webinar series**, a space for humble dialogue on mission, language, and culture. Themes include *transformation of self, the complexities of submitting to local leadership, and humbly walking with Christ-followers in different cultural-religious contexts*. These online gatherings bring together a range of voices for shared learning and reflection. To join, please register [here](#).



A compact book for practitioners that explains ...

- what vulnerable mission is
- what it can look like in a variety of cultural contexts
- how vulnerable mission differs from other mission approaches
- why vulnerable mission is so important
- what serving according to the principles of vulnerable mission may require

Explore *Vulnerable Mission for Practitioners*—A Resource for the Year Ahead

After its publication in 2025, *Vulnerable Mission for Practitioners* remains available to those interested in exploring the principles and practices of vulnerable mission. The book can be ordered through [Amazon](#) or via the [AVM website](#) in both paperback and PDF ebook formats. A 5-minute AI-generated [podcast summary](#) is also available for a quick introduction.

Since the book is offered on a donation basis through our website, it may be a helpful option if you’d like to request multiple copies—for example, for your organisation, missionary colleagues, or ministry partners.

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- *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).