



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

[www.vulnerablemission.org](http://www.vulnerablemission.org)

**Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin**

**March 2018** (Archived back-copies [here](#) Subscribe for free [here](#))

**Volume 10, Number 3.**

Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM



<b>Executive board</b>	<b>Advisory board</b>	
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		Stan Nussbaum

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

.....

- Lera Boroditsky, cognitive scientist and professor, [here](#) responds to an interviewer (MP3 recording), telling us how language shapes thought. She gives clear powerful examples discovered in her research that demonstrate ways in which language ‘dictates’ avenues of thinking. Bilinguals can never quite turn off their other languages, she says. Hence, for a bilingual, their communication will always be influenced by the language they are not using. Choice of language impacts *enormously* on thought, according to Boroditsky. It can change how someone interprets life. She makes a special study of the effect of the gender of nouns in different languages.





- [Should We Help Believers Escape Persecution?](#)

Is a question asked, then answered here by Nik Ripken in this article. I appreciate someone who has the guts to address this issue! Westerners almost invariably, when we find Christians being persecuted, want to *extract* them. That way, we remove that Christian witness. "... let's just watch and see what God will do," Ripken concludes.

- See [here](#) for a professionally produced promotional flier for Jim's recent book, *The Godless Delusion*.

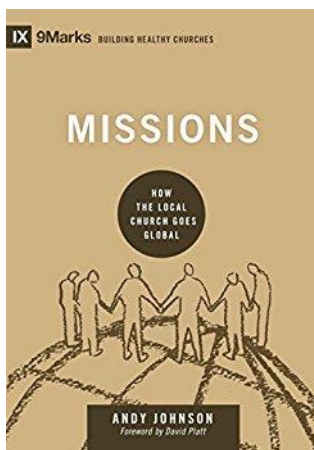
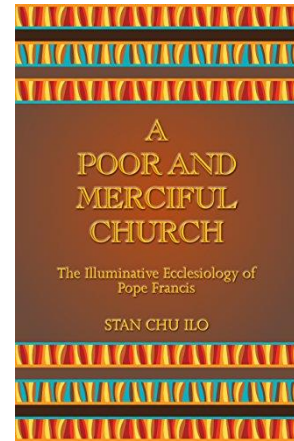


- **Videos of Jackie Pullinger.** Jackie Pullinger, from UK, has been a missionary in Hong Kong for 50 years plus. She has great insights to share, many recorded on you tube. Just google: 'you tube Jackie Pullinger' and watch a few inspiring interviews or sermons.

- Add your language to help the deaf and the reading to be familiar with God's word. More details [here](#).

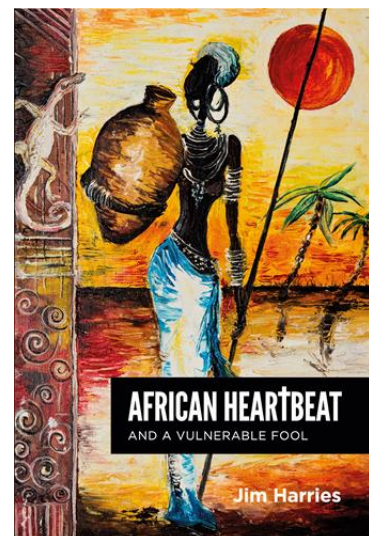


- [A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis](#) is the title to a new book by AVM member Stan Chu Ilo. The book is available over Amazon from 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018. “ ... the church of the poor and the church of mercy have deep roots in biblical, patristic, and diverse ecclesial traditions. In Ilo's focus on Africa, he offers a "Triple A ecclesiology" of accountability, accompaniment, and action guided by some of the practices and theological aesthetics of Pope Francis. The result is a road map and guide for the mission of God in history beyond the papacy of Pope Francis.”



- See [here](#) for a review of: Johnson, Andy, 2017, *Missions: how the local church goes global*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway. This is an excellent introduction to mission for churches in the West, except that it totally ignores vulnerable mission concerns!

- Recent review on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk): The title '*African Heartbeat*' relates not just to the intoxicating thrum of the village drums, but to the experience of the Westerner Philo as he discovers, through progressive integration into African society, what is really at its heart. Along with Philo and through the eyes of his visiting friend Richard, we find the African way full of interest and surprise. We gain insight into rural living conditions, social mores (esp funerals, child discipline, African time!), relations between the developed and the majority world – and a whole new meaning to the word 'racism'. Add in the spiritual and economic fallout of Westerners' behaviour, and you have a moral tale as well as a human one. The titular Vulnerable Fool is Philo ... [more](#).



- **Consultation:**
- 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> June, Minneapolis. Please pray for a consultation being arranged to be held in Minneapolis, USA, 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018. It will be an exploratory / collaborative meeting of VM board members and others who are not explicitly committed to AVM, drawn from those who came to Trinity in November 2017. We'll be looking for ways to widen the awareness of VM principles in the U.S. setting.
- **A summary of the November 2017 consultation, *Moving Beyond Post-Colonial Dependency: Developing Sustainability through Vulnerability*, held at the Trinity School for Ministry in PA, can be found [here](#).**
- **Advance notice:** Please note that the April 2018 edition of *Global Missiology* ([globalmissiology.org](http://globalmissiology.org)) will be a special edition devoted to vulnerable mission, especially containing papers presented during the 2017 consultation in the USA.

- **A word from Micah Global:** “At our up-and-coming Global Consultation in September we will be inviting members to share how their understanding of integral mission has influenced and impacted the way they serve. In what way has it transformed our aid programmes, our advocacy initiatives, our lifestyles and the way



we care for creation? We will explore the past and present impact and discern the way ahead together. We invite all Micah members to draft a one-page reflection on the integral mission journey which we will collate and publish in

September. Please send your reflection with your organisation's logo, vision and journey outlined, and provide your web site link so as to enable us to share with one another.” Anyone willing to do this, find more details here:

<https://mailchi.mp/micahglobal/news-views-campaigns-resources-and-more-300041?e=193dca273f> Please let me know, then go ahead and produce something for Micah. [jim@vulnerablemission.org](mailto:jim@vulnerablemission.org)

- [Africa \[is\] failing to address linguistic imperialism](#), Ekkehard Wolff tells us in this article in University World News. Wolff emphasises the important necessity of this issue. One can't help but think, that his article will fall on deaf ears around the world. Perhaps a few members of the AVM will be interested to do something about this?



# Vulnerable Mission: WHAT IT IS, AND WHY WE NEED IT



## Mission Conference

may 31 - June 2  
2018

allnations  
training for mission

hosted at  
All Nations Christian College  
Easneye, Ware, Herts  
SG12 8LX UK



Frank Paul  
Argentina/Germany



Deborah Bernhard  
Germany/Thailand



Dr. Jim Harries  
East Africa

Vulnerable Mission is a means of Christian outreach using the language and resources of the people being reached.

£ 179 early bird rate  
£ 199 after 30 April  
F/T students pay 80%  
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vulnerablemission.org

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[www.vulnerablemission.org](http://www.vulnerablemission.org)

## Conference: Vulnerable Mission: what it is and why we need it.

All Nations Christian College, Ware, Hertfordshire,  
31st May to 2nd June 2018

### HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday 31st May.  
17.00 hrs Arrival  
18.00 Introductions  
20.00 'What is vulnerable mission?'

Friday 1st June.  
9.00 hrs Keynote paper, Mission in the Chaco, Argentina, Frank Paul.  
11.00 Ignoring Advice: implementing Vulnerable Mission in Africa. Jim Harries.  
14.30 Group discussions.  
16.30 Mission Today, and Vulnerable Mission, Richard and Louisa Evans (provisional).  
19.30 Panel and Questions. Harries, Paul, Bernhard.

Saturday 2nd June.  
9.00 hrs A paper on South Africa, Marcus Grohmann.  
11.00 Contextualization as vulnerable mission. Deborah Bernhard.  
14.30 Seminars – various topics.  
17.00 Departure.

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Provisional

## **Bios** of our **guest speakers**, for the conference '*Vulnerable Mission: what it is, and why we need it.*'

Conference to be held at All Nations Christian College, UK, May 31st to June 2nd 2018.

### **Deborah Bernhard**

Deborah has lived in cultures other than her own for over 20 years. Every place she's lived she has learned the local language. In her church planting work in Thailand among the Shan people, she used only local language and resources in her work. She found herself on a discovery of also using only local culture. Questions of "what does Jesus and his church look like in the skin of the local people and context?" led her to discovering barriers to the gospel and seeking to overcome them. Realizing that the answers require some paradigm shifts in the way we do mission among Buddhists, Deborah and her husband Jens have committed themselves to learning more about the local context, understanding barriers to the gospel, and sharing with others specific ways of overcoming them. Deborah is an Associate Certified Coach with the International Coach Federation, and coaches missionaries in SE Asia. She and her husband also lead groups of practitioners who are seeking to see Christ in the local culture, and are writing a book about following Christ in the context of Buddhist traditions.

### **Frank Paul**

Ute and Frank Paul have three children. They belong to OJC, an intentional interdenominational community in Germany - sharing life, daily work, resources (see: [www.ojc.de](http://www.ojc.de)). Their vision focuses on living and offering (mainly) to young people: friendship, a place of belonging, and a sense of direction in Jesus Christ. For 18 years Frank and Ute lived in Argentina - a few years in the slum areas of Buenos Aires ([www.kairos.org.ar](http://www.kairos.org.ar)). Afterwards they joined an international team of fraternal workers who were accompanying independent indigenous churches in the Chaco area in northern Argentina. Frank, fluent in Toba and Spanish as well as German, is a board member of the AVM-Alliance for Vulnerable Mission ([www.vulnerablemission.org](http://www.vulnerablemission.org)) that encourages others to lean on local strengths, resources and mother tongues.

### **Jim Harries**

Jim, is the chairman of the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission), that advocates for use of indigenous languages and resources in ministry overseas. Jim has a PhD from University of Birmingham, UK. He has lived and worked in East Africa since 1988, engaging indigenous and other churches with bible teaching using the Swahili and Luo languages. Jim, who is single, has been looking after orphan children in his African village home since 1997. He has published many missiologically related articles, and eight books, including *The Godless Delusion* (2017), and a novel, *African Heartbeat* (2018). Jim recently spent 10 weeks visiting 15 seminaries and Christian universities in the USA and Canada. Jim, who also speaks German, was born and raised in the UK. He attended All Nations in 1992/3.

## **“Why should a missionary be vulnerable?”**

(This is not about mission to vulnerable people, or vulnerable children, but it is about the need for a missionary to the majority world him/her-self to be vulnerable.)

Vulnerable to what? Vulnerable to failure. Vulnerable to getting 'hurt'. Vulnerable, like, sensitive to what is going on. Vulnerable like - what you do won't work at all unless local people invest their time, energy, and money into helping you ...

How do you become vulnerable?

1. Use their language. If you use their language, you will start to hear their criticism as they intend it. Then, in due course, you might learn how to function according to their social rules. Then God might be able to use you to reach them with the Gospel in a way that makes sense to them.

2. Don't use outside money to subsidise what you are going to do. That is - even if the people you are going to work amongst are poor. That way you won't buy your influence. You'll have to sweat for it.

Who does vulnerable mission? Our focus is on helping Westerners to do vulnerable mission as a means to reaching people in the majority world.

Why do we need vulnerable mission? So as to be able to listen to the heart of people in the majority world. So as to share the Gospel of Jesus, meaningfully.