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**Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin**

August 2024 (Archived back-copies [here](#) Subscribe for free [here](#))

**Volume 16, Number 8.**

Editor: Jim Harries, PhD, Chairman of the AVM



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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.**

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**The Whens and Hows of Language Learning as Basis for Fruitful Cross-cultural Ministry**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liyEVz3teYU>

\*James to contribute paragraph.

**Decolonising intercultural theology and research: What role for cultural outsiders?**



[https://www.academia.edu/122245814/Decolonising\\_intercultural\\_theology\\_and\\_research\\_What\\_role\\_for\\_cultural\\_outsiders](https://www.academia.edu/122245814/Decolonising_intercultural_theology_and_research_What_role_for_cultural_outsiders)

This paper by the Research Coordinator of the AVM Marcus Grohmann (pictured) is published in *Verbum et Ecclesia*. Marcus concludes this paper with the following paragraph: “The role of cultural outsiders who relationally manage to gain emic perspectives can thus be a double one: because of choosing vulnerability in engaging the ‘cultural other’, they can offer contributions to insider discourses that ask for acceptance based on their coherence with local culturallinguistic terms. They would therefore be decolonial in nature. Moreover, because of the insights gained in this way, they can play a mediator role between their host and their home community, equipping and advocating for further vulnerable – and thus decolonising – intercultural engagement, be it in the practice of theology or academic study.”

#### Non-expert Discussion on Sacrifice



<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:share:7216073261955076096/>

What is the place of sacrifice in the modern world? An informal discussion between AVM members James Alongi, Jim Harries and Dr. Mirlenda Noëlliste, took place on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The following report is from James:

In his otherwise helpful book on dualistic versus non-dualistic rationality (read Jim Harries’ positive review [here](#)), T. M. S. Evens accepts the critique, by other anthropologists, of René Girard’s theory of sacrifice as being “dogmatic, ethnocentric...functionalist...absolutism (ch. 3, note 1; p. 313).” The problem is that for Girard’s theory these would be seen as strengths, since it is precisely these attributes of non-dualistic cultures which sacrifice reflects. Yet Evens’ perspective of sacrifice as self-denial does

Field Code Changed

help to explain how much of Western society has come to view rationality differently than do cultures that maintain sacrificial (ritual) practices, as discussed at this meeting. A growing sector of thinking in the West acknowledges the influence of Christ's sacrifice on the development of Western thought, even as such growth increasingly divides people in the West. Partway through the discussion, the two participants were joined by Dr. Mirlenda Noëlliste, a Haitian scholar studying in Dallas, Texas, USA. Her insight that the love of God must never be dissociated from the cross of Christ within ecclesiological contexts led to a dialogue concerning the removal of the concept of "sacrifice" from that of Love in the West. (For James' full report, go here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:share:7216073261955076096/> )

### **Blessed Are the Meek Missionaries in Thailand**



<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2023/may-web-only/meekness-thailand-buddhism-christianity-evangelism-respect.html>

Nantachai and Ubolwan Mejudhon are a Thai couple who found faith in Christ during their studies in the West. On getting back to Thailand, they initially endeavoured to get people to follow the 'four spiritual laws'. They soon realised that foreign forms of the Gospel weren't going to work for them. They turned instead to being more appreciative of the people with whom they were sharing the Gospel. That is when they found people much more responsive ...

### **Conference in Cape Town**



<https://iamsafrica.co.za/>

IAMS-Africa (International Association for Mission Studies) is to hold its inaugural conference at **Stellenbosch University** in Cape Town, 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The theme of the conference is:

Mission as Vulnerability in the African Context

AVM research coordinator Dr. Marcus Grohmann and AVM chair Dr. Jim Harries are to present papers at this conference.

**Comparison Between Sport-Languages Illustrates the Urgent Need for Translation to be into the Known, with respect to Europe and Africa.**



Jim Harries is to present this paper at CASAS and the Desmond Tutu Centre on Tuesday 27 August, 13h00-14h00, in the CMDR seminar room in the Old Arts Building at UWC (University of Western Cape). Come if you can! His abstract is as follows: "A radical transformation in information exchange between Africa and Europe is argued for, by using sports as simplifications of different 'cultures' and ways of life. In this, Africans play football, Europeans tennis. Presentation of sport-languages, best learned in play, are used to demonstrate that translation should be into what is known. Firstly, foreign observers will have a different view to indigenous people's self-understanding. Secondly, the process of translation itself separates comprehension of indigenous and foreign. In concluding, a radical recommendation emerges from realistic re-evaluation of contexts of translation. This seems to require a very thorough overhaul of contemporary communication practices, that prioritises indigenous languages for Africa, whereby African education needs to be guided from Africa, and insights from Africa to Europe need to be communicated by Europeans."

**Decolonizing Theology and Embracing Your True Christian Identity with Rei Lemuel Crizaldo**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayVVWktmXN4>

Crizaldo, here being interviewed on behalf of the Lausanne movement, gives a view on decolonizing theology, from the Philippines. After introducing himself, Crizaldo explains his own realisation regarding his crucial but failing capabilities in his own local language. (P. Rei Lemuel

Crizaldo coordinates the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the theological education network of Tearfund UK in East and Southeast Asia.) (Crizaldo does not bring specific vulnerable mission insights, aside from pointing to the importance of people's using their own languages in their theological discussions.)

**Reconciliation as Mission: How Vulnerability Enables Us to Think Beyond Integration**



<https://mailchi.mp/9f00064181b2/colonial-mother-city-being-black-in-cape-town-lets-talk-about-adoption-diversity-and-church-planting-13562052?e=50b5b9eafd>

On 17 September Dr. Marcus Grohmann will be discussing the topic Reconciliation as Mission: How Vulnerability Enables Us to Think Beyond Integration. Details pending. This is to be a free webinar (donate if you can). Please make a note in your diary!



**Congratulations to Nick Henwood, for a year after resigning from the AVM board, being ordained as a Deacon in the Anglican Church.**

**Forsaking Resource Righteousness for the Global Theological Table Fellowship**



<https://missionexus.org/forsaking-resource-righteousness-for-the-global-theological-table-fellowship/>

In this short article, Jessica Udall, who has extensive experience of teaching and research, including engagement in Ethiopia, pleads for theologians around the world to sit around the same table. She appeals for the head of the table to be Christ, rather than as all too often today, a kind of ‘self-appointed default’ chair position being given to a Westerner. (Jessica does not mention the issue of language! She seems to expect discussion to be in English, not considering how that itself slants power relations. Issues of translation, incommensurability, are not mentioned. Neither does she state HOW the massive access to, or potential access to, resources, that almost all Westerners have, that will surely give them ongoing prominence around the discussion table, can be neutralized.)

**Missiological Conference, annual national event in the USA, 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October.**



<https://ems.regfox.com/ems-2024-annual-conference>

Jim Harries, chair of the AVM, is to present at this conference. Follow the above link to register for the conference, in person or online.

#### **Upcoming webinars in 2024**

(Click on images for more information including on how to register.)



Details and registration: <https://www.vulnerablemission.org/quarterly-webinar>