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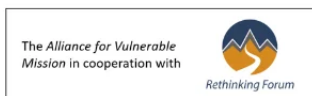


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Editor: Jim Harries, PhD

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



9th July 2026: Aanand A.



Cultural imperialism and the new believer

A case study of Hindu devotees of Yeshu in South Asia



**Webinar on
9 July 2026**

Register now!

July webinar

In this upcoming webinar, Aanand A. will address cross-cultural workers' blindspots in the context of people following Jesus who are embedded in their Hindu backgrounds. Sign up [here](#) for free!



The Challenge of Language with Jim Harries

[The Missions Drop Podcast](#)

“In this episode Andy Bettincourt interviews Jim Harries about the importance of using local languages and resources in mission, education, and theology. We discuss the challenges of communicating with and serving people from very different worlds/cultures and how often foreigners misunderstand or train Africans out of their local contexts and practices.”



Mit Jesus unterwegs in der „Platte“

Frank und Ute Paul vernetzen Stadtteilmissionsprojekte in Ostdeutschland und [erzählen von ihren Erfahrungen](#) im Plattenbauviertel Gotha-West. „Die Menschen hier haben sehr viel zu geben,“ sagen **Frank und Ute Paul**, „unser Projekt ist ein Ort zum Mitgestalten“. Seit fünf Jahren leben sie in der Plattenbausiedlung Gotha-West als Teammitglieder der „**Senfkorn-Stadtteilmission**“. Die Senfkorn-Arbeit ist ein Projekt der **Ev. Kirche in Mitteldeutschland** im Rahmen des Förderprogramms „**Erprobungsräume**“.



Evangelical Missiological Society 2026

The Alliance for Vulnerable Mission encourages participation in this event.

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.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.

Both Mark Smith and Jim Harries presented papers at a Bible Translation Forum held 29th to 30th May 2026 in Burbach, Germany. Der 21. Forum Bibelübersetzung / the 21st Forum Bible Translation.

The 21st Bible Translation Forum will address current questions in Bible translation, research, and mission. Topics include poetic and grammatical challenges in the Hebrew Bible, decolonial perspectives on Bible translation, insights from the Mongolian Standard Version, and the role of artificial intelligence and human "translator intelligence" in the translation process.

Their papers were as follows:

Doing Research in the Context of Bible Translation in the 21st Century as a European in Africa: A Decolonial Approach

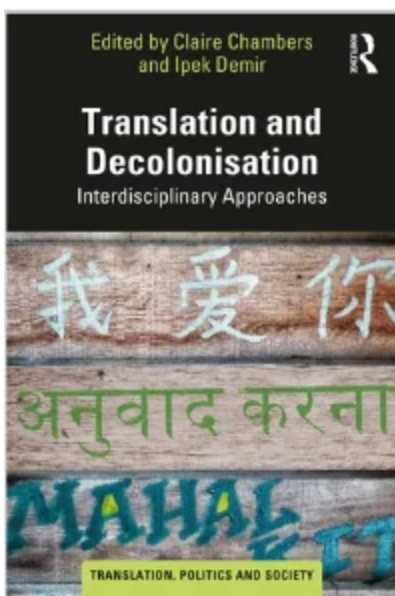
A presentation of the above title, was made to gathered conference participants, in Burbach in Germany, on 29th May 2026. Dr. Mark Smith, the presenter, told us of language work he and his wife have been doing in North Africa for more than 20 years. They work in indigenous language development, engaging entirely with Muslim people. Smith's focus was on decolonising research methods and applying the methods to their language work. He and his wife do this through use of local languages, but also the national (non-colonial) language with the people concerned, and through being careful not to bring in too many outside resources. For example, he told us, they work without owning a vehicle. If they want to get somewhere, local people sometimes give them a ride or pay their tickets when travelling on public transport. They work without "cold calls". Once invited by locals, they come under their protection. Their showing interest in the Bible in local tongues, may have an interested local take on a translation project on his own initiative or read in a local Gospel translation that was not used for a long time, which can in turn result in taking interest in the life and work of Jesus. (This report is written by Jim Harries, who was also at the conference. Mark Smith is a close friend to the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission.)

Bible Translations' Wider Responsibility with respect to Theological Bifurcation in the World of Artificial Generative Intelligence

Mark Smith identified three aspects of food-for-thought arising from Jim's paper:

- 1) AI does not know about the things we do not know, or that are taboo to talk/write about.
- 2) AI reflects White-middle-class knowledge. Most of the input into AI is from the West and therefore will produce similar output.
- 3) Most of BT work is done in areas that have not shared in the history of the West. How can AI produce something non-Western?

- An audio recording of Jim's presentation can be found [here](#).

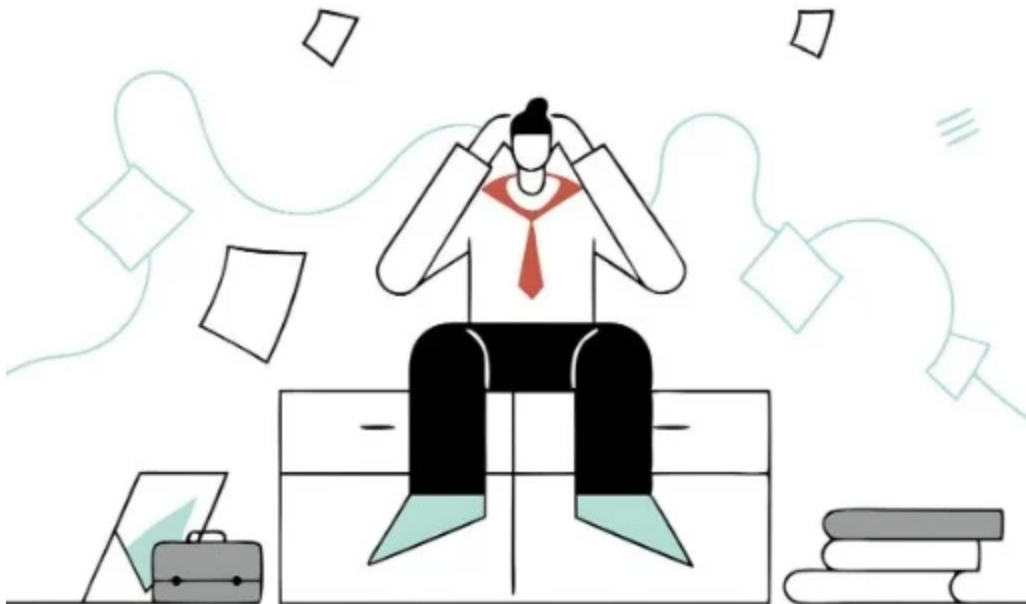


Review of: Chambers, Claire and Demir, Ipek (eds), 2024, *Translation and Decolonisation: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Routledge.

By Jim Harries.

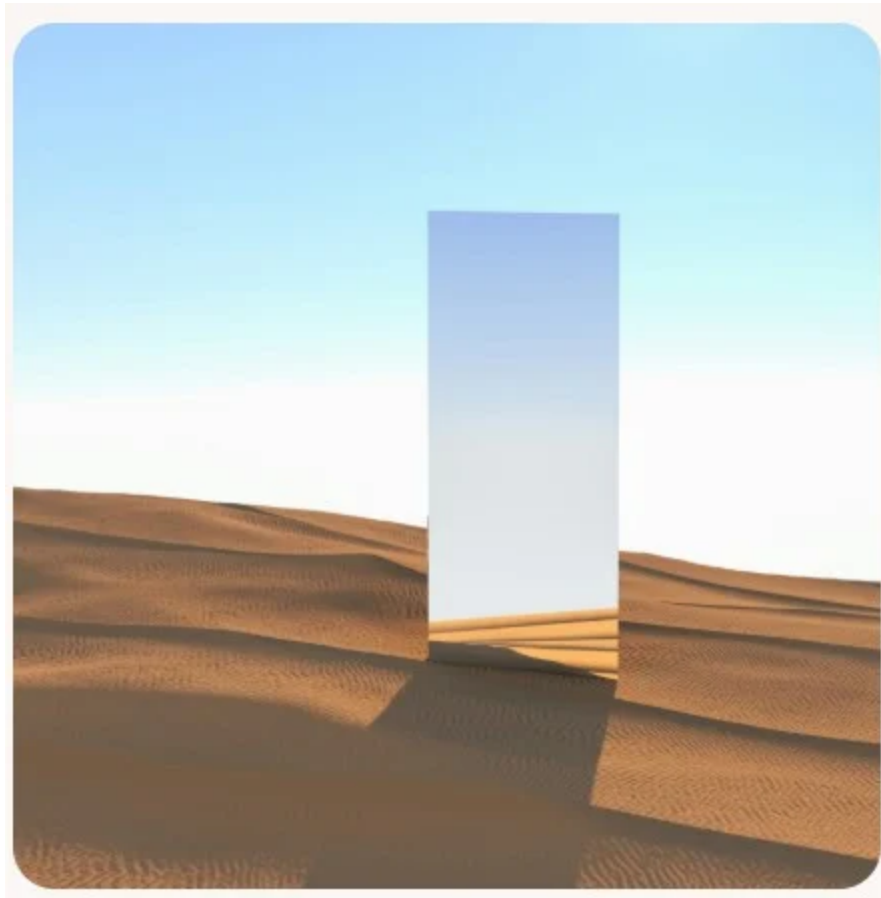
Language is an important topic for the AVM (Alliance for Vulnerable Mission). This gives us a serious interest in others' work on language, especially when it focuses on decoloniality, and on translation. This compendium of academic articles related to this topic makes a worthy read. A striking point: Authors acknowledge openly, that translation is impossible. They also acknowledge, that people do translate. I welcome explanations by many authors of ways in which translation transforms or even destroys. The failure by many to realise this reality can be destructive to Christian mission.

The authors do not come up with the need for vulnerable mission. Neither do they deal profoundly with the question of the direction of translation (into the known or into the unknown?). Authors' silence and probably ignorance of the work of Christ in people's lives may not be surprising given contemporary academic tradition. Yet this silence is consequential. My major critique of this book, especially latter contributors' chapters, is of ways in which it's taking the Gospel as hollow results in a barrage of shallow attacks levelled at Western civilization. Implicitly what also struck me as strange, especially in later chapters, given that Western civilisations are perceived as inherently neo-colonial, is the implicit lifting up of Islam as not-colonial 'religion'. All that being said, the book's content of linguistics / translation I believe does strongly support an advocacy for vulnerable mission. Early chapters are rife with challenging theories. Serious scholars seeking for direction for Christian mission by the West and how to avoid neo-coloniality in the 21st Century, will do well to look at this book.



The 'Project' Narrative in Missions – by Five Stones Global

Is it possible that our project-centered approach to missions has slowly trained us to measure success differently than Jesus did? Because one approach builds structures. The other builds people. And only one multiplies. Perhaps the question is not what we can build, but what others can reproduce.



The Displaced Minority

Information Dilemmas and Cognitive Crises of Chinese Christians

An expert on China (Sam Ren) here describes ways in which the church in China receives its inputs from around the world. Many in the Chinese church are apparently aware that statistics about them are contested, and that people in the West are concerned to know how many of them they are. This becomes their global presence. “This fusion resulted in a long-term cognitive lock-in” says Ren. “The deeper problem is the solidification of a cognitive framework”, around reports by the press in the West, Ren adds. Ren’s descriptions spoke to me about the church in Africa. In Africa as in China, the Churches’ international identity is built on efforts by the West to understand her, encourage her, and evaluate her.

Join AVM Webinars in 2026



22nd January 2026: George M.

When the Change Begins in Us

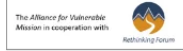
Beyond new skills – a transformation of perspective



16th April 2026: Deborah Bernhard & Jim Harries

The Limits of Letting Go

Navigating the complexities of submitting to local leadership in Vulnerable Mission



9th July 2026: Aanand A.

Following Jesus as Yesu Bhakta in the Hindu context



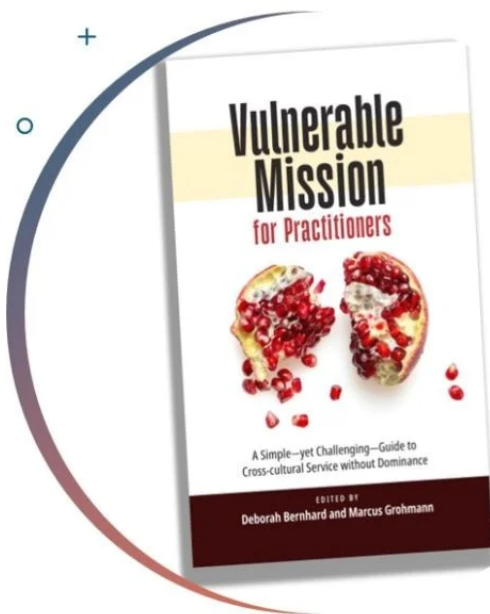
15th October 2026: Anna T.

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*

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.

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- Relating to people through their languages and local resources -



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