



ALLIANCE FOR VULNERABLE MISSION

www.vulnerablemission.org

**Alliance for Vulnerable Mission Bulletin
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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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Dr. Edwin Zehner (the tallest person) with students in Thailand

Dr. Edwin Zehner has very helpfully contributed his thoughts, reflections and reports on this experiences of vulnerable mission as a visiting Professor in Thailand. Please find here links to 3 documents, preferably read in numeric order:



Dr. Zehner with a bible class in Thailand

1. Dr. Zehner's **original piece** written in response to a request to make a submission to the AVM Bulletin.

<http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Zehner-1-Vulnerable-Mission-.pdf>

2. The above piece with some **thoughts and reflections** added by AVM chairman Dr. Jim Harries.

<http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Zehner-2-Vulnerable-Mission.pdf>

3. An article written by Dr. Zehner following the above exchange that **outlines and clarifies** his own position and understanding with regards to 'vulnerable mission'.

<http://www.vulnerablemission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Zehner-3-vulnerable-mission.pdf>

Dr. Zehner's biographical background: Dr. Edwin Zehner is an evangelical Christian who was raised in the Christian and Missionary Alliance and who since early 2013 has been a Lecturer in the Ph.D. Program for Asian Studies at Walailak University, located in Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from Cornell University and has taken graduate coursework in theology and missions from Grand Rapids Bible Seminary (now part of Cornerstone University) and from what was then the Fuller School of Mission. In addition to his teaching and writing duties at Walailak University, Dr. Zehner is active in the Thai-speaking Grace Church of Tha Sala (*KhritsachakPhrakhun Tha Sala*), where he has been invited to help serve in teaching, preaching, and worship music. He has also been invited to serve as Faculty advisor to the new Christian Student Association at Walailak University. In terms of mission affiliations, about a year after becoming employed at Walailak University he became a "Teaching Fellow" with Global Scholars (www.global-scholars.org), which seeks to place Christian university professors in locations where students otherwise might not have direct contact with Christians in positions of social respect. Dr. Zehner has served at Walailak University since early 2013, and at the time of writing he was in the process of having his employment contract renewed for a fourth and fifth year.

- **The African Village Mission – episode 1.** <http://www.gc-connect.org.uk/73/>
 “That was a great trip we had to Africa’, said John as he met George in the local pub. ‘The young people are really enthused by all they were able to do to help that village. They would like to do something more. ‘What sort of thing were you thinking about?’ asked George. ‘Well, something more permanent. I think we should set up a charity to help the village regularly. I have spoken to the minister and he thinks it would be a good idea if we started an African Village Mission. ...”
- **Is There a Role for the Western Church in China?** <http://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/from-the-west-courtyard/is-there-a-role-for-the-western-church-in-china>
 “But I also believe that we need well-trained Westerners to be most effective in this. Specifically, we need Western partners educated in language and culture. **Relationships built on English language and Western ways of doing things are effective only in work with the cosmopolitan, English-fluent elite comprising, surely, less than one percent of the population.** (An exercise in putting yourself in another’s shoes: imagine teams of Chinese partners arriving in the US to work with Anglo churches, but without a single person who knows a word of English. Absurd, yes?) Work undertaken in the Western idiom will have limited success and fuels Chinese suspicions that Christianity is, after all, a Western religion, available to those few who like their films with subtitles.”
- Jim Harries is to attend a 3-day conference put on by Global Connections, UK, 3rd to 5th May 2016, details here: <http://www.globalconnections.org.uk/events/global-connections-conference-3-days/160503> The conference is entitled: ***From Where I’m Sitting: Mission from different perspectives.***

Jim is to lead a workshop entitled: **How to remain vulnerable to the perspectives of others.** Use of local languages and resources in their mission intervention is proposed as a means to enable Westerners to keep open ears and open heart. Christ himself neither raised outside funds nor introduced foreign languages in his ministry. Yourself using the languages of the people you are reaching, and asking them to run your proposals with their resources, is extremely challenging.

- Michelle Higgins talking at Urbana: <https://urbana.org/message/michelle-higgins>

- **Pillaging African Resources**, by Mallence Bart Williams
 – TED talks in Berlin:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvNp9gHjfk>
 - (short-version here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3t3cHb6R34>



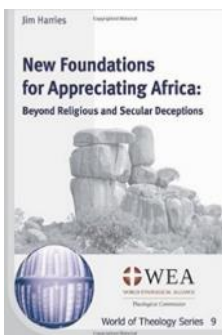
This is straight talk to the West about their ongoing pillaging of African wealth. Williams tells us that: “you [Westerners] should come [to Africa] empty handed filled with integrity and honour”.

- Eleonora Hof’s article entitled: ‘**Towards a theology of vulnerability**’ is to be published this year. Anyone wanting a preview, please write to her at this address: eleonora.hof@gmail.com Here are the concluding remarks to Hof’s article:

“My insistence on racial justice through the dismantling of white privilege, thereby striving to find reconciliation and human flourishing, brings me squarely within the theology of Edward Schillebeeckx. I take from Schillebeeckx a concrete attention to those who are sinned against, as is so clearly the case within racial injustice. As Kevin Considine argues in his description of Schillebeeckx’ theology, attention to the signs of the times is a paramount request for those who practice theology.

The signs of the times are at the present moment impossible to ignore. The months which passed between the presentation of the paper (August 2014) and the final editing stages (June 2015) were characterized by large-scale police violence against black and brown bodies. The scandalous deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner brought massive outrage and protest all over the United States of America. Catholic theologians in the United States responded to these egregious killings by issuing a statement on racial justice, which is at this present moment signed by over 450 theologians. The massive outcry against racial injustice might very well be one of the most poignant signs of the times we are experiencing at the present moment. It is therefore my hope that a robust theology of vulnerability will be read in accordance with the 'signs of the times' and might contribute to the addressing of the issue of white privilege and will create creative pathways for resistance.”

- Jim is looking for people willing to evaluate his latest book. Any comments need to be back to Jim by 18th April. Please write to him here for him to send you a word copy of the draft for your perusal: jimoharries@gmail.com The working title for the book is ‘**The Godless Delusion**’ and it is about 67,000 words.



- Print versions of Jim’s book (published Feb. 2016) available from the publisher here: [***New Foundations for Appreciating Africa: Beyond Religious and Secular Deceptions***](#) (Also available over Amazon; USA and Germany).

- Go here: <http://www.missiologie-afem.de/em.html> for some great articles on missions in German language. The first edition for 2016 is particularly VMish, and can be seen here: <http://www.jim-mission.org.uk/rundbrief/em1-2016.pdf>

