

What if the whole “God delusion” approach is a neo-colonial imposition at the linguistic and philosophical level? Could it lead to unmitigated disasters in intercultural communication and development work? This paradigm-challenging book points to the necessity, in light of contemporary impasse in intercultural understanding, of God’s involvement in the encounter between the West and the majority world, especially Africa. Failure to account for God, the cradle of imagination operative in human hearts and minds has resulted in a black hole that deeply troubles intercultural engagement between the West and others. While drawing on his personal long-term field experience in Africa, the author cites contemporary scholarly Western literature on philosophy, anthropology, “religion,” and beyond. Ironically the West, which values dualism, instead of seeking to share it with majority world people, wrongly presupposes its universality. A proactive compliance to the countering of “racism” and to the demotion of impacts of human imagination on understanding, contribute to this. Effective education must be from known to unknown, this text emphasizes. Enabling African people to build understanding on their own epistemological foundations might be more important than exporting of pre-packaged languages and educational systems from the West.

“Jim Harries has some wonderfully illuminating stories to tell about how the Western world looks from Africa. Regardless of how far one may agree with Jim’s analyses of the issues at stake, we in the West need to hear these stories as we reflect on our own states of faith and disbelief.”

—RICHARD BRIGGS, St John’s College, Durham, United Kingdom

“Jim’s critique of anthropo-centric western theology is welcome, controversial, and born of deep personal insight. This may catalyze fruitful debate concerning the legitimacy of seeking to deny God’s existence by mere human belief. It is my prayer that his African insights, shaped by a sharp European academic mind, plus over two decades of living and serving as an African, might challenge us in the West to explore new realms in debates about God.”

—CLIVE G. BURNARD, Senior Pastor, Mutley Baptist Church, Plymouth, United Kingdom

“Harries never pulls punches. In this energetic work, he continues this tradition of taking on difficult issues in ways that may simultaneously please, surprise, and annoy you. He takes the reader on a dizzying journey through diverse issues including language, worldview, economics, racism, post-colonialism, perception and reality, and short-term missions. Intimate facility with African culture and language make the book especially helpful. Agree or disagree, Harries challenges us to thoughtful awareness of critical issues.”

—CHRISTOPHER FLANDERS, Abilene Christian University

Jim Harries has degrees in theology, biblical interpretation, development, and agriculture. Following a call to serve God in Africa, Jim has lived in Zambia and then Kenya since 1988. Jim’s ministry to indigenous churches, which includes Bible teaching and relationship building, is engaged using the Luo and Swahili languages. Jim’s articles and books include *New Foundations for Appreciating Africa* (2016). Jim chairs the Alliance for Vulnerable Mission (vulnerablemission.org).

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Europe and Africa

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