

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE SAFELY **ABOUT** YOUR MISSIONARY

Many missionaries work in security-sensitive locations where Christians may be persecuted or forced to leave. By using caution in your communications, you will help keep missionaries safe overseas. The greatest exposure and expulsion risk to missionaries comes from information posted online. Social media, blogs and church websites are of particular concern as they can easily be searched by radical groups or those who wish to do harm.

So how do you communicate effectively yet safely about your missionaries and their ministry?

Use the following as a starting point to determine how much to communicate about your missionaries and in what context. Remember that these are just guidelines—confirm with the missionaries that this is how they want to handle communication.

## **PUBLIC**

Social media, websites,  
displays, bulletins



Never use the names or photos of the missionaries. Do not use specific country or city names, but instead use general regional names.

*Example: "Pray for our missionary family serving in East Asia, as they build relationships to eventually share the Gospel."*

## **SEMI-PUBLIC**

Sunday morning service



Church services should be considered semi-public, as most are open to visitors and some are recorded or broadcast elsewhere. Use missionaries' first names only, and regional names rather than specific locations. Photos are okay to use in a church service. If the missionaries are speaking in the service, it is likely that they will not want that portion of the service recorded or broadcast.

*Example: "Pray for Jim and Mallory, serving in East Asia, as they build relationships to eventually share the Gospel."*

## **PRIVATE**

Small groups  
or one-on-one  
conversations with  
trusted people



When speaking with individuals or small groups of trusted people, you may be able to share more information about your missionaries, including their first names and country of service. You may share photos. This applies to verbal communication only; do not give out written information about your missionaries.

*Example: "Pray for Jim and Mallory, serving in China, as they build relationships to eventually share the Gospel. Let me tell you a little about them, but please do not talk about their work on social media."*

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE SAFELY WITH YOUR MISSIONARY

Ask your missionary family how to best communicate with them.

- Is there a specific secure email address to use?
- Are WhatsApp and other messaging apps acceptable?
- Should you send letters or packages?

The following guidelines will help you communicate in a way that holds no threat should the message be compromised. These guidelines should be followed for ALL phone calls, emails, blogs, social media posts, letters and packages.

## COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES



- *Please DO write to your missionaries. Mail is a cherished and important encouragement. Even if you can't say all you'd like to, please write. A note about what is happening in your life could make their day!*
- *Do not criticize the government of the host country, especially any policies or person by name.*
- *Do not mention missions, evangelism, witnessing, distributing Bibles, the host country's religion, Christians in the host country, etc.*
- *Do not send missionary prayer letters, tracts, church bulletins, missions magazines or Bibles.*
- *Do not send letters on church stationery or packages with church labels.*
- *Do not mention other missionaries in the host country by name or in any way identify people who might be interested in Christianity.*
- *Limit your use of Christian language to talking about your own spiritual life. You can quote Scripture, but moderation is the key.*
- *Do not give your missionaries' mailing or email addresses to anyone unless you have permission from the missionaries. Then, pass along these guidelines as well.*
- *Character substitution does not increase security so people are advised not to use it - for example, "We are pr@ying for you."*

## What's in a name?

The word "missionary" has become a loaded term. Different people have many different ideas of what a "missionary" does. To help communicate more safely, you may consider substituting another word, for instance, "worker." Other words may also carry risk. See specific examples below.

**Do not say:** evangelism, salvation, church, Bible, mission or missionary, outreach, converts, witnessing, gospel, proselytize, crusade, sharing the love of Jesus

**Feel free to say:** God, serve, worship, salt and light, prayer, Scriptures, Believer(s), Christian(s), showing the love of Jesus