



# Share Mission Stories Safely



Communicating with your church  
without putting our brothers & sisters at risk

*It is one thing for a missionary or local worker in a restricted country to suffer persecution because of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is quite another matter if they are put in harm's way by the unwitting sharing of their impact by Christian brothers and sisters half a world away.*

In our modern age, we have so much to be thankful for as believers! The global Church is larger now than at any other time in history! Technology has advanced to the point where we can communicate with brothers and sisters halfway around the world instantaneously and with ease. Doors are opening for the Gospel to go forth in previously restricted nations. The Gospel is spreading, people are coming to Christ, and by God's grace, and we get to be a part of His story!

With all of the excitement and technological changes comes a great responsibility for the Church. While doors are continuing to open around the World, there are still many nations that are closed to the Gospel or restricted for mission workers, including both expats and nationals. A brother or sister's safety and ministry can easily be put at risk if that nation's government discovers that they are spreading the Gospel or doing any type of church/Christian ministry. They can be deported, put in jail, persecuted, or even killed. These risks apply to **both** workers from outside the country, and to the local indigenous mission workers, pastors, etc.

So how does your church communicate about what God is doing overseas in a way that does not put our brothers' and sisters' safety and ministry at risk? How does your church use technology wisely in communicating with the Body at large?

### **Here are some general guidelines:**

1. **Communicate** with the mission workers and mission organizations. Ask what restrictions apply to their ministry, specific nation and/or people group. They should be able to tell you what level of security they need in your church communications.  
*\*If you have questions about specific countries, feel free to email Global Disciples Church Relations: [Jerry.Meadows@globaldisciples.org](mailto:Jerry.Meadows@globaldisciples.org)*
2. **Be careful on social media:** Do not put any information on social media without *first checking with the mission workers*. If you choose to use social media at all, give the mission worker a fake name, do not use their picture, and avoid mentioning the specific country where they serve. The goal is to be vague; no specifics!
3. **When using video at church or posting online,** avoid naming specific locations and people as well as the name of their mission board/organization. Again, use broad terms (e.g. Central Asia) and instead of the mission worker's full name, use just a first name. Avoid full head shots or full faces that can be clearly identified; use shadowed/reduced lighting, rear or limited side shots, hands or feet but not heads or faces. Consider using a voice-over when explaining culture or background to ministry and do not put a person on camera, etc.
4. **Avoid using photos of mission workers online** (including formal team or group photos) especially with identifying banners, signs, or name tags. The goal is that the mission worker is not easily identified so if you wish to show them doing ministry, consider using a side-shot, rear-shot, heads bent over, etc., but not full face-shots. Use Photoshop if necessary.

5. **Names of mission workers living in high-risk areas** should always be changed. The name can be asterisked with the footnote “names changed for security reasons”.
6. **Emails should always be** sent to your mission workers with caution and discernment. Words that can be red-flagged by governments for example are: God, Jesus, Pray, Missions, Missionary, Christ, Bible, etc. For security, do not use the words *missions* or *missionary*. Consider using alternative words such as servant or worker. For God or Jesus, consider removing the vowels or using the word Master, Him, or Teacher, for example.
7. **Anything in print should** avoid mentioning the name of the country. As mentioned above, use broader regional names e.g. South Asia, Northern Africa, etc.

\*Some of these restrictions can be adjusted or lifted if used in a church event or with media that is not published or passed along, and not posted on your church website in audio or video form (speaking engagement, stories shared with a limited audience, PowerPoints not shared or left with someone other than a church leader). This is at the discretion of the mission worker and church leadership.

## When in Doubt, Remember...

### Checklist for Sharing Mission Stories Safely

1. **Always** check with the mission worker and/or their organization about what you can safely share.
2. **Do** change the names of the worker or their local ministry partners.
3. **Don't** use a mugshot/portrait of the mission worker or local partners.
4. **Do** get creative in showing the worker in action (without showing their face).
5. **Don't** mention a specific town, state, or province.
6. **Don't** identify their Mission board/Organization