

Sending Churches: Crisis Management

Q: What happens if our missionary enters a crisis? Anything from kidnapping, to an overthrow of a government, to a crisis in that country, in a host country, to maybe issues of, maybe there's a marital problem, or, or a family issue. What happens when those things come about? And who does what? Many times people don't know.

A: We have a team that specializes in this area. That team would be pulled together based on where the incident happens in the world. We do have someone we call a Global Security Advisor who's looking at the situation in the whole world for our organization and our staff members. That team gets pulled together made up of a number of unique individuals depending on what the situation calls for.

And we do have a policy about communicating about crises. I would just remind churches that sometimes their missionaries are working in places where they don't want to be identified as a Pioneers missionary, because of what it might do in terms of putting others at risk, maybe other missionaries, or, more likely, indigenous people that they're trying to do outreach with.

The sending church will be contacted as soon as is possible in the formulation of this crisis management policy. They will be told about the situation as we understand it on the ground.

We do request that churches really try to refrain from making too many statements or communicating too much about their situation until this crisis management team has had a chance to understand and set some parameters into place for how communication can and should happen.

It might be in some instances that Pioneers communicates nothing publically about it and the church does all of that. It may be in other situations that the church is not involved and Pioneers is the better party. Or it may be that neither party says anything publicly. But that policy will set what happens based on the situation that's on the ground.

We don't want to put our missionaries into situations where we harm the field ministries, but we also don't want to value that field ministry so much that we put them at risk, either. And so it's complicated.

We would just ask for a lot of prayer and a lot of patience and to just be kind of calm, particularly at the beginning of a crisis situation. We work with the church to make sure it's handled in a way that really, we hope, honors the Lord and the ministry that's on the ground.

Q: We talked about partnership and churches, how that works with agencies at a variety of different levels. What would you have to say to churches? How would you encourage them? Especially how would you encourage churches that are maybe thinking about but haven't maybe crossed over the line of really engaging in frontier, frontline unreached people group sending and ministry? How would you encourage them?

A: One of the beauties of my job is that I travel, and I get to see a lot of what the Lord's doing around the world. And what's happening out there right now is just utterly miraculous and amazing. And we are probably living at a time when there is the greatest harvest of people into the kingdom of God, ever. The church is just growing globally.

So I would say: don't be on the sidelines. Now, now is just such an incredible era with what God is doing. Jump in with both feet. And be ready to go through some rough waters as that happens. It's not an easy thing to do. But it is incredible to see the beginnings of a new church, a new movement, in places where, prior, there's just been nothing. And so, the water's maybe turbulent but very refreshing, so jump in!

A: We work with a wide variety of different churches in the evangelical world that are very, very different from one another. We love the church. We believe it is God's tool and God's means and God's way to reach the world with the gospel, and we are committed to not only the mission of God at the center of that but we are committed to the mission of the church as well in that.

That's why we have chosen church planting and seeing disciples that become church planters and see that really be something that is growing and is maybe exponentially turning into a church-planting movement of some kind, Lord willing. That's what we're praying for. That's what we're hoping God will do. We really appreciate churches willing to be at the center of that and invest in whatever way possible to see people go.