

Security Brief Episode 8

Risk Myth Busters Part 1

We spent a most of our time discussing a Theology of Risk in the previous 7 episodes. We will dive deeper into that in the future and may even work on learning how to develop our own personal Theology of Risk.

But for the next few episodes, I'd like to talk about some "Risk Myths". Author Anna Hampton has been mentioned several times in these episodes, and if you haven't already, I encourage you to purchase both her books: The Second Edition of *Facing Danger: A Guide Through Risk* and her follow up book, *Facing Fear*. I've put the links in the transcripts of this episode and am also providing the QR code on the screen if you are watching this on video.

Dr. Hampton introduces the concept of Risk Myths and describes them on her website <https://TheologyOfRisk.com> as "statements about... risk to people in high-risk situations. Many of these are repeated as if they were faith-based and found in the Bible, but the manner, timing, and tone of how they are stated usually makes them not true and unhelpful – even discouraging.

What this means is that when a global worker is facing a high-risk situation, one or several of these "risk myths" might be told to them by a well-meaning pastor, supporter, or even a leader or colleague. We may even quote some of these statements to ourselves. But they are all myths and could jeopardize our ministry, our faith, and even our lives.

The website and her book lists 16 risk myths, but we will cover only the first one in this episode. Also, if you want to go into greater detail, you will need to purchase the book, *Facing Danger 2nd Edition*. We will only be skimming the surface here.

Risk Myth #1

“You are never safer than when you are at the center of God’s will.”

This one hits me hard. When I was first itinerating, we shared our calling with many churches to a risky restricted access country. But I quickly found that people did not share our passion for the lost of this country in the same way that we did. In fact, they were terrified for us and thought we were out of our minds. As I scrambled to find a way to explain to people our calling and how we were trusting God with our lives, I somehow landed on this exact phrase: “The safest place to be is in the center of God’s will.” That seemed to placate many, if not all, people.

Although I never really believed it, I said it anyway everywhere I went. When I finally realized that it probably wasn't a good idea to tell people this risk myth, I found that I couldn't undo the damage. Even decades later after consistently trying to correct this poor theology in the minds of our supporters, I discovered it was too late. The die had been cast and this phrase was quoted back to me many times over the years.

So what is wrong with this statement anyway? Why is it a myth? First, to paraphrase C. S. Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* when Susan asked if the Great Lion Aslan (who is a Christ figure in the book) was “safe”, she was told that Aslan was not “safe”, but he was “good”.

In the same way, God never promised us safety. Far from it. As has been stated time and again, being a follower of Christ, and even more so a Global Worker, is risky. Harm may come to us as we do God’s will. Being at the center of God’s will is not a guarantee of safety for any follower of Jesus.

Being at the center of God’s will may be exhilarating, comforting, intimate, strategic, or any number of other things. But “safe” is probably not one of them.

Now you know.

We’ll talk about some other risk myths in the next few episodes. See you then.

Resources:

- Theology of Risk Website: <https://theologyofrisk.com/>
- Security Office Book List Recommendations: <https://s1.ag.org/securitybooklist>