

Security Briefs: Secure Connections – Episode 045

Part 1: Transparency and Trust — Stewardship, Not Secrecy

Introduction

Today on Security Briefs, we are going to begin a new series that we are calling “Secure Connections.” This series is going to be a little different. If you are a regular listener, you know that the primary focus of this podcast is toward missionaries. It’s true that many churches and supporters are also regular listeners, and that is great.

But in this series, we are going to spend time in each episode addressing a single topic and then focusing that message first toward the missionary, and then toward the supporters. Because of this, for clarity’s sake, I will be using non-sensitized language like “missionary” and “missions”. Our hope is that you missionaries will share this series with supporters to help them understand your context and how best to form those secure connections with you.

Over the course of the next couple of months or more, we will be addressing a quiet tension in global missions that exists on both sides. That tension is this:

- On the one hand, supporters need meaningful connection.
- On the other hand, missionaries need meaningful protection.

What I mean is that churches and individuals back home want to know what God is doing. They want stories. They want specifics. They want to pray intelligently.

And at the same time, in many parts of the world, too much detail can create real risk — for the missionary, their team, and for local believers.

So how do we hold transparency and security together without sacrificing either?

Today, we begin that conversation about secure connection — strengthening partnership while protecting people.

The Missionary Side

First, let’s talk to our missionary friends. Especially if you serve in a sensitive or restricted context, you already feel this tension.

You don’t want to sound vague. You don’t want to appear distant. You certainly don’t want supporters wondering what they’re investing in. But you also know that names, locations, photos, and timelines can expose more than you intend.

Here’s a simple framework that may help. Think in three categories: Public; Private; Not Shareable.

Public information is safe for broad distribution — newsletters, church presentations, social media.

Private information may be shared with a small, trusted circle through secure channels.

Not Shareable information stays off communication platforms entirely.

Decide what information falls into each of those categories in advance — not in the emotion of the moment. Because when you pre-decide your boundaries, you reduce anxiety and increase clarity. You're not hiding. You're stewarding.

And remember — protecting a local believer's identity may be one of the most loving acts of discipleship you ever practice.

The Supporter Side

Now, to those listening who support missionaries — financially and prayerfully.

When updates are limited, it is easy to assume something is wrong. It may not be. In fact, vagueness often means things are going right. Security-conscious communication is not secrecy. It is maturity.

If a missionary says, "Please don't post this publicly," honor that without question. If details are general, assume there is a reason. Trust is the foundation of partnership.

Remember, you are not just a donor. You are a steward alongside them.

The Shared Principle

Scripture calls us to be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

Wisdom does not contradict transparency. It shapes it. Transparency is about truth. Security is about protection. Both serve love.

When missionaries and supporters agree that people are more important than publicity, partnership grows stronger — not weaker.

Practical Takeaways

So here are some practical takeaways for you.

Missionaries: This week, define your Public, Private, and Not Shareable categories. Write them down. Share them with your team or leadership.

Supporters: Choose to assume wisdom before assuming withholding. And when in doubt, ask privately rather than posting publicly.

Secure connection is possible.

And when we practice it together, we protect the work God has entrusted to us.

Now you know. We'll see you next time.