

Serving the Least-Reached in Contexts of Risk



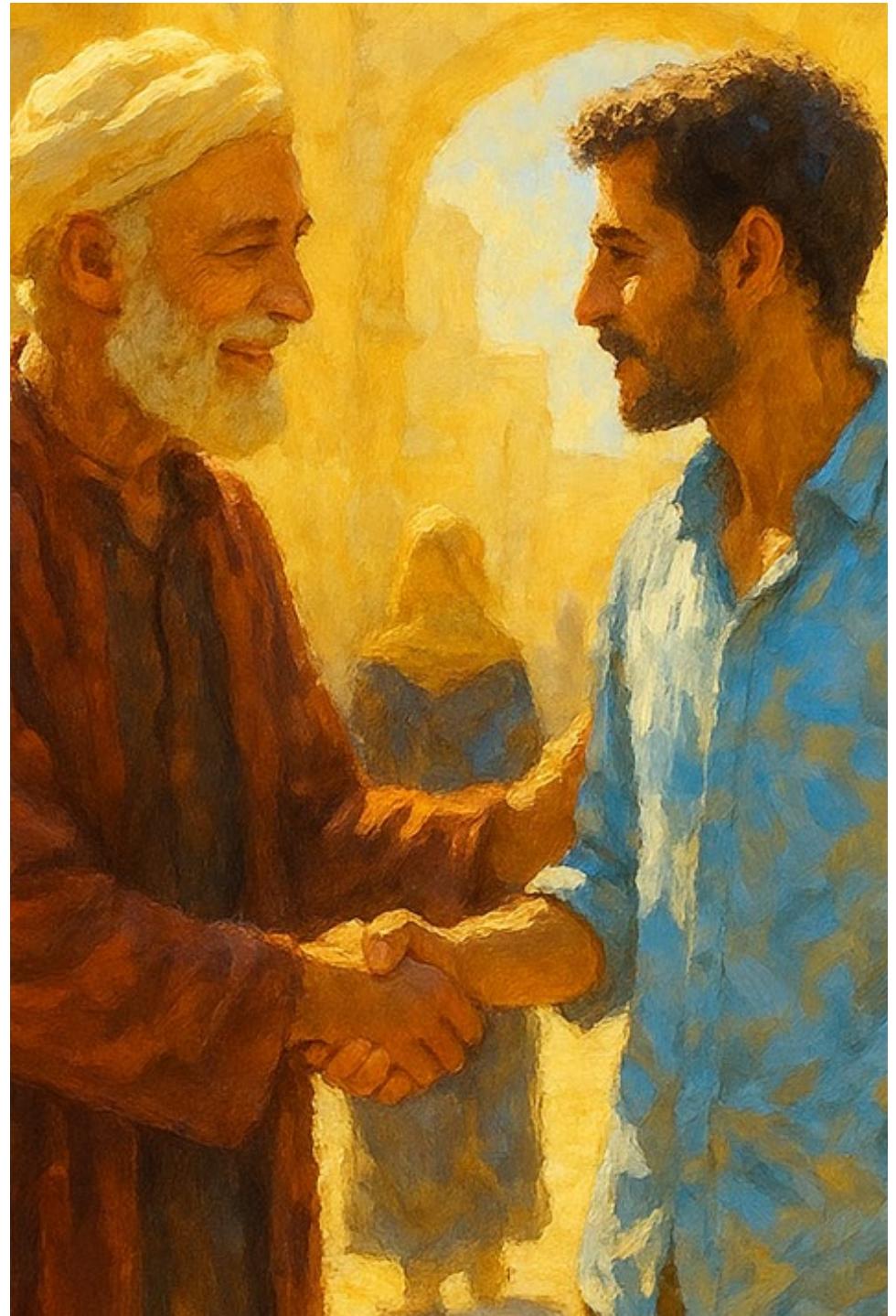
The Great Commission includes dangerous places. Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples throughout all the earth—not only in areas that are relatively safe, but in every part of the world, among all people groups.

Our mission at Christar is to establish churches in least-reached communities—places where Christ’s Great Commission has not yet been fulfilled. As we partner with local churches toward this aim, we recognize that these communities that still lack access to the gospel are areas of especially great risk.

Threats of violence, terrorism and war, as well as increased vulnerability to natural disasters, are daily realities for many who serve among the least-reached. We do not take this lightly. Our board, our leaders and our workers all recognize the weight of the risk we undertake to respond to the Lord’s call into these places. We also acknowledge that releasing a loved one to follow God’s leading is a tremendous step of faith for sending churches, family and friends.

We accept this risk—circumspectly, wisely and willingly—because we know that more than four in 10 of the world’s people will continue to be cut off from the good news of Jesus unless someone goes to share it with them.* We are willing to be vulnerable to suffering and danger because we want these least-reached people to know and worship our Savior.

* Statistic taken from Joshua Project (joshuaproject.net)



Guiding Principles

Our goal is to establish churches in least-reached communities while minimizing personal and organizational loss. Every Christar worker is sent with full affirmation from their church, commitments to daily prayer by one hundred people, careful evaluation by our team of seasoned professionals and thorough cross-cultural training. Should a crisis develop, Christar leadership is committed to assisting workers in all appropriate ways possible, while looking with them to God for their ultimate security.

Christar's philosophy on risk and suffering is guided by several key principles:

- We recognize Jesus as our example in all things. He was willing to give up the comforts of heaven to make our salvation possible through His death.
- We believe He calls us as His followers to likewise give up our earthly securities to carry the truth of salvation to others.
- Because of God's sovereign love, we trust that He works through suffering to bring about good in our own lives and for the sake of the Kingdom.
- We know that suffering increases our understanding of fellowship and communion with Christ.
- We recognize that our commitment to godliness may require that we willingly deny self and suffer loss.
- We acknowledge that suffering impacts not only workers but also their families and loved ones.



Christar U.S. Board of Trustees'

Statement on Risk and Suffering

The board recognizes that our members are called to places of risk, opposition, suffering, danger, pain and, at times, persecution. Whether the pain and suffering are inflicted by acts of violence or by the ongoing realities of cross-cultural work in spiritually resistant and difficult places, training and member care services to our workers are critical components to achieving our vision.

In light of these realities, we make the following affirmations:

Going:

Christar recognizes the potential, even the normalcy, of pain and suffering as a part of our calling to establish churches where they do not exist. We commit to providing training to prepare for such situations and care when they do occur. (John 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Timothy 3:12)

Christar recognizes that some ministry contexts are more dangerous than others. We strive to monitor and assess risks in the areas where our members serve and provide them with pertinent information and training. This enables them to make the best choices possible for themselves and their families in conjunction with appropriate organizational and church leadership and other significant voices in their lives, in the spirit of Proverbs 11:14: that there is wisdom in the multitude of counselors.

Staying:

Though Christar does not require workers to leave an area of tension when faced with immediate danger, workers have the right to leave such an area when they sense their security is threatened, in consultation with their immediate supervisor. Conversely, though a member may not want to evacuate an area of danger, Christar leadership may **STRONGLY** advise that the worker and his/her family leave.

When workers are compelled to leave an area of ministry because of danger, we will pursue avenues of ongoing service that support the establishment of a church in that community.

(Adopted October 2023)





Dos and Don'ts During a Crisis

By following these guidelines, you can help protect cross-cultural workers and local believers.

- **DO** pray and solicit the prayers of others, but only through private and secure means of communication.
- **DO** expect to be kept informed, as much as possible, by the worker's sending church or a Christar representative.
- **DO** work with the church and Christar according to their crisis plans and consultants.
- **DO NOT** take actions, such as contacting authorities, on the worker's behalf.
- **DO NOT** post information about the situation online, including on social media or in mass emails, or encourage others to do so, as increasing public awareness of the situation could add risk for workers.
- **DO NOT** call or speak to the media. You will be informed by the church or Christar regarding where to direct media inquiries.

Frequently-Asked Questions:

What types of risk management training and support do Christar workers receive?

Workers sent through Christar U.S. to serve outside of the United States participate in risk and crisis preparedness training with Fort Sherman Academy (FSA, fortsherman.org). FSA provides basic to advanced levels of training in risk preparedness specifically for cross-cultural work. This allows us to maintain a high standard of risk preparedness with consistent language and processes for all workers, while coordinating each worker's level of training with the projected security needs of his or her ministry and location.

Workers serving outside the United States are provided with a 24/7 emergency contact number for Travelers' Shield (travelersshield.org). In the event of a crisis, they can engage appropriate and timely assistance with this emergency support network as their first point of contact. Workers based in the U.S. can call the Christar Mobilization Center U.S. as well as two directors' cell phone numbers for after-hours emergencies.

Would Christar pay ransom in a hostage situation?

According to crisis management professional practices, Christar would not pay ransom.

Have any Christar workers lost their lives through acts of targeted violence or persecution of their faith while serving through the organization?

As far as we are aware, no Christar worker's life has been taken for the sake of their faith.

During a crisis, what other organizations would you work with?

We would work with the sending church, local authorities on the field, the U.S. government and crisis response organizations.

Who do I contact if I hear of a situation in the area where my Christar worker serves?

We recommend that you first contact their sending church for information. If you become aware of a crisis situation involving a Christar worker, please contact the Christar Mobilization Center U.S. at 214-838-3800.

Who will contact me if my loved one is involved in a crisis situation?

The sending church would primarily be the one to contact you. However, it is possible that someone from the mobilization center would initiate contact based on the situation.

For suggested resources on risk for the sake of the gospel, visit christar.org/risk-resources.