Security In the Context of Ministry (SICM):
Faith, Stewardship, and Obedience with Personal & Physical Security

Scott Brawner
President Concilium Inc.
Executive Director, Risk Management Network

SICM Definition

SICM is understanding how the Lord uses stewardship of security to empower the Great Commission through personal and physical security. Security In the Context of Ministry (SICM) is more than an acceptance strategy. SICM utilizes all aspects of the Security Triangle: Protection, Deterrence, and Acceptance. However, most secular NGOs do the same. So what's the difference between SICM and physical security strategies of secular organizations? Simply put, it's the placement of VALUES and the prioritization of the GOSPEL as the organizational highest value.

The Battle: Spiritual and Physical and Spiritual

The battleground of the Gospel is experienced in our daily lives. This battle is both spiritual and physical. This is a complicated matter and no single diagram will do it justice. However, we can break the spiritual/physical battle into five areas: Inner Man, Outer Man, Our Fight, and our Resistance, and the Battleground.

Victimization vs Persecution

For many Christians, especially missionaries, their understanding and reference for evil is framed through the perspective of persecution. Persecution is defined as ill-treatment especially because of ones religious beliefs. However, not all evil faced by believers can be characterized as persecution. Many Christians around the world have been victimized simply because they were vulnerable—regardless of their faith.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan lays out perfectly the idea of victimization. Jesus calls it "evil along the road" in Luke 10:30 ("A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him, beat him, and went away leaving him half dead…"). Notice, this man was not attacked because of his faith or message; he was simply vulnerable.

Many Christians who are assaulted today fit the characteristics of this man: people heading down the road of life (missionaries or not…) who left themselves vulnerable to attack. These are direct issues of personal and physical security. The reasons for attack may be their color, their nationality, or even simply, their possessions (what we call "economic crime"). What makes this scene even more sad is that many Christians who are victimized along the road never have the opportunity to share the Gospel they so desperately love. This is because they lacked good physical security and succumbed to evil along the road and never had the opportunity to "rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

The takeaway: There is a real and tangible difference between facing evil that stems from persecution and evil that is found along the road. Christians today must learn the differences just as Jesus knew the difference—and warned his followers likewise.

This is where the scriptures like Ezekiel 33, Matthew 10, and Luke 10 and 22 (and many others) come into play—protecting ourselves from evil along the road through personal and physical security measures. In other words, because we are to be engaged in stewardship rooted in protection against those who war against the saints, we are called to be wise when we are confronted with victimization in our daily lives.

Ezekiel 33:1-6: A Model for Biblical Risk Management Practice

When it comes to security and scripture, we do not want to take scripture out of context and "wrap" a sacred text around a secular security principle. In other words, we don't want to justify secular principles with a weak scriptural foundation. On the contrary, there IS a place for secular security principles in ministry (Luke 16:9) but that is not the goal with SICM.

With that said, while this passage of scripture renews Ezekiel's call and mandate as a prophet of Israel, it is also a very good example of biblical risk management principles and practices in action through SICM.

Principles of Ezekiel 33:1-6

The passage begins with God saying "When I bring a sword on the land…" This is important as God does not say, "When the evil one comes", or "when evil overwhelms…", etc. The fact is, God is sovereign in all things and often God chooses to judge nations and peoples. Moreover, in God's sovereignty, we know that NOTHING comes against God's elect that does not first pass by the throne of God (Psalm 103:19; Job 1:6-12; Luke 22:31; etc.).

It is critical to note that, even in the midst of God's sovereignty -- and judgment -- He expects His people to appoint a watchman; the modern day security manager. This is a critical point as Christians (and Christian organizations) must be very careful in light of this passage *not* to blindly rest on what they consider to be "God's will" and thus take an un-given permission for un-necessary risk taking in the name of Jesus. The opposite is true. God makes it clear that, in His sovereignty, there is a real and tangible place where personal responsibility comes into play in the midst of His sovereign judgment. These principles apply not only to individual saints, but also corporately for Christian organizations. In the case of Christian organizations, we call this the biblical mandate for "duty of care" (duty of care is a moral and legal obligation held by an organization to provide a standard of reasonable care and protection for their personnel while performing any acts that could foresee-ably harm others, such as missionary work in dangerous places).

Duty of care issues are real (and have been quite costly to organizations that have been sued for negligence), but this training is not about duty of care. This training is about the responsibilities and duties of individual Christians who often serve with Christian NGOs and mission agencies. Bottom line, organizations know there is evil along the road. If God makes it a point for organizations to appoint watchmen when "He brings the sword on the land", how much more critical is it for organizations to appoint watchmen when the "evil along the road is the concern. Thus God requires the appointment of watchmen, both in season and out of season, whose job it is to protect their organization and people in

all their endeavors.

This passage pragmatic; it deals with death. In this case we are talking about the death of God's people. Whenever we speak of the death of God's people, the issue of martyrdom immediately comes to mind. Let me be clear what I am saying:

1. In light of this Scripture passage in Ezekiel 33, I am *not* talking about issues of salvation. I am, however, talking about the issues and concerns of obedience when it comes to security best practices and Gospel advance.

2. In light of this Scripture passage in Ezekiel 33, I am not talking about issues of persecution and martyrdom as characterized in Revelation 6. I am, however, talking about the application of Ezekiel 33 as it pertains to "evil on the road" as Jesus described in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

3. According to Ezekiel 33:4, when Christians ignore the call of the watchmen, and do not deliver their lives from a warned danger, their blood is on their own heads. This means the burden of responsibility for personal decision-making in personal and physical security falls on the individual—even if their bad decisions lead to tragedy. Remember, this is not a question of God's sovereignty; it is a question of personal judgement -- an individual's poor decisions never catches God off guard.

4. Thus, a Christian who ignores the call of the watchman may well die in the Lord (for everyone who is saved dies in the Lord), or even die in service to the Lord. But by ignoring the call of the watchman and being killed for our stuff (economic crime), national politics/nationality (collateral damage) or even our color (race crime), the word of God is pretty clear this death is not martyrdom, according to Revelation 6.

The Accountability of the Watchman (Ezekiel 33: 6)

God says through Ezekiel that the security manager (the watchmen) carries the burden of responsibility for others. In our work, often the lives of those for whom we have responsibility hang in the balance. Thus we must remain vigilant and be diligent in our duties. This is for both for professional as well as spiritual reasons. The first is the legal duty of care mentioned briefly yesterday, the other is that God Himself says He will hold us accountable if we are derelict in our duties.

Keep in mind, when it comes to the safety of those God has put in our charge, we will give account before God himself for any shortcoming in our duties. Of note, while pastors and teachers are warned to expect a "stricter judgement" in James 3:1, a similar accountability is placed on watchmen as "the blood of others will be required from their hands" according to this passage.

Remember, steadfast within the sovereignty of God remains our need for personal responsibility. We MUST do our jobs even when it is tough. If we as security professionals (watchmen) fail to bring our legitimate warnings and concerns to our supervisors or leadership due to fear, neglect, lack of will, politics, etc., the blood of those who are harmed as a result of our shortcoming will be on our hands according to the Word of the Lord.

To be clear, watchmen work as part of a ministry team. Rarely do we make carte blanche decisions on

behalf on our organizations. Organizational safety and security officers need to be diligent to report threats, trends, and concerns to their leadership. That way, organizational leaders can make the best security decisions with the most up to date and relevant information available.

While the culture of sending organizations can be very different, the principles of security stay the same. The same is true of principles of sanctification (the process of becoming more Christ like). As you serve in security for your organization, may you never forget that, in this position and responsibility, each of us is called to walk with God and look more like Jesus at the end of the process (or the job in this case...) than when we started. I pray that is true in your life too!

How is this lived out?

At its heart, Security In the Context of Ministry is stewardship: the stewardship of time (nobody wants to waste their time), treasure (don't want to waste money), and blood (the stewardship of lives). This includes not only stewardship of personal safety and security, but the overall stewardship of security risk management and ministry/business continuity programs as well. I call this the *Security Stewardship Triad* (Security, Risk Management, Continuity) that leads to organizational resilience and thus good stewardship of the Gospel!

'Traditional' Secular Security Model

The highest value of most secular orgs is the safety of organization personnel (which is not bad in itself). However, the pressure to ensure personnel safety often constrains organizations when it comes to fulfilling their mission and mandate. This can be demonstrated by the safety/security "box." In this model, The organization clings to personnel safety as the highest value, so the highest priority restricting risk taking on behalf of employees and personnel. Thus, this model naturally utilizes the organization's security policies, procedures, and planning (P3s) to constrain risk, but has the negative impact of restraining organization's mission in the name of safety. But there is a problem with this model for Gospel organizations… SOMETIMES GOD WORKS OUTSIDE THE BOX! Therefore Gospel-centered organizations need a different security model to empower great Commission Obedience.

SICM Overlays Security On the Organization's Mandate

SICM overlays the organizations' security P3s onto the organizational mission. We do this because God, in His mandate to the Church, has called us both individually and corporately to GO! God is specific in this mandate as he tells us to go to every language, people, tribe, and nation. That means we MUST take greater risks than secular organizations if we are to manifest Great Commission Obedience. Thus, organizational security policies and procedures in SICM are intended to empower evangelical orgs in light of the Great Commission to fulfill their mission; not limit that mission for safety's sake.

Setting Values

What makes Evangelical organizations different from their secular counterparts is their highest value. The highest value of Evangelical organizations is the Gospel. While each Evangelical org will manifest the Gospel in different ways (church planning, evangelism, discipleship, medical resources, community development, aid delivery, etc.) and have different risk tolerances, the highest value of these

organizations is the GOSPEL defined as the Lord Jesus being glorified by the sharing of the Good News in fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is this "cog" that drives the SICM model.

The highest priority to the Lord is people; He loved his people so much He sent His only Son to die on their behalf, reconciling them to the Father. This is why Jesus came and broke all the rules of safety and security in the first place (Jesus broke the "rules" by placing himself in mortal danger, in obedience to the Father, in order to reconcile a lost world to Himself). Thus, God makes it clear that His highest priority is people. Moreover, Jesus Himself makes the work and safety of His followers the priority in Matthew 10 through their obedience to the Great Commission.

The Highest Precedent of the SICM Model is the organization mission, driven by the Highest Value and Highest Priority. In other words, an Evangelical organization cannot fulfill its own mission if values and priorities are not first in the right place. This understanding is critical to the SICM Process.

In the 21st Century, the unreached and unengaged are unreached and unengaged for a reason: they live in areas that are hard to get to! Most of these areas are considered "unsafe" for many reasons: cultural animosity toward the Gospel, ongoing warfare, terrorism, violent crime, government opposition, political strife, or other reasons that deem the locations where these people live as 'unsafe'. Thus there is a direct correlation between areas that are considered "unsafe" and "lost." Thus, the need for the stewardship of personal and physical security is supremely relevant in the process of obedience.

The SICM process utilizing personal and physical security is designed to empower organizations (thus its people) to become more resilient through biblical security practices. These practices empower an incarnational witness (both the voice and the presence of the Gospel) in dark and dangerous places.

Like a fishhook, SICM empowers organizations to "get in and stay in" unsafe areas. In other words, the SICM process helps organizations confidently cross the "safety line" as they wisely manifest an incarnational witness in "unsafe" areas utilizing personal and physical security programs.

How Is This Lived Out?

Unless we as individuals, and our organizations, have the culture to support the principles of SICM, everyone will do what is right in their own eyes. When that happens, a house that is divided against itself will fall. Therefore, we want our students to remember that SICM is a spiritual principle with immediate practical application. How do we do this?

➢ Prayer and Vigilance. Establish a culture that begins with prayer and intercession and is yet marked by physical vigilance to what is happing on and around the mission field.

➢ Know the Normal Now. The normal now is always shifting and the normal yesterday is

obsolete. The goal then is to avoid becoming the proverbial "frog in the kettle" where the water begins to boil around the frog and he does not realize it until it is too late.

➢ Establish Personal Relationships. Missionaries and humanitarian workers are great at establishing relationships within local cultures. Watchmen and other security personnel cannot see everything (we are not clairvoyant…). Establishing and maintaining local relationships in culture allows Gospel workers to keep their fingers on the pulse of the area.

➢ Connect Calling With Security. We can not longer afford to silo personal security and Gospel zeal. The two are NOT mutually exclusive. Jesus make this clear when we are told to be "wise as serpents and gentle as doves." Further, we do not want to over spiritualize security matters because God is not the author of confusion and spiritualizing and emotionalizing matters of security is both confusing and dangerous.

➢ Connect With the Watchman. Organizational security managers are great resources. Don't be afraid to contact them with concern and problems. Through SICM, we want Gospel workers to see their security managers more like force multipliers and less like organization "speed bumps" that slow down or inhibit ministry.

It is my prayer that this essay will be of help to you and your ministry. I pray that these values will help your organization establish a security culture that **empowers** the Gospel to every language, people, tribe and nations through resilience strategies that include a comprehensive personal and physical security program.
In Christ,

Scott Brawner
Concilium President
Exec. Director, Risk Management Network