

Dear Friends:

PLEASE BEGIN TO BE CAREFUL WRITING ME NOW

Today I leave for Kunming, China. As you probably know, China is still a communist country, which means I will not have freedom of religion, freedom of speech, or even the freedom to write what I want. Since I will be in a foreign country where the government watches the people on a regular basis, and since I will be a guest there, I must also follow the rules.

Since this is the case, I must ask each of you to BE VERY CAREFUL when sending me anything: email, snail mail, or even a simple phone call. Each of these means of communication are monitored by government officials in China. In fact, 90% of all packages sent to US citizens in China are opened and inspected. Email is set up to scan for certain “buzz words” that are considered detrimental or subversive to the Chinese way of life or government. Snail mail can and is opened, and words blocked out to reflect what the Chinese want me (and others) to know what is going on in the world.

Please NEVER use the following words, phrases, or ideas when communicating with me: Christian, Jesus, Christ, missionary, Bible, prayer, references to a free Tibet, references to Taiwan, references to Christianity / missionary work, make no references to Chinese government (certainly nothing bad), don't talk badly about the Chinese government or politics, never mention my school being Christian.

Basically, people in China are not allowed to be Christian, so make no references to that. It is not wise to talk badly about the Chinese and what they are doing to Tibet, or relations with Taiwan. Sending me Bibles or other Christian literature, even email forwards, is not good, as the above mentioned words can be flagged, which will get me investigated, and then get me into trouble.

Please remove me from any email “forward” lists you have, unless you can remember EVERY TIME to not send me emails that have the above mentioned words, phrases, ideas in them.

So that we can talk about those ideas we mentioned above, please use the following code:

Prayer = thinking of you

God = Father (my earthly dad will be dad)

Missionary work = the project

Other Christians = other like minded people

Bringing others to Christ = teaching others about Alaska

Teaching others to pray = teaching others to communicate

Due to security reasons, I cannot answer that question = I don't know

I just honestly don't know the answer = I really don't know

Tibet = the hinterlands

Bible = my book

Church = my special place

Jesus = Father's brother

My new address will be as follows:

Steven Dickens  
Kunming International Academy  
Yan Jia Di Xiao Qu  
Kunming, Yunnan, 650034  
People's Republic of China

Please be aware that packages take three months to get here unless you choose priority or express mail. THEY WILL BE OPENED. Mail, I'm guessing about a week. I will be using Yahoo Messenger and MSN Messenger so you can communicate with me that way if you don't like email.

As soon as I have a phone, I'll pass that information on.

The code and careful communication with me STARTS NOW. Please respect the situation I am in and the rules of China. I look forward to emailing you all! Thanks so much for your support!

In Christ,

-Steven