

We Need Our Missionaries!

It burdens my heart to receive a resignation from any of our valuable missionaries, especially when I feel that some times it is preventable. As our overseas work expands, the need for long-term missionaries grows. We often hear among leaders, "less is more." This is one area where *less is not more*.

My message is clear, simple, and describable in three words. "*We need you.*" When you feel like throwing in the towel, and that hope is gone, give us the opportunity to talk about it. We want to do our best to help. This is one of the reasons we have our international and regional leadership team. We are here for you, and because of you.

Now, let's move into some missiology tech-talk. The return of missionaries is referred to as "*attrition.*" No, that is not another vaccination (I wish!). It refers to all the reasons missionaries return from cross-cultural ministry. Studies show that approximately 5.1% of the worldwide long-term missionary force (including all denominations) leaves the field each year. Regrettably, 71% leave for preventable reasons. (Steve Hoke & Bill Taylor, 1999)

There is normal or expected attrition that includes, among other things: death, failure of health, and retirement. We have little control over these. Yet, I am painfully aware that there are escapable reasons for missionaries coming home. This brings concern when it falls into the category of "*The Three P's of Attrition.*" These are *premature*, *preventable*, and likely *permanent*. (Kelly O'Donnell, 2002)

We will pick up with this discussion next time. Oh, let me not forget your homework.

Missions Possible

Have you ever thought of giving up, and throwing in the towel? Make a list of some of the reasons missionaries come home. Which ones are preventable? Which ones have you struggled with in your ministry? How did you make it through?

Suggested Resources & Bibliography

I recommend the following e-books to you which were a help to me. (These can be downloaded and require an Adobe Acrobat Reader.) <http://www.wearesources.org>

Steve Hoke, Bill Taylor. (1999). *Send Me! Your Journey to the Nations* [Electronic version]. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Kelly O'Donnell. (Ed.). (2002). *Doing Member Care Well; Perspectives and Practices from Around the World* [Electronic version]. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

William D. Taylor. (Ed.). (1997). *Too Valuable to Lose; Exploring the Causes and Cures of Missionary Attrition* [Electronic version]. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.