

AIMers in All Shapes and Sizes



It takes lots of AIMers of all shapes, sizes, ages, talents and motives to make the world go round.

Builders:



They free the hands of the missionaries to do the work. Whatever their hands find to do, they do it. Yep, like Nike, that's their motto: "Just do it!" It's scriptural too. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). God has meant for us to be spectators but participators. We are in the service business not the serve-us mentality. They build up the missionary and his/her work. They may or may not desire future and further missionary involvement. They are available here and now leaving the then and there in the Lord's hands.

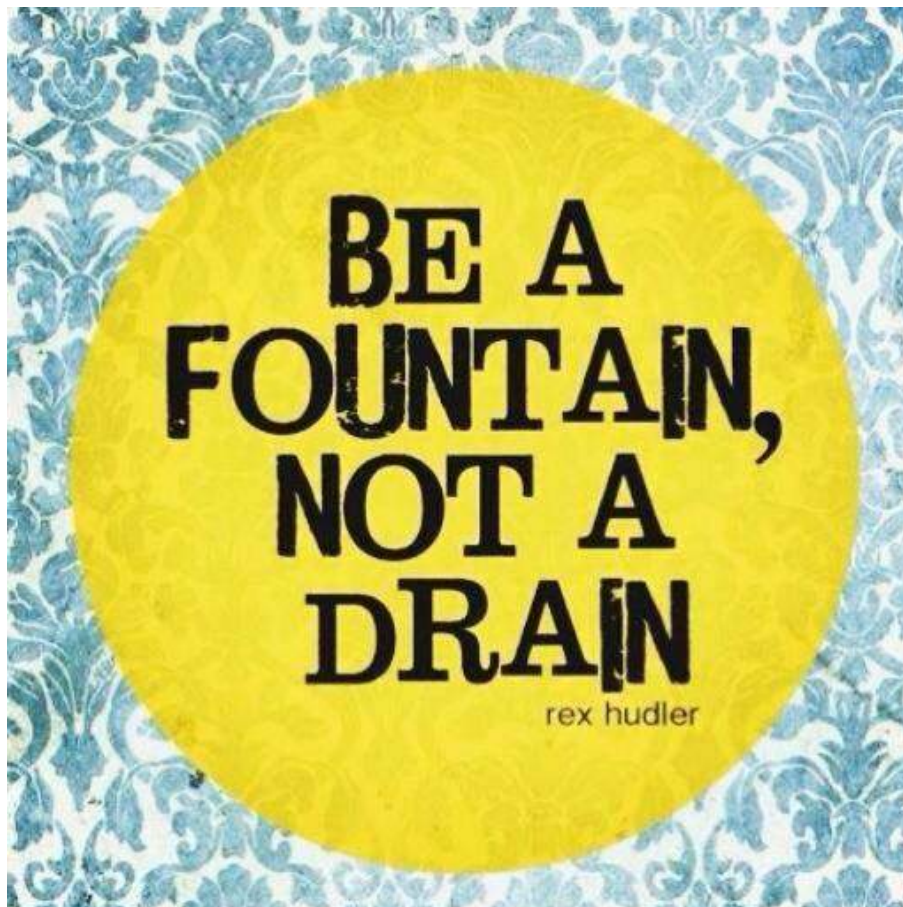
Drainers:



They drain the missionary and his/her work emotionally, physically, spiritually. If they drain at home; they'll drain on the field. Don't send drainers just to relieve the local church. Remember, the AIMer is a reflection of the local pastor and church; their representative on the field; so that reputation must be guarded with care.

Mishaps hinder the reputation of the AIM program for the individual, couple or family; the church locally, regionally, and globally.

Best advice for those dealing with "drainers." Minimize damage being done in the national work. Do not extend the AIM invitation once the approved time is up. Get rid of the headache as quickly and as diplomatically as possible.

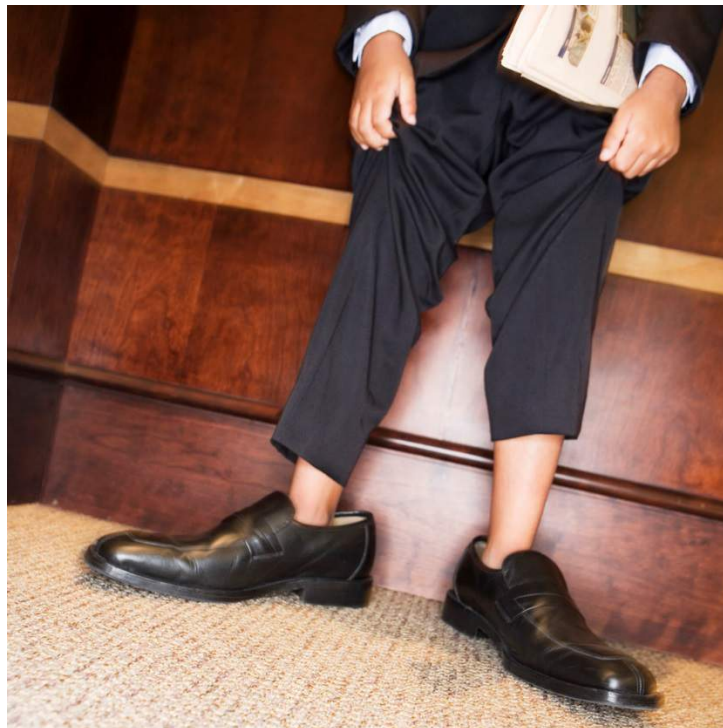


This diminishing group of personnel may also be called "Binders." I call them "diminishing" because they don't last long and they leave a trail of diminishment along the way. They are the direct opposite of "builders" who free the hands of the missionaries to do the work. Rather, "binders" bind the hands of missionaries preventing them from doing the work.



Not all AIMers will become missionaries. Time spent in mentoring and ministering AIMers for kingdom expansion is time well invested.

Growers:



The AIMer derives personal benefit, development and growth through the experience while not making a tremendous impact on the national church or ministry in the country. Such an AIMer

may not add a lot of value to the work but the national or local church may add a lot of value to the individual. They are like a budding plant; blooming where they are planted. They will return to North America stronger than ever.

MIT (Ministers in Training):

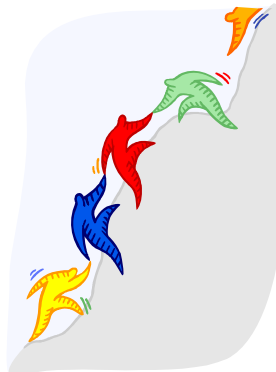


Not all will remain on the field and become lifers. They are still a valuable investment. Even if they return home they will be missions-minded and be involved in evangelizing the world; advancing God's kingdom locally and globally. Keep them as part of your extended team even when they return to the homeland. They could be lifelong friends and assets both to you and your field.

MVP (Missionary Valuable Potential):

This is what we dream of, plan for, it protects the future of the missionary program. These are the most valuable players you want to have on your team. Make it your goal to add value.

Someone said concerning another: “She has the gift of making everyone around her better/stronger. I’m not even sure it’s a conscious gift. It’s just who she is. Using the basketball analogy she’s God’s point guard. Everyone scores more points when she’s on the court. Thus, the team wins.” Be a value-adding AIMER.



Some things to keep in mind:

Remember everyone starts out as a liability. But, should not stay there. Move quickly from being a liability to an asset. And, just because you begin as a liability doesn't mean you are a drainer. You have unlimited potential for greatness and growth.

I remember reading in a missions' book concerning three wrong motives for missions' involvement. I've never forgotten them:

1. Spirit of adventure.
2. Desire to travel.
3. Ineffective at home.

I might add:

4. Quest to build one's personal reputation.

Right motives for involvement in missions:

1. Desire to advance the kingdom globally.
2. Personal call to participation.

3. Acknowledgement that a time abroad is in the perfect will of God. This would be confirmed by spiritual leadership.
4. Gifted for cross-cultural ministry.
5. Determination to reach the world.

My goal is for each AIMer to have a positive experience on the field and for the field to have a positive experience with each AIMer. This is heightened when the supervising missionary develops a relationship with the potential AIMer prior to approval. Communication tools and possibilities abound. If the missionary doesn't take the first step, establish the contact and keep in touch.

Every AIMer should have a job description that clearly articulates responsibilities and boundaries.

It is my sincere prayer that the Lord would use you to impact some corner of the world. You will advance and build God's kingdom throughout the earth.