



May 2018

Have you considered missions but the thought of deputation and support-raising holds you back? This perspective on that topic comes from BMM missionaries, Paul and Joanna Avery, who serve with their family in Córdoba, Argentina. Thanks to the Averys for sharing their hearts!

Deputation. That dreaded word! The word itself brings about so many scary thoughts. More often than not, those thoughts focus on the hours spent on the phone contacting hundreds of pastors, the majority of which you do not know; the terrifying unknown of hectic travels in which you would be staying with hundreds of people you've never met; and the months of valuable ministry time not spent on the field to which you were called. Honestly, the list could go on forever and feels rather daunting. However, I cannot think of a process that could have prepared me better for foreign ministry than that of modern-day deputation.

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What is the value of deputation?

Our experience of deputation started out as common as any experience. We were ready to send out packets in mass quantity. We asked close pastor friends to make some phone calls for us. We hopped on the phone, calling as many as we possibly could. We traveled hours to get to any church that would let us come. Over time, the fresh excitement began to wear off, and we found ourselves wondering the value of deputation.

They say it takes about three years of travels to get to 100 percent financial support. In our first three years, we reached only 30 percent. We began to question whether we understood God’s will for our career. Little did we realize that God was going to use deputation to teach us what we consider to be one of the most applicable qualities for on-field ministry.

God was at work

Just after those three years, a door opened we did not suspect that made deputation a renewed joy. We were presented with a nine-month furlough relief ministry for the very missionaries we were raising support to be with for the first few years on the field. God used that deputation break to solidify our future ministries while also giving us a better way to communicate with pastors,

missions committees, and church members about those ministries.

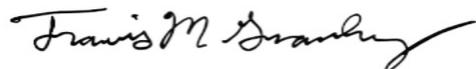
Upon returning to the States, we weren't horrified about restarting deputation. Before that, all we could ask ourselves was, "Are we focusing in the wrong area? Are we not communicating our passion strongly enough? Are we doing something wrong?" Those self-focused questions all changed once we realized that God was at work, teaching us one of the most needed characteristics for on-field ministry ... **perseverance**.

The most important lesson

Yes, deputation can be full of highs and lows, excitements and discouragements, blessings and afflictions. But in every step to the field, we saw that it wasn't just a job to rush through. It taught us that effectiveness for the cause of Christ on the field will be met with obstacles. Those obstacles cannot cause us to throw in the towel immediately. With God's help in changing our perspective, deputation taught us the need for perseverance in lifelong service with His passion and for His glory.

The lesson of perseverance is paying off for the Averys, as their infant daughter is dealing with a significant health concern that has delayed their return to Argentina after their furlough. Lord willing, they will return in 2019, when they plan to launch a new church plant in Córdoba.

For His name,



Travis Gravley

Administrator for Church Relations and Enlistment



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