

103429

AVERAGE NUMBER OF MILES LOGGED DURING DEPUTATION PROCESS

551

AVERAGE NUMBER OF FAST FOOD MEALS EATEN



A CLOSER LOOK AT MISSIONARY

DEPUTATION

3,686

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PHONE CALLS TO SET UP APPOINTMENTS WITH PASTORS

87

AVERAGE NUMBER OF NIGHTS SPENT IN A HOTEL



A labor that is not in vain

By Jon Konnerup | BBFI Mission Director

How well I remember deputation — the miles driven, the churches visited, and the new friends made. Having grown up as a missionary kid, I was accustomed to the idea of deputation and the new opportunities and excitement it provided. As an adult missionary, I didn't necessarily enjoy making all the phone calls; however, God allowed my family and me to see His amazing handiwork in our deputation.

The verse I often referred to on deputation was 1 Corinthians 15:58:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

This verse talks about being:

STEADFAST — firmly fixed in place, determined, faithful to the end

UNMOVABLE — unyielding, unshaken, solid as a rock

ABOUNDING — to excel, never stop, keep going, walking to please God

God used these words to encourage me to stay focused and work hard to finish deputation to ultimately arrive where He was going to use my family as missionaries.

Deputation is the first major opportunity missionaries encounter following their approval. While deputation is a difficult task a new missionary will undertake, God can use it in three ways.

First, He builds the missionary's faith and character. This was vitally important to me as I learned to completely rely on the Lord instead of placing my faith and trust in pastors or churches. Had I not learned to depend on Him while on deputation, I would have quickly crashed and burned when I encountered difficulties on the field. Over the years, I have met people who felt the call of God to be missionaries, but were afraid to take on the deputation task and refused to surrender. D. L. Moody believed faith meant not only doing something, but also believing something saying, "I show my faith when I go to men and state the needs of the Lord's work, and then ask them to give to it."

Second, deputation stimulates and motivates the burden for missions within the local church. The excitement and passion of a new missionary motivates others to give, pray, and even go.

Third, deputation is a time of preparation for the missionary's field of service. Missionaries not only learn from pastors and churches they meet, but they minister alongside the churches visited and plan ahead for what they will encounter on the foreign field.

While some may see deputation as a time to endure, it should really be a time of endearment, as God's magnificent power is displayed in providing all one needs to serve Him — new friends, prayer partners, and supporting churches.

The sometimes-long-but-always-rewarding, road to the field

By Steve Bender | Assoc. Mission Director

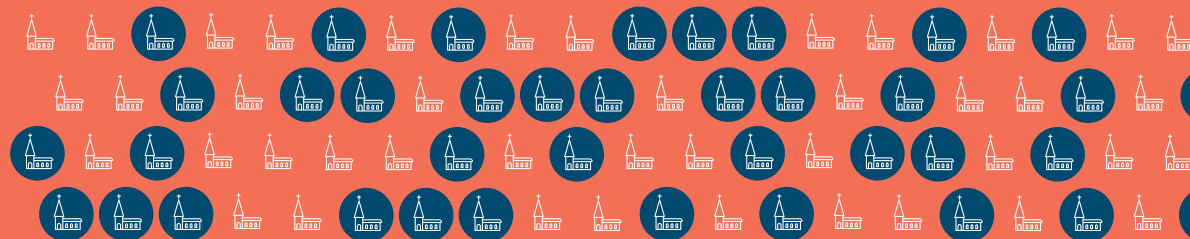
From the founding of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International in 1950, missionaries have followed the Biblical authority of being sent from a local church to fulfill God's call upon their lives. After meeting the standards of the BBFI and the formal approval process by pastors, missionaries set out to raise both prayer and monthly financial support. Simply stated, these men and women of God contact pastors, asking to visit their churches to present themselves and their ministries to the congregation. Their prayer is that the church, led by the Holy Spirit, would help them take the Gospel to the people to whom God has called them through prayer and financial support.

Following this process the past 66 years has worked well in protecting the local church's Biblical authority and autonomy in sending missionaries of their choice. The results — hundreds of missionaries sent, thousands of people led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and over 18,000 churches established outside the United States.

While the cost of one eternal soul can never be valued, the deputation process cost has had a significant increase. Based on deputation data collected over the past six years, it takes the average BBFI missionary family of four about 39 months to raise their financial support. With the average cost of \$188,000 incurred per family while on deputation, coupled with the physical, emotional, and spiritual stress involved, the task can be overwhelming. Yet, these missionaries, called by God, continue with

156

AVERAGE
NUMBER OF
CHURCHES
VISITED
DURING
DEPUTATION



... RESULTING IN AN AVERAGE OF **(59)** CHURCHES THAT WILL TAKE THE MISSIONARY ON FOR MONTHLY SUPPORT AS



AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES A FAMILY OF FOUR ON DEPUTATION TO RAISE FULL SUPPORT

great resolve to complete the mission.

For years, the question has been raised, “What can we do to shorten deputation?” The problem includes: the economy, fewer church services per week for missionaries to present their ministry, and a shift in mission-giving philosophies (more project-oriented than regular monthly support).

In most instances, there is no substitute for ministers of the Gospel living among and pouring themselves into the lives of the people to whom God has called them. Perhaps if churches would begin supporting two new missionaries a year the month they are approved, without requiring the missionary to visit their church, the deputation process could be shortened saving thousands of dollars. This would get missionaries to the field much sooner to share the Gospel with those who need to hear. Maybe it’s time to stop talking and start doing!

How much support does a missionary need to go to the field?

By T. S. Long | Assoc. Mission Director

Initially, missionaries’ expenses are determined by the specific place they are going, their family size, and the ministry expenses they will need to get started. The BBFI Mission Office has information from various sources that helps to accurately project what each missionary will need on the field.

Personal Compensation

The Mission Office uses guides containing country-specific cost-of-living charts to figure the personal funds needed for a missionary. Resident missionaries also help to determine the accuracy of the information.

When calculating the personal funds missionaries need to live on the field, a predetermined personal compensation baseline along with insurance, education, and housing expenses are taken into consideration. Additional factors, such as economic fluctuation due to instability within the country, cost of living, and exchange rates are also taken into account. Following these guidelines, missionaries are given the opportunity to make necessary adjustments to their level of personal compensation on a range from 70-110 percent in order to insure that the compensation meets their specific needs.

AVERAGE MONTHLY SUPPORT OF BBFI MISSIONARIES BY REGION

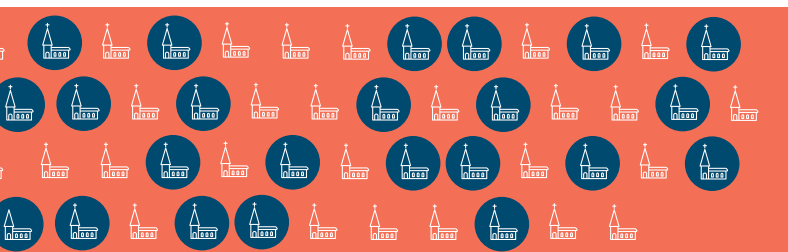


Ministry Funds

The missionary raises ministry funds for the sole purpose of conducting ministry overseas. Since TEAM missionaries are associate missionaries working as interns with a career missionary, they are not expected or encouraged to raise funds for ministry work. The only ministry funds they should need are to help with travel expenses to and from the field, transportation, small equipment purchases, communications, printing, and help with language studies while on the field. Should a TEAM missionary transition to career missionary with the BBFI, they will come back to the United States to raise only the ministry funds they will need.

Because each missionary’s ministry is different, there are no guidelines to structure the amount needed. However, accurate reporting of tax-exempt funds is expected through the quarterly report process. First-term missionaries are encouraged to only raise funds for language school, furlough travel, and initial ministry work. When they return for their first furlough, they should have a better grasp of the additional funds they need to raise for their ministry.

Raising funds for the field may be a source of anxiety for some missionaries, but it should not be so. As a missionary on deputation, I remember being given words of wisdom, “Never hold back, be hesitant, or shy to ask for others to be partners in the blessing of taking the Gospel to others.” Missionaries and the churches have the same desire — to get missionaries on the field quickly to carry out the Great Commission. The BBFI Mission Office wants to provide the resources and experience to help facilitate that process.



A RESULT OF A DEPUTATION VISIT

PROS AND CONS OF THE DEPUTATION PROCESS



Ministry experience

You get to see a variety of ministries and methods that could potentially be applied to your particular mission field. To interact with pastors and ask ministry-related questions is a great way to learn and prepare for a future ministry overseas.

Service

A missionary should always be ready to serve no matter where he or she is. Serving while on deputation keeps your heart, attitude, and love towards others in the right place.

Adventure

Although it is not a vacation, deputation allows a family to visit many great places in the United States, creating lifelong family memories.

Challenges with family life

Homeschooling while on the road can be difficult at times. Not every child is fit for that particular learning system. Some will miss the classroom and their classmates. Also, the loss of a permanent place to call home makes you feel like you have lost some stability.

Duration

The length of the deputation process can make the missionary weary and also disappointed with the process. A missionary must maintain perspective, understanding he or she will go to the field in God's time and the deputation process differs from family to family without comparison or competition.

ESTEBAN ALVAREZ
Arrived on field August 2015

An exercise in perspective

By Kevin Kolb (pastor)

When it comes to deputation, we could talk about the need to raise financial and prayer support, but if our only reason for deputation is because "it's how we get the money," today's missionaries could find faster, more efficient means to "go fund me." A more compelling answer considers Christ's work of sanctification. **Veteran missionaries testify to how God incrementally prepared them for a life of cross-cultural ministry. Deputation trials were a significant part of that process.** Few of us ever choose the heat of the refiner's fire, but afterward we rejoice in all God accomplished and cherish the lessons learned.

A second equally compelling answer considers Christ's devotion to His church. Deputation puts the Great Commission front and center for the local congregation. It brings global missions within reach. **The church embraces their mission to the world with greater knowledge, involvement, and sacrifice because a missionary personally stopped in their city and opened their eyes to the cities beyond.** Deputation is a valuable tool in God's hand. With it He shapes both the senders and the goers, all for His glory and the saving of the nations.

MATT KELLER (pastor)

I have to admit a few things before we begin — I am not a missionary. I am not a missionary kid. I have never spent a single second on deputation. What I know of deputation comes only from being a supporting, and now, a sending pastor. Currently, we have two families out of our church who are traveling across the nation looking for churches to support their vision, burden, and calling. Their experience has provided me with a glimpse into deputation.

I watched these families quit good jobs, sell houses, and part with nearly every earthly possession that would not fit into a trunk or a trailer. They have spent hours trying to connect with pastors, days driving, and months away from their church, friends, and family. They have faced uncertain times, but they have met loving and generous people. Above all, they have grown throughout this process. **Their faith has been challenged, exercised, renewed, and strengthened as they have seen God provide their every need.** They have learned, in a very unique way, to fully depend upon God. While our process isn't perfect, and while other groups get their missionaries on the field with greater speed and efficiency, many of those missionaries miss out on a once-in-a-lifetime, faith-growing, relationship-building experience.

MAX KENNEDY

Approved as career missionary May 2014

Not long after we began deputation, we were traveling down the road when we heard about a huge Lottery payout to someone in Texas. I grinned and asked my wife, "What if someone just gave us that much money right now? I guess we would be headed to Nicaragua tomorrow, huh?" As serious as she could be she said, "I would hope not! I don't want to miss building relationships with all the churches we're planning to visit in the next several months!" Once again I learned something very profound from my wife. And honestly, it changed my attitude toward deputation.

The key to actually seeing deputation as a blessing is to make sure raising funds is not the primary objective. After that moment in the car with my wife, I determined my primary objective for traveling, calling pastors, presenting my field, and writing monthly newsletters would be to build a network of pastors, individuals, and churches who would not only give to our mission, but be moved by the prospect of seeing us as an extension of their church on the field.

There may be a better way to raise money, but **I can't think of a better way to raise a team.** I'm thankful for every mile we've traveled, every church in which we've presented, and every hand I've shaken. The deputation road is long, but the next time you notice those dashed lines on the highway, imagine they are links to another member of your eternal impact team.

Deputation and the single missionary

By Dennis Jennings (pastor)

Concerning the local church, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him,” (1 Corinthians 12:18). Specifically speaking of unmarried women, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:34, “The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit.” We are privileged to see this passage lived out to the fullest in the lives of many single missionaries!

These missionaries are a blessing to their sending church. By their presence, they help keep missions in the forefront of the church family, especially among other singles.

To a supporting church, the single missionary who shares the story of how God worked in his or her life will often be used

by the Lord in the life of a young person or another single who is wrestling with the call of God. How often does God use the testimony of a single missionary to open the hearts of others to the truth that God will use them, too, if they would surrender to His will for their lives?

By their faithful service on the field, single missionaries provide additional hands to work in the ministry. Whether teaching women and children, discipling new believers, equipping leaders, supporting the work, or serving in some other capacity, their stories are always encouraging and inspiring!

I thank God for those sent from and/or supported by our church. I am always humbled by their dedication to Christ and passion for His ministry.

DON ELMORE (pastor)

I do support some single ladies and believe they have a valid ministry on the field. However, it can be harder for them to raise support because we are a preaching Fellowship and ladies don't preach in the churches they visit. So, we will have a single missionary share her testimony, passion, and love for missions everywhere we can. We give her a time on Sunday morning to do that as well. I treat her the same as any other missionary in every area except preaching.

JUSTIN RHOADES

Approved as career missionary September 2014

I am a career missionary to London who has been on the deputation journey since September 2014, and I am also single. I am not sure why, but that last part always seems to surprise people. After almost two years of deputation, over 150 churches, and 45 pastoral meetings, I have come to realize that being a single male career missionary is about as rare as seeing a unicorn. Despite the strange looks and comments I get for being single, being a missionary on deputation can be a great season for ministry.

It always puzzles me how some view being single as a handicap or disqualification, when God called most men and women into ministry when they were single. For males who are career missionaries, the only difference between married and single is that the single guy has more time for the ministry. I currently don't have to worry about taking care of a family, which frees up time and money to do more ministry, not only on deputation but also on the field. I surrendered my life to God 15 years ago and I am thankful I get to serve Him on deputation and in London.

OF THE 32
MISSIONARIES
CURRENTLY ON
DEPUTATION, HOW
MANY ARE SINGLE?

a. 7 b. 5 c. 10

Answer can be found on the bottom of page 12

Q. AS A SINGLE MISSIONARY, WHAT IS ONE THING THAT WOULD HELP YOU RAISE YOUR SUPPORT QUICKER?

A. KATIE BISHOP *Approved as TEAM missionary May 2015*

I think it helps if pastors and churches understand that TEAM missionaries are only required to raise personal funds needed for the first one to three years on the field. The total dollar amount is significantly less than a career missionary who is raising both personal and ministry funds. I only need 22 churches at \$85 a month, whereas a career missionary needs almost 45 churches. As my TEAM financial partners, those 22 churches are supporting me during my internship on the field and helping me be one step closer to being a career missionary.

Q. WHAT COULD CHURCHES DO TO HELP PROMOTE YOUR MINISTRY?

A. BECKA MCMURPHY *Approved as TEAM missionary May 2015*

While a single missionary doesn't have the needs of family members to juggle while traveling, the single missionary has to do all the calling, scheduling, driving, thank yous, follow-ups, and such. One thing that would help tremendously would be for pastors to recommend us and our ministries to their friends. Pastors seem to be a little leery about bringing a single, female missionary in, but a personal recommendation goes a long way.

BILL CRAWFORD

Career missionary since 1998

We knew of so many missionaries who dreaded the deputation process, but in spite of the stories we heard, we decided to keep a positive outlook knowing there were some things God needed to prepare us for before we could get to the field.

Because we homeschooled, we used this time to educate our girls not only on the beauty of our wonderful country but also on its rich history. Another perk was meeting those who would sacrificially pray for and give to us each month. And if that wasn't enough, it was an opportunity for us to grow spiritually as we went through the trials and tests on the road. It either draws you closer to the Lord and to your family, or it reveals your true spiritual temperature.

JEREMY LYNN

Arrived on field August 2016

What deputation is like for a family can be an elusive question, mainly because it evokes reflection on some of the best and most trying times. The process of packing bags and loading the vehicle became a familiar part of life. Having the right books for homeschooling and planning the days to actually have classes was a part of that process. After you hit the road, there are many unknowns. What will we do here? Will I make new friends? Will I say and do the right things? All these questions became part of our family's thinking. Reassured by God and the overwhelming call on our lives, we continued on, ready to share our hearts for the mission field.

The unsure feelings turned into amazement as we saw the heart of local churches. We talk often about how much time each church gave to get to know us. There were churches that invested time and resources into spending time with us in order to get to know us during our stay. When we consider their desire to make our family a part of their ministry, we begin to comprehend the worth they place on what God has called us to do, and are rendered speechless.

Although we felt the pressure in many ways to share our call, one major benefit of deputation is how God uses it to bring about maturity. As parents, there were many opportunities to help our children understand and apply the Scriptures to difficult circumstances. As husband and wife, we have seen God stretch us where we needed to be stretched. There have been moments of tension, but God's grace abounds. Simply, He has used this time to nurture growth individually and as a family.

MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVES ON DEPUTATION



STAN SHERWOOD

Arrived on field January 2014

The BBFI mission office was a tremendous help before, during, and after we completed deputation. As we began, Director Jim Smith was a great encouragement and a wealth of answers. We also asked the other directors the steps they took (ordering literature, preparing a video, making phone calls and scheduling, etc.) when preparing for deputation.

The Mission Office provided many vital roles during deputation. The first was taking care of our finances. Whether it was checks sent by mail, online donations, or us dropping off monthly support checks, they were always

processed and deposited on time! The finance team and Director Paul Hylton handled our numerous inquiries about the quarterly reporting process and other finance questions in a quick and helpful manner.

The second service provided was with all of our mail and packages being handled for us. They even forwarded them to various locations along our travel route. A third service was from the IT department. New computers were programmed and necessary software was installed for us as we traveled.

Any time we had the opportunity to stop in at the office, everyone on staff knew us by

name. Also, every director was welcoming and would take the time to talk about our ministry and God's work through us in promoting missions in the churches we visited. All of these services are vital to every missionary, but truly the most important to us was to hear that during the daily staff meetings they lifted missionary families by name to the Lord in prayer! I'm so thankful for all the services the Mission Office performs, and I know there are many I didn't even list, but prayer was and still is the number one service provided for the BBFI missionaries on a daily basis!

OLE KONNERUP

Career missionary since 1979

Deputation is certainly an interesting journey for the missionary. I think it could be improved upon, but I would not replace it. To me, the process is like what a soldier goes through during boot camp to be prepared for battle. Deputation helps the missionary in many ways, but I think the biggest way is learning how to live and walk by faith, something very important to learn.

Some say deputation is much harder than it used to be. That may be a fair assessment, but it was still a lot of work and a lot of phone calls. To this day, I do not like to make phone calls.

Now, after all these years, lining up churches is much easier. I have found those who really want us to come will respond and make us feel welcome. This makes our furlough time an enjoyable and fruitful time. And I don't have to make as many phone calls!

LANCE GOTCHER

Career missionary since 1999

I can sum up our deputation experience in one word: faith. Some have said the BBFI's method of doing deputation is archaic, costly, and inefficient. I disagree. Deputation is the most amazing thing. Only through God's provision could we explain going as a family around the country, visiting places we have never been, presenting our field in churches to people we have never met in order to ask them for prayer and monthly financial support. Of course, our faith has been stretched on the mission field even more than on deputation, but had we not had that initial faith-stretching time before coming to the Philippines, I don't know if we would have attempted as much for the Lord.

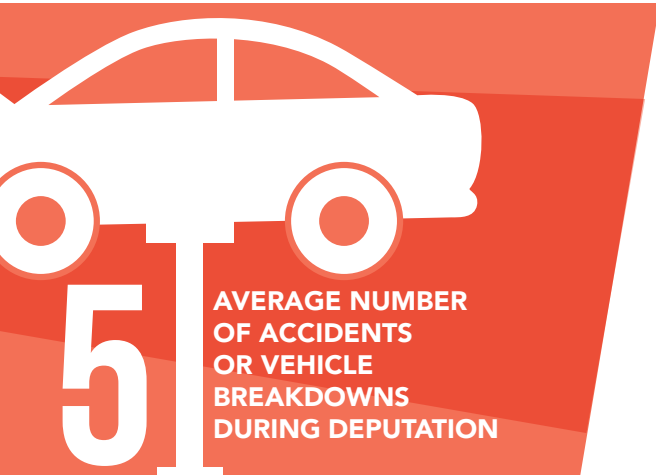
We've always been thankful for deputation. We had a blast as a young family. We were overwhelmed by people's generosity and God's provision. We wouldn't trade it for anything!

MICHAEL NELSON

Career missionary since 2006

The greatest benefit of the deputation process for our family was meeting people who have become integral partners in ministry and life. This was highlighted to our family late last year as we returned to the U.S. for our first furlough after ministering almost seven years in Australia. Our goal was to say thank you and be a blessing to our supporting churches. What we discovered was we received the blessing. We were once again reminded churches really do care and people really do pray. While on deputation we had visited churches and shared our burden for the people of Australia. We asked churches for their prayers and monthly financial partnership — and people got on board!

This has helped remind us that we are not alone in ministry, but part of something bigger and greater than just ourselves.



“...WE HAVE BEEN ON THE ROAD SO LONG WE ARE LOOKING FOR A LITTLE PERMANENCY ... EVEN IF IT IS IN SIBERIA.”

SHANE SALMON

Approved as career missionary May 2014

There are a number of benefits to the deputation process, including opportunities to preach the Gospel and connect with believers. But, through the process, missionaries also gain a stronger sense of personal identity. Whether you are a single missionary or a missionary with a gaggle of children, you garner a better understanding of who you are as an individual and how to work as a team with your family!

As you travel, you get to attend many different churches and see their various styles, formats, and participation in outreach and discipleship. What better time to build your mission field toolbox with ideas and resources than while you travel!

Deputation is also an opportunity to hone your craft of communication, which equips you to further the Gospel, both on deputation and on the field to which God has called you. God has allowed my family to have a great deputation, and we are thankful for all these benefits, and the privilege of being part of God's plan to tell others of Christ.

JOSEPH FLORY

Arrived on field July 2016

Oftentimes I believe we get caught up in the numbers of deputation. From an uninformed perspective, it might come off as a waste of time. All the miles, restaurants, and hotels can add up, but what we often forget is the missionary's preparation, the souls being won, and the encouragement to churches.

I believe deputation is a great “trial by fire” for us as missionaries. It has allowed my family to have a soft landing for the field — since we have been on the road so long we are looking for a little permanency, even if it is in Siberia. It helps solidify our perspective on the task at hand and see the Lord work in a mighty way as our faith has been tried and we have been encouraged.

SENDING CHURCH + MISSIONARY + SUPPORTING CHURCHES
A PARTNERSHIP FORMED ON
DEPUTATION

A sending church cannot do it alone

By Tracy Roby (pastor)

Sending out a missionary from your church delivers one of the highest blessings for a pastor and congregation. Immediately, the sending church feels a responsibility to provide the necessary support to sustain the needs of “one of your own.” However, you quickly realize you cannot do this alone! Trust and faith are imperative, yet God has chosen to work through independent churches.

The partnership among missionary, sending church, and supporting church is vital. And many of those connections are made during the deputation process. We need the sending church, the missionary, and the supporting churches to join together to accomplish the greatest endeavor in existence: telling the world the good news of Jesus Christ. There is value in churches working together to assist missionaries in getting to the field as quickly as possible. The broader the church base, the greater the stability of the missionary on the field. Diversity of support offers the steadiness of financial and prayer backing, providing security for the missionary’s family. This, in turn, means less stress and anxiety for our missionaries when they know we are holding the ropes back home. The enhanced security and stability frees missionaries to effectively fulfill their mission and can increase their longevity on the field.

RON ABBOT (pastor)

As a sending pastor, I know how important it is for other churches to partner with us in assuring our missionaries quickly reach their fields of calling.

A missionary sent out from our church receives a larger contribution from us than any of our other missionaries. They are family, and we try to take care of our own, but we can’t do it alone. We understand that, at any given time, we may be called upon to invest heavily in our missionary when an emergency suddenly calls them home for medical or family crises. Our partner churches are essential in this process.

DENNIS JENNINGS (pastor)

Biblically speaking, denominations don’t send missionaries. Schools don’t send missionaries. Mission agencies don’t send missionaries. We see in Acts 13, missionaries are called and sent by local churches and the Holy Spirit.

We see from Paul’s writings, the church at Philippi sent financially for the support of his missionary endeavors (Philippians 4:10, 15). It is this model from which we see the partnership of the sending church, supporting church, and missionary.

What a joy to know that as we partner with the missionary, the sending church, and their supporting churches, we are engaged in the enterprise of the Great Commission!

HARAMBEE

by Carl Boonstra
Former BBFI Mission Director

Kenya became an independent nation in 1963. Their first president, Jomo Kenyatta, was educated in an African Inland Mission school and was a professing Christian. Achieving unity among the great diversity of more than 50 different tribal groups was a great challenge facing Kenyatta. As a symbol to unify the nation, he took a cow’s tail and attached it to a wooden handle. He called this prop *Harambee*, which means “pull together.” He went to every tribal group with the same message — Let us pull together!

Henry Ford said, “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” Working together must be our method. The deputation process connects missionaries with local churches, which can then partner with other local churches in order to further the Gospel.

Let’s pull together, pray together, promote together, participate together. Think what we can do together.
Harambee!



MISSIONARY COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP

Nov. 6 – 11, 2016

Location: Camp PONDO in Southern California

Every missionary who is going to give any kind of presentation in a church should attend the Missionary Communication Workshop. The best news of all is that Ventura Baptist Church completely covers the cost for the workshop!

1. You will acquire communication skills that will capture your audience’s attention for a memorable presentation that gets the results you are looking for.
2. You will raise the money you need for support and projects because your presentation will clearly communicate the need.
3. You will develop the reputation as a missionary who pastors want in their churches.

For more information go to www.aboundmissionaryservices.com

DENNIS ISBELL (*pastor*)

I believe **the deputation process helps our church to stay on fire for God, for missions, and for fulfilling the Great Commission.** I want the missionary's burden imparted to my heart and our folks. Our folks are able to visit with the missionaries and it's a blessing to see the connections that are made.

I don't believe the deputation process should take three years, and I don't believe it would if we allow our people to see the passion our missionaries have to reach the people God has called them to.

BRUCE GARNER (*pastor*)

1. It reminds us that missionary work is done by everyday people. Missionaries do remarkable, eternity-changing work, but having missionary families visit in person, place their children in our Sunday school and nursery, and sit beside us in the worship service shows our congregation the work of missions is not conducted by superheroes. Missionaries have needs, talents, and fears just like we do. "Normalizing" missions and missionaries helps people in the pew consider they, too, can be used by God to reach across cultures.

2. It fuels passion. There is no substitute for knowing someone who is serving overseas. When countries where our missionaries work are in the news, our email and social media light up with questions. Are they safe? Will they have fresh needs? Is there something we can do? Those questions and their energy would not exist if we did not personally know someone serving the Lord there.

LEWIS MCCLENDON (*pastor*)

Missionaries who visit Ventura Baptist Church during deputation help our church in two ways:

1. Our people hear about what God is doing in the world. God has a global plan to reach the world with the Gospel. When missionaries share that God has put a specific country on their hearts, our people see God really does care for the world and is actively seeking and saving people. As they hear that message, they are challenged to reach people where they are.

2. Our people can pray specifically for missionaries they know. At Ventura Baptist Church we believe we really are partnering with our missionaries. True partnership requires relationship. Relationship requires time together. Time together requires missionaries to come to our church. We do our best to give generously to our missionaries, but we believe the greatest gift we can give our missionaries is prayer. It is hard to pray for a person who is unknown to you. During our eight-day mission conference, missionaries speak, teach, or give testimonies in all our services, Bible studies, and banquets. We schedule lunches and dinners with families throughout the week. We create every opportunity we can think of for people to spend time with missionaries. By the time the eight days are up, our people really know our missionaries and are motivated to pray for them.

Q. Pastor, how does the deputation process benefit your local church?

BOB STEPHENSON (*pastor*)

There is an important, glorious, God-blessed aspect to missionary deputation that goes far beyond fundraising. People in the pew are impacted by the faith and sacrifice of visiting missionaries. **Our congregations are challenged to attempt great things for God as they hear from ordinary men and women being used of God to accomplish the supernatural.** They think, "Maybe God could use me, too." The Holy Spirit's call is answered and new missionaries are born.

We never let a month go by at Graceway without a missionary in our pulpit. Why? Because missionaries need our help and are worthy of it. Also, as a pastor, I know nothing will challenge my people to pray, give, and go more than listening to our missionaries' testimonies.

KEITH TAYLOR (*pastor*)

May I begin by saying we want those who come to our church by way of deputation to be blessed by their time at Southside Baptist Church. We love missionaries! They are vital to our obedience to fulfill the Great Commission. We do our best to welcome them, make them feel at home, and fellowship with them.

Vital prayer support is generated when our church gets to know the missionary. The close of our mission conference is designated as a candlelight service. **Our people get excited about picking a missionary family to pray for every day throughout the year.**

Another benefit for our church is when a missionary shares a pressing need. Our church, whenever possible, comes together to meet that need immediately.

MAKING IT BETTER ... TOGETHER

CLOSING THOUGHTS AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

For missionaries...

DWAYNE WRIGHT (*missionary*)

As a deputation missionary, your focus is key to having a positive or negative ministry experience. One area we focused on was simply working hard. Deputation should not be seen any differently than working at a career or on staff at a church. Our schedule was tight. Monday we normally traveled, Tuesday through Thursday I would hit the phones from 8:30 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. (depending on what time zone I was calling). If we weren't making phone calls, we were doing follow-up — emails, sending out packets, or traveling to nearby churches for face-to-face meetings. We began making contacts one year before approval. By the time we were approved, we were booked a year out every week. Even while on deputation we would book out as far as two years. It's always easier to cancel if God gets you to the field earlier than planned!

SHANE SALMON (*missionary*)

Respect a pastor's time. Pastors are busy with the ministry. Being mindful of their time helped me communicate in a concise and timely manner.

For pastors and churches...

ESTEBAN ALVAREZ (*missionary*)

One of our supporting churches has a ministry called Missionary Care Team. A month before we arrived for their mission conference, members from that team sent us personal messages introducing themselves and asked us about our family and if we had any prayer needs. That made a tremendous impact because when we arrived at the church, instead of feeling like strangers, we felt we actually knew some of the congregation.

MAX KENNEDY (*missionary*)

I was a senior pastor for 18 years. Now, as a missionary to Nicaragua, I've been blessed with a unique perspective to be able to say, "If I had to do it (the pastorate) all over again, I would ..." With that in mind, I would definitely allow more new missionaries to come for love offerings whether I could take them on for monthly support or not. Generous love offerings are what keeps new missionaries' motors running ... literally.

LANCE GOTCHER (*missionary*)

One of the most helpful things for a missionary is finding a pastor available. Whether at a conference, a meeting, or on the phone, missionaries have to talk to pastors to get scheduled in a church and have the possibility of getting support.

JOHN REILLY (*pastor*)

Our church has been fortunate to purchase two homes right next to the church. In 2011, the decision was made to turn one of them into a mission home. As a ministry, two of our members took over the task of creating a warm, relaxing place for missionaries who visit our church. The home has four bedrooms and two baths. It also has a full basement and a big yard for kids to run around. It is a place for them to "stretch out" for a bit. We also stock the cupboards and refrigerator with food for their stay. We have found it a great way to get to know our missionaries on a more personal basis.

For State Fellowships...

THE TEXAS LAUNCH PROGRAM

CARL HUGHES (*pastor*)

When it comes to getting new missionaries to the field, what can we do better? This was the question Pastor Rick Carter asked in 2008 as the chairman of the Texas BBF. He realized that in the 1980s it cost \$100,000 a year for a missionary to be on deputation. Even then, it was taking each missionary a year or more to get to the field.

As the Texas board talked about this problem, the solution became apparent. Instead of having missionaries drive all over

Texas, using precious time and money, why not have pastors come to the missionaries?

We already have fellowship meetings where pastors are coming together. The pastors could meet the missionaries at these meetings, and take them on for support, all at the same time.

The Texas board developed two main qualifications. First, the missionary had to do their internship in the state of Texas. Second, the missionary had to go through an interview process and be approved by the Texas Board of Directors. Once this happened, they would be presented to the pastors at a fellowship

meeting. The idea was that each attending pastor would take them on for support.

The first candidate for the program was presented at the Texas BBF meeting in August 2008, and, in one day, Texas pastors raised \$2,035 in monthly support for the Morrows, who were headed to Curacao. The Morrows were able to gain this considerable amount of support by travelling to just one meeting and using two days. Since that time, many more missionaries have participated in the Texas Missionary Launch Program.