

THE DEPUTATION TRAIL
MINISTRY
OR
A MEANS TO AN END?
A
COVENANT

Missionary & Pastor Jeremy Markle



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Missions: The Deputation Trail
Ministry or a Means to an End?
by Missionary/Pastor Jeremy Markle

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**I wish to lovingly dedicate this book
to my wife, Laura,
who has faithfully joined me
in every aspect of my life and ministry.**

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CONTENTS

<u>FROM MY HEART TO YOUR HANDS</u>	1
<u>DEPUTATION PHILOSOPHY</u>	3
Ministry or Misery	5
Be a Servant and Dont Get Used to Being Served	11
Initiative or Impatience	15
Patience or Complacency	17
Pastoral Relationships and Respect	19
Supernatural Provision or a Sales Pitch	23
Beggars Cant Be Choosers, or Can They?	27
From a Glass House to a Glass Suitcase	35
Faithfulness or Failure	43
Preaching:Performance or Proclamation	45
Time Spent or Time Invested	51
<u>DEPUTATION PRACTICE</u>	55
Helpful Tips	57
<u>SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMPLES</u>	81

FROM MY HEART TO YOUR HANDS

Dear friend, each missionary's deputation experience can be as diverse as the country, culture, and language to which God is guiding him or her to minister. The purpose of this booklet is not to be the final answer to deputation's questions nor to provide the secrets to a fast and easy deputation ministry. Rather, it is intended to help the ministry process by presenting biblically based philosophies and practical tips to guide you through a God-honoring, church-expanding, and believer-edifying prefield ministry.

As I seek to be helpful by documenting a few practical principles for deputation ministry, I am very aware that I am not an expert on the subject. There are individuals who could easily expand on my work and provide a more detailed resource. However, I pray that what I learned during my six months of part-time deputation (which began less than one year after 9/11), two years of full-time travel before language-school training, and six months of travel before leaving for the field with over 100 percent of our budgeted support can be of some help to those who follow. These lessons were not learned in the isolation of my own personal wisdom but through a mixture of personal study and experience, assisted by the counsel and insight of others whom God directed into my life before, during, and after my deputation ministry. There is no doubt that any "success" I saw on deputation was not based on special manmade formulas but on God's graciousness. My deputation trail began with a direct answer to prayer and ended when God provided my last meeting and fulfilled my budget requirements. Therefore, I praise God for His goodness in the lessons I have learned and also for those I have been able to spiritually encourage during this time of ministry travel.

DEPUTATION PHILOSOPHY

A proper philosophy of life and ministry is just as important as sound roots are to a tree. As the roots of a solid tree must be grounded in good soil so that the tree can receive regular nourishment and maintain its stability, so the roots of a proper life and ministry philosophy must be grounded in God's Word in order to provide the needed spiritual nourishment and stability that are required for a life of Christian service.

Psalm 1:1–3 says: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

It is very important that God's servants constantly evaluate not only what they are doing but also the biblical philosophy behind their actions. These servants of God must ensure that they are truly living in God's will, accomplishing it God's way, and doing it for God's glory. They must humbly recognize that I Corinthians 1:27–31 apply to their life and ministry: *“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 1:27–31).

The Deputation Trail

In the discussion of a missionary's deputation philosophy, John the Baptist's words in John 3:30, "***He must increase, but I must decrease,***" must be exemplified.

The Apostle Paul put it this way: "***For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.***" It is well known that the missionary's message must always reflect Jesus Christ. However, it is equally important that Jesus Christ "***must increase***" as the missionary's name, wishes, abilities, and accomplishments "***decrease***" as he or she serves others "***for Jesus' sake.***" The missionary's service to others for Jesus Christ does not begin when he or she arrives on the field of service, but it includes those with whom he or she comes in contact while being an "***ambassador***" for Christ every day of his or her life, even while in his or her homeland (1 Corinthians 5:20).

With these biblical foundations established, the next few pages and subjects can be a spiritual encouragement and reminder of a missionary's ministry roles while on deputation and of how he or she can use this time to minister to others and bring glory to the Lord long before he or she arrives on the field of service.

Ministry or Misery

Deputation can be viewed in two ways: as God's ordained will and my extraordinary privilege to minister to those with whom I come in contact on my way to my physical destination in this world, or as a necessary evil which my family and I will endure in order to get to my goal of ministering in another place; therefore, individuals and ministries in my path are simply stepping stones to move me forward. Seeing it stated in this way, it is very easy to verbally choose the God-centered and servant-hearted philosophy. But the choices and actions that the missionary displays will be the real test of his or her view of God and his or her attitude while in His service. The Apostle Paul said, "***But godliness with contentment is great gain***" (I Timothy 6:6). Each missionary must seek to be content with God's will for both his or her present location (hometown/foreign field) and ministry (deputation/mission work) like the Apostle Paul did when he said, "***For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need***" (Philippians 4:11–12). If a missionary does not maintain a God-centered ministry focus, he or she will find the deputation trail to be miserable. However, if that individual does maintain a God-centered ministry focus, he or she will find true security and satisfaction as he or she glorifies God with both the process and the product of his or her ministry.

The question can then be asked: What biblical truths can be applied to prevent the missionary from being miserable? **First, ministry is serving God. Ministry is not a specific location, but rather it is a heavenly vocation.** Second Corinthians 5:20 is clear that each believer is an "***ambassador***" for Jesus Christ. Therefore, each believer is representing Jesus Christ wherever

The Deputation Trail

he or she is located and with whomever God permits him or her to have contact.

Luke 17:7–10 says, ***“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”*** A true servant is faithful to his or her master, no matter where that individual is located. It does not matter if he or she is on the field or at home; that servant is always faithful to the master’s wishes.

When deputation is viewed as God’s place of ministry at this time, the hunger to reach the souls around the world will not be quenched, but great peace will be experienced. This is true because the missionary is in the center of God’s will by obediently serving Him (Genesis 24:27). Consider this: **Will you find satisfaction by being in your country of service and out of God’s will or by ministering to the souls presently around you and being in the center of God’s will?** **Second, ministry is serving people.** Paul said, ***“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved”*** (2 Corinthians 12:15). Paul was not concerned about the response of the people he was serving. He simply dedicated everything he was and had to serve them.

As spiritual leaders, we are admonished by the Apostle Peter to ***“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly...”*** (1 Peter 5:2). God has clearly placed each pastor, missionary, etc. into the local church for His specific purpose.

Ministry or Misery

Ephesians 4:11–12 provides the purpose of spiritual leadership when it says, ***“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”*** This passage is part of the job description of every missionary. When he or she is on the mission field, the missionary is often a pastor, helping the flock grow in the Lord. When he is at “home,” the missionary is similar to a modern-day evangelist, traveling to assist the local church leadership in teaching the flock how to grow in their knowledge of and service to their Lord.

The Apostle Paul is an example of this type of minister as he made his way to his sending church in Antioch. The Bible says, ***“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith...they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed”*** (Acts 14:21–23). In Acts 20:32–38, he took extra time to teach and pray with those believers he was passing by. They were not seen as a means to an end but as a God-given ministry opportunity while en route to a future destination.

As a missionary on deputation, I had no idea if I was making any difference in the world. It wasn't until I was scheduling furlough meetings years later—while speaking to a supporting pastor whom I had not yet met due to a pastoral change while I was on the field—that I learned that he believed the Lord used me and the counsel I had given to direct the church to call him to be their pastor. I truly do not understand all of the reasons why God asked me to stay home a few months longer from the field, but I do know that it provided me with the opportunity to be with this ministry and have this originally unknown impact. As I look back on this and other deputation experiences, I can see that God

The Deputation Trail

specifically ordained all those we met along the way. I praise Him for His guidance and take hope for future travels.

Third, ministry is impacting souls, and all souls are equally important in God's eyes. A missionary trying to get to the field will naturally have his or her heart and attention drawn to his or her future home and ministry. However, it is important to remember that the command to *“be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* (Acts 1:8) is not only a command to go to the uttermost parts of the world, but it is also a command to go to your hometown and surrounding areas.

As Jesus Christ prophesied of the apostles' future ministry, He declared, *“Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men”* (Mark 1:17). Men with spiritual needs can be found even as close as next door. Although it is “religiously romantic” to write home from a faraway country about a soul saved, *“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner [from America] that repenteth...”* (Luke 15:7). God's desire is for all, including those at home, to hear the Gospel. In the same way, it may be “religiously romantic” to speak of believers around the world dedicating their hearts and lives to God, but God also desires this for American believers.

Each missionary should desire that God would use him or her and his or her ministry to see each believer *“draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our [their] hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our [their] bodies washed with pure water. Let us [them] hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us [them] consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves [themselves] together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Hebrews 10:22–25).

Ministry or Misery

A missionary must remember that the missionary with the greatest impact for the cause of Christ, the Apostle Paul, was greatly burdened for his own countrymen and said, ***“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”*** (Romans 9:1–3). He boldly declared that his ministry focus was to the Gentiles and called himself ***“the apostle to the Gentiles”*** (Romans 11:23). But he maintained a passion for his own people and took every opportunity possible to evangelize and minister to them.

And so must the missionary fulfill his or her God-given calling to minister to those around the world while never losing his or her natural love and concern for those in his or her own country. The missionary must consider every opportunity God provides him or her to minister to his or her ***“kinsmen according to the flesh”*** as a privileged opportunity. This individual must say with the Apostle Paul, ***“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel [my country] is, that they might be saved”*** (Romans 10:1).

As a traveling servant in the service of his Savior, it should be understood ***“that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”*** (Jeremiah 10:23; Psalm 37:23). God is the One planning each encounter so that the missionary has the privilege of impacting individual souls throughout all of his or her life and ministry.

As Philip was ministering in his specific revival ministry in Samaria (Acts 8:5–25), the Lord called him to a different ministry, which changed the life of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–29). A missionary should be equally ready to obediently go wherever, whenever, and to whomever God sends him or her.

The Deputation Trail

As I returned from the field for my first furlough, my heart was greatly burdened for my homeland. I began to ask the Lord to help me be used by Him to spiritually impact the lives of those with whom I came in contact. At the end of one of our missions conferences, being thoroughly exhausted and simply looking for an opportunity to crash, I had no idea that God was going to answer my prayers. As I was loading my car with my missionary paraphernalia, a young man met me to ask some questions. My first thoughts were of how little I really wanted to talk at that time and of how little energy I had to pay attention. But the Holy Spirit quickly reminded me of my prayer to be used of God to impact others.

Little did I know that, with just a few questions about missions, God would help me to recognize that I had been praying for this young man's salvation for several weeks after having gotten to know his brother. By the end of the conversation, in the middle of the church parking lot, that young man bowed his head, and with his own words, asked Jesus Christ to forgive him of his sin and to be his personal Savior. As I walked away from that conversation, I choked back tears of joy. My strength was fully spent, and yet through the power of God, He used me to see another child added to His family.

I was quickly reminded that God wants all souls to receive His gift of eternal life, and it is His business to call me home from my "field of service" so that one of my own countrymen would be added to the kingdom of heaven. Praise God!

DEPUTATION PRACTICE

The process of planning and preparing for deputation can be very overwhelming. It is as if each missionary needs to become the CEO of his or her own company. But, different from a CEO, the missionary will need to be all of the branch managers and work force—all at the same time (communication director, advertising specialist, shipping and transportation planner, etc.). The organization process takes time, and many times things are forgotten. It is because of the difficulty of this very important area of ministry that I want to share with you a few helpful tips that span many different subjects found in the deputation ministry. Please use these tips not as the final rule book, but as guides to help you formulate your own personal deputation practices.



Helpful Tips

How to avoid the potholes along the deputation trail.

1. Contact lists
 - A. Contact lists can be gathered through the home pastor, family and friends, mission board, other supporting pastors (after you have built a rapport with them), etc.
 - *Be very careful of lists provided by other missionaries due to the over-taxing of pastors and their ministries.
 - B. Each contact should be evaluated based on location and ministry separation issues.
 - *Personal recommendations from trusted pastors and faithful believers can ensure good visits with churches of like faith and practice.
 - *Each contact should be considered with care. With the resources of the Internet, etc., you should complete a proper investigation in order to protect awkward circumstances due to separation issues.

2. Meeting locations
 - A. It is beneficial for missionaries to make contact “hubs” surrounding their home church or where they have friends or family as a central location. These contacts can work to help them schedule meetings as well as be a place of fellowship they return to for future furloughs.
 - *When the original contact lists from friends, family, etc. have been exhausted and you need to

The Deputation Trail

expand the contact resources, maintain the hub philosophy as much as possible. It may be possible to find a location that has a prophet's chamber as a central location for a time, or, by contacting board pastors, you may find ministries of like faith and practice in a specific geographic location.

*It may also be helpful to connect the hubs by looking for contacts between two or three hubs so that travel time on furlough can be useful as you link your supporting churches while coming and going from different hubs.

- B. Computer and Internet mapping programs can be a great help to find approximate distances from one place to the next and make boundaries as to how far you will go for a meeting.

*For example: a part-time deputation missionary must be able to return to work on Monday, so by using a mapping program, he or she can find all of the contacts he or she has available within three hours of his or her home and not contact anyone beyond that distance to get started. This type of planning will help for scheduling furlough and prevent wasted funds on travel expenses.

- C. Although GPS units and smart phones have become very popular and are very helpful, it is always important to double check the directions the unit gives before setting out on a trip. (It is not uncommon for a GPS to take you out of your way and waste valuable time while getting you to your destination.)
- D. A missionary should plan on arriving at least thirty minutes before the first service of the day. This will allow him or her time to greet and communicate

Helpful Tips

with the pastor as well as set up all of his or her display and multimedia presentation.

3. Intro packets (*Supplementary Examples*)
 - A. Each missionary should prepare some form of introductory letter and portfolio (or brochure) that can be sent to each pastor.
 - *You should view the portfolio's price in printing and mailing as an investment and not a loss. You can easily recover the cost of each packet when you scheduled meetings gain support.
 - *The portfolio content should be brief, yet thorough, in content. The more information the pastor has about the missionary and his or her ministry, the fewer questions the missionary will need to answer and clarify over the phone.
 - *The portfolio should be as professional as possible—quality printing, proofreading, layout, etc.
 - *The portfolio should be reviewed by the home pastor and any others who might be able to provide clarity. Make sure that you are not just presenting information correctly but also that you are communicating your heart correctly.
 - *The portfolio should be distinguishable by use of a specific color of folder, design, or label on the front. This will help the pastor remember your portfolio when you contact him.
 - B. It is best to mail a small portfolio of information to a pastor two weeks before calling to ask for a meeting.
 - *If the pastor has received the packet of information, it is much easier for the missionary

