

the LISBON

focus

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Dear Friends and Prayer Partners,

Thank you for your prayers and faithful support! We are happy to share with you how God is working in our lives. We hope that this report is as encouraging to you as it is to us! God bless!

DEPUTATION: NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

As we near the end of deputation, we have a lot of experiences behind us we never could have imagined at the start! We joke that we need to write a book of all of the funny things that have happened to us. Maybe we could title the book *"Is that our car making that noise?"* (a phrase we have uttered on more than one occasion). In it we would write that we have bought 14 tires over the course of the 100,000 miles we have traveled in less than two years. We could tell of the adventure of traveling all of those miles with 2 beagles. We would give God credit for our safety as some 41,000 lives were taken on the highways last year, and of course our transmission problem that caused us to travel 720 miles at 40 mph to arrive at a church where a visiting mechanic offered to fix our car free of charge. What an awesome display of God's faithfulness to us!

Maybe we would name the book *"The love offering was what?"* and tell of the challenge of going from a 6 figure income to no income overnight as your expenses increase with every mile traveled. We would talk about the challenge of raising support in a troubled economy and of filling our tank 2 to 3 times each day for over \$4 per gallon. We could talk about the moment God gave us peace about His time schedule as struggled with why our house has not sold after 2 ½ years on the market. We watched God provide time and time again for every need.

Maybe a good title for our book would be *"Murder or Divorce?"* and we could tell of how God has grown our marriage over days and weeks without one minute spent apart, including many hours in the car with difference in opinion over whether or not we are even driving in the right direction! But there were also the times where our only friend in the world was our spouse and we learned to appreciate and depend on each other like we never have before.

Maybe Beau could write the book and title it, *"Traveling with a Pregnant Wife"* and repent of traveling 2,200 miles from Michigan to Arizona in 3 days TWICE. Maybe Valerie would write, *"Traveling with a Newborn"* and tell of taking our new baby to her first church at 10 days old and the challenges of parenting on the road.

Whichever of the various topics we could choose, we would convey that the blessings of deputation have far outweighed the burdens. Overall we have had a wonderful experience. We recognize how valuable these life lessons will be once we reach the field. We have decided if you can't make it through deputation, you won't be able to make it in a foreign country. What a great training ground for exercising faith in your Christian life. Beau often says, "I think every Christian should go on deputation for two years of their life!"

This week we finish our last mission conference. Next week we pack our container. The week after that we visit our family one more time and finally, we will board the plane to go to Portugal. What a victory! We could not have done it without your prayers and God's faithfulness to us! Though we are not at 100% of our support, we both feel complete peace that this is when God would have us go. Please pray for that last little bit to come in as we take this step of faith.

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