



BRANDON & MARCI JONES - Missionaries to Brazil

February 2017

Dear Family and Friends,

It is said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. For us, each day is another step closer to our thousand-mile journey to Brazil. We took our first step in the fall of 2015, when we first felt God tugging on our hearts for the ministry in Brazil. We began to pray and ask God if this was the next step of ministry for our family. After a few months of prayer, we took the next step and visited Brazil for the first time.



When we first arrived in Porto Alegre, we quickly saw that this was a world of opposites from where we are now. We live in the northern plains of North America in the city of Herreid, South Dakota, where the winters are long and cold and the summers are short. Porto Alegre is in the southernmost part of Brazil, where the summers are long and hot, and the winters are short, and not nearly as fierce as the Dakotas. Herreid has a population of 450, while Porto Alegre has a metro population of 4.5 million. Herreid is in a rural area with farms and ranches all around. Porto Alegre is a dense city with high rises overlooking bustling streets. We live in a spacious parsonage where our kids each have their own rooms and will move to an apartment where they will learn to share a room. Our kids have the freedom to roam around town and bump into people they know at every turn, and soon they will have to be kept close by as we all adjust to city life.

Despite the differences we noticed right away in Porto Alegre, we also felt a great calling confirmed in our hearts. During our two weeks in Brazil, we quickly fell in love with the people and the ministry.



We met pastors and church leaders who shared the burden that God has placed on their hearts to reach their neighbors. They shared about the struggles they face, the joys they receive, and they often offered to pray for us as we sought God's will.

During our trip Brandon taught a two-week intensive class on Old Testament theology that met every

PRAISES

- We have received a positive response to our fundraising efforts as we begin this long journey.
- Our children have been very receptive to the changes that are coming and are excited about this new chapter in our lives.
- We have many friends and family that keep us in their prayers and have been an encouragement to us.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- God will continue to bring in our support so that we can go back to Brazil as soon as possible.
- As we plan to move to Dallas to make that our home base and that we can find a home church there.
- For our children, as the changes they will experience will become greater as time goes on.
- For the churches and her leaders in Rio Grande Do Sul.

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

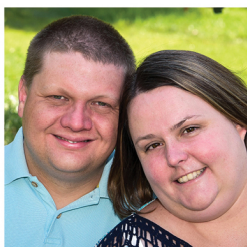
James 1:17



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weeknight. The students were kind and gracious. Their smiles and their welcome was infectious. They were encouraging and gave kind feedback, telling Brandon that they have a renewed passion for the Old Testament and were excited to go back to their churches and share what they had learned. Brandon also had the opportunity to teach a class on baptism to the local pastors.

After returning to the United States, we continued taking one step at a time. Last September we were approved by the NAB International Office to become career missionaries to Brazil. In some ways it seemed that we had climbed enough steps and made it to a landing. We could look back and see all the ways God had worked to bring us to this point, but we also looked forward to see that our journey had only just begun.

As we reflect on the last year, we have joked with one another that it is amazing that God ever calls a missionary. The task before us seems too great. We have even said that we have never had to trust God so much as we do now. We must trust him as we raise support, look for a home base, and transition from our ministry in Herreid. Sometimes these steps before us seem overwhelming, but our Father is always faithful. Many nights we go to bed with a victory, whether that be another person joining our financial support team, our children's precious prayers about their excitement to move to Brazil, or peace that God is always at work and lets you and I be a part of what he is doing all over the world.



While we were in Brazil we had the privilege of visiting the Chain of Love home for children in the city Campo Bom. There we met the director, Telmo Camargo. He told us of his upcoming trip to the United States and Canada and told us that when he came he would come by our home and see us. Of course, standing in a different hemisphere than our home, neither one of us thought it would be likely that he would make it to rural South Dakota. And yet, less than a year later, Telmo and his son Wesley were spending the night in our home. They were traveling with the Chain of Love US representative, Robbyn Hanstad. What a joy it was to share our evening with them. Our son, who is 12, instantly connected with Wesley, who is 15. They found common ground in Star Wars, and even though there was a language barrier, it seems that Star Wars has a language all its own. We

were very excited to share with them the traditional Gaucho tea from their region, chimarrao.

What a joy and a privilege it was to host this group. We enjoyed showing off the little bit of Portuguese we had learned from our online lessons. After a late night conversation of both English, Portuguese, and hand gestures, Telmo said "we don't speak the same language, but we understand each other because our hearts are connected." That is such a powerful truth! God has connected our hearts with those in Brazil, and we feel so privileged.



Thank you for your continued prayer and support! Please continue praying for us as we raise the support needed to get to the field.

—Brandon, Marci, Daniel, Monica, and Olivia