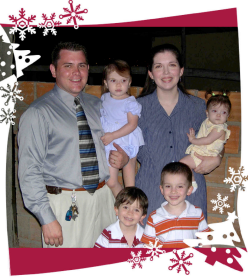


Dickens Family To Brazil

December 2006



Dear Praying Saints,

We wish a Merry Christmas to each and every one of our family, friends, pastors, and supporting churches, and prayer partners. In our ever increasingly commercialized, Christ marginalized holiday season, I am glad that we can celebrate the glorious birth of our Savior and Lord. Birth in general has to be one of the most miraculous events that any human can experience. I know all the moms are saying, "Yeah, only because you don't have to experience the nine months of struggle and hours of intense pain." After four children, I am still amazed at the joy and love that is experienced at the birth of a child. Then to think how Mary and Joseph must have felt not only watching their son being born, but knowing He was the fulfillment of all the prophecy of the Old Testament like Galatians tells us, "In the fullness of time." Then to imagine that as Mary, "pondered these things in her heart" she knew the reason that He had "become flesh and dwelt among us" was since eternity past, He was to be the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This is the



message we preach. This is the reason we work. He is the why and wherefore that we pray, preach, sweat, and love those who are so blinded by religion that when asked about their eternal destiny simply respond without hope, "I hope to make it." He is the motivation in your sacrificial giving to our family and ministry half a world away. You give not only in the area of finances, but in your prayer and love and each year I marvel at your desire to help and encourage us. You

have sent cards, and letters, care packages and made phone calls. It was this outpouring of love that Paul referenced in so many of his letters to the churches.

These past two months I have witnessed the birth of a church here in Caruaru and the continued conception of a church in Belo Jardim. There has been great joy in seeing the church Bro. Nash started five years ago finally be born and how exciting to see it taking its first baby steps. God allowed



us to be involved in it for a year and now we are involved in the conception of another. I have mentioned Elisangela and Silvio who need your continued prayer as do Valdemir and Maria. We have a new young couple visiting Bel and Eliane who we are attempting to win to Christ. We have started Wednesday evening services with great excitement and except for two flat tires on the way to church last week all has gone well. Those flat tires did however save us from a potentially dangerous situation and God taught us that sometimes when he sends a little inconvenience it could be a present just wrapped in newspaper and not pretty wrapping with a bow. The work continues and we are thrilled to be involved.

Bible Institute will be finishing here in three weeks and we are in full swing with preparations for the Christmas Cantata and plans for New Years Eve. You can also be praying for all the ministries here as Bro. Nash is set to head home for a two-month furlough and we will be trying to help out while he is away. Now that we have more training in the language it is easier to be



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of assistance in that respect. Please remember these requests and especially that some of these will receive the “greatest gift” of all this season.



We have no snow, or even cold weather, but we are all getting excited about the Christmas season. Cynthia has discovered a source for good Christmas music in Portuguese and is already teaching not only our children, but also the children in the church, Christmas music. Morgan has finished kindergarten! He thinks he is big stuff and already wants to start first grade. Aydan wants to get right in there with him and displays an understanding of many things beyond his three years like the fact that he told me at the dinner table that he had no hair because as he said, “I don’t see any.” Daniella continues to develop her language and reinvent two perfectly good existing languages. She frequently arrives at our legs to say, “Amo-cê” (Amo você or I love you). The Brazilians think she is asking for lunch, but at 6 in the morning or 10 at night you would hope she is expressing her love. After days of screaming and generally irritable behavior, Abigail finally revealed two little teeth and our little Brazilian continues to steal hearts. I am trying to build an office in a room we have outside the house because although I love my wife and children it is still difficult to study and work in the house. I guess you could say it will be my Christmas present to myself. Cynthia ever remains my compliment. She is busy as wife, mom, schoolteacher, nurse, nursery worker-coordinator, junior church professor, and treasurer and accountant. In her “spare time” she tries to sleep.



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This time of year always causes me to think of my family, now spread across the globe with my parents in China “teaching” English and attempting to see Chinese souls come to Christ, my sister and brother-in-law in Ecuador, my brother onboard ship and his wife and children in the states, and my other sister and brother-in-law heavily involved in their church and deciding about future ministry, and Cynthia’s parents dealing with yet another Christmas with their daughter and grandchildren far away; yet although we miss one another’s company, we know it is to deliver the “gift” of salvation to a world of lost souls. The world focuses on physical needs so much at this time, but our focus is Christs and the reason He was born and died, “To seek and to save that which was lost.” Thank you for your prayers, love, gifts, and financial support. Merry Christmas to each of you and your families and may God bless your coming New Year!



...Because He first loved us,

Joel E. Dickens

Ps. 118:23

P.S. Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support