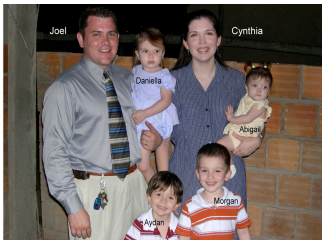


Dickens Family To Brazil

May 2007



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Dear Praying Saints,

This past weekend we completed the first year with the congregation that we started in Belo Jardim. *Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; Psalms 105:5.* This is exactly what we did on Sunday. We had a dinner before the service and then our regular evening service followed. We had a wonderful time and I preached out of Ephesians 1 about having God's best for our lives. This past year we have seen the marvelous works of our Lord on our behalf, but more importantly how true His Word is and remains that way. We have seen three people saved since we began the work and we are regularly having between fifteen and twenty in the services. Another family has begun attending and we have had the opportunity at least once to clearly explain the gospel to that family in their home. None of them have expressed a decision or desire to do so yet, but it has not stopped them from attending the services. There is another couple interested in starting Bible studies with us, and another family with whom we have been holding regular Bible studies every week. Our regular attendees and those who have been saved have been going through regular discipleship on Wednesday evenings and you can pray with us that they will make decisions to follow the Lord in believer's baptism. Two of these couples are in need of making decisions to get married, as living together unmarried is a regular part of Brazilian culture in this part of the country.

God's Word and its truth are imperative to the success of our ministry here. We constantly confront false teaching from other churches. The charismatic movement has such a strong hold on the people that great care must be taken to explain Biblically the truth of salvation by grace without works. Several weeks ago following a service, I spent twenty minutes witnessing to a man so confused about salvation that he continually asked me to pray for him that he could get remarried so he would not sin through lust and die and go to hell. He had been deceived into thinking that his salvation was so insecure that any sin could cause him to lose it. Our hope is eternal! This coming year it is my desire to put a tract or portion of the New Testament in the door of every house in Belo Jardim, and I have been invited to preach the anniversary service for a national pastor and his church in the state north of us. I will be continuing to teach in the Bible Institute here in Caruaru on the book of II Timothy.

God's protection has been evident in many ways. We have seen police cleaning up several accidents as we pass on the highway knowing that had we left the house a little earlier we might have been involved. I was at the pharmacy getting my debit card back from the cashier after paying for my purchase when I noticed the cashiers putting cash in a plastic bag for a man standing at the front of the store. When I asked what they were doing the cashier in front of me said, "It's a robbery!" The man took the bag and left never once brandishing a weapon or asking for anything from me or the other customers even though I was within arm's reach of the assailant. For the past two weeks, we have been passing viruses back and forth between the six of us. Finally, we are all well and trying to take vitamin C and other natural medications to prevent other viruses.

Cynthia and the children are all doing well, now that we are past the viruses. Cynthia is enjoying working with the children at church, but it is not easy with a class with ages from 1 to 12 years. Morgan is enjoying first grade and amazes us with his desire to learn, although he was sure that the opposite of the word "top" was "pot." Aydan amazes us with his logic - like when he told us he had no hair because he could not see it, as he rolled his eyes upward as far as he could. Daniella is growing and her language skills are improving, but she continues to mix English and Portuguese. Abigail loves to talk, although she makes no sense. However, we

clearly understand her words as she chases the dog (the dog is roughly five times her size) around the house giving it commands to “sit”, “stay”, or “get down!”

Thank you all for your continued prayer and financial support. Your continued love and care for our family and ministry have been continually encouraging as we work here. We especially offer our gratefulness to the Victory Baptist Church in Charlotte Hall, MD, for their sacrificial gift toward the purchase of a piano. We continue to pray for the Lord to provide the rest needed to purchase that piano. We are also praying about a larger vehicle. Also, I am sure that we are not the only missionary to express this need. The fall of the dollar has greatly affected our support. Due to your faithfulness, we have not experienced any large decrease in the amount of support coming in. We have even had one church begin supporting us for the past year. (Our thanks to Ohana Baptist Church and the Wagar family!) Thank the Lord! However, the dollar has dropped here by about 25% (based on the exchange rate that we used to figure our support needs during deputation). Looking at this fact, it is almost as though we have “lost” 25% of our support, even though none of you have stopped supporting us. We truly cannot complain, but we covet your prayers! God has and will continue to provide for our every need. One of those needs has been a pastor for our home church, and He answered that need last week. Our new pastor Bruce Hoose should be moving to the Outer Banks in a couple of months to begin his new ministry at Roanoke Island Baptist Church. We pray for you all weekly and praise the Lord for the ministry he has given us and those of you who are supporting us through your love, finances, and most importantly your prayers. God bless.

...Because He first loved us,

Joel E. Dickens

Ps. 118:23

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