

Dickens Family

To Brazil

July 2007

Dear Praying Saints,

Ecclesiastes says there is nothing new under the sun. And we know that this is true, but in the life of a missionary there are always new experiences. Last month we made the decision to begin a monthly evangelistic effort with the folks who are attending the services. You may ask, why only monthly? We are involved weekly in visiting and evangelizing those we come into contact with as the Lord gives us opportunity, but our people have never done this so it is the beginning for them. One of the ladies that joined us for the first evangelistic effort was so excited about what she was doing that I think I can safely say she was a hostage evangelist. She has been waiting for two years for a good church to be started in the city and she wants everyone to know Jesus and salvation like she does. Through the evangelism we have about 8 prospects that we are visiting to explain the gospel better. Pray for these efforts. Our second is coming up at the end of the month.

This past weekend, July 21-23, I made my first solo voyage to another state to preach in an anniversary conference of a national pastor friend. I had a wonderful time with Pastor Anízio and the people of Igreja Batista Bíblica of Soledade, Paraiba. This pastor and his church of about 60 members have begun a work in a city about 25 km from theirs and have plans to start two others and help in starting a third. There is a true evangelistic spirit with these people and they are conservative, independent, fundamental Baptists. After the preaching Saturday and Sunday evenings, two young ladies trusted Christ as their Savior!

Cynthia has begun a small Bible club for the children who attend our services in Belo Jardim. She is giving them sheets of daily devotions to do weekly at home as well as Scripture memorization and music to learn. We are already beginning to see fruit from these labors as one young girl has made a decision to trust Christ as her Savior and another is asking many questions.

There is such a famine of good conservative music and with praise to God and thanks to several churches specifically, Victory Baptist in Charlotte Hall, MD; Landmark Baptist in Elkins, WV; and Temple Baptist in Chesapeake, VA; we have been able to purchase a digital piano which now gives Cynthia the ability to record music for her children's club as well as possibly record a CD of good music for the people here. One of our goals is to teach our children how to play piano as well.

One of my new experiences was to eat chicken feet! We teach our children that not to offend we must eat what we are served when visiting in other houses. I was doing just that and was served a soup. The man's wife was not there and she had left the soup for us. When I dipped in to serve myself I curiously found chicken feet. Not wanting to offend I simply thought to myself, "Perhaps she forgot to take the pieces out." After the first serving the husband asked, "Pastor, don't you want to try the chicken feet?" Well, what do I do now? I took one and put it on my plate asking, "How?" He said, "Chew off the meat and spit out the bones?" I must say, not bad, and I ate a second. Yes, they had been well cleaned before being cooked.

Please be in prayer for the following requests. Primarily for the Word of God to make its entrance into the hearts and minds of the dear ones that need to hear the gospel, that the congregation in Belo Jardim continues to grow spiritually and then numerically. Pray for these children that Cynthia is working with as well as the evangelistic efforts we have begun. Pray for the ministry of music that we are beginning to enter into. Finally, I would like to ask special prayer for the financial needs of every missionary in Brazil. Personally, with the dollar losing value drastically in this country we have lost about 30% of our support, even with the continued faithfulness of each of you and your sacrifices for us. I know of another missionary who has lost



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nearly 60% of his support. I can imagine know that there are others as well. Please be in prayer, the current president would like nothing more than to devalue the dollar to an equality with the Brazilian currency even to the detriment of his own people. Thank you for every sacrifice that you make for our family and ministry. We are here by your prayer and support. God bless your families and ministries. It is such a privilege to work here in the harvest field.

...Because He first loved us,

Joel E. Dickens

Ps. 118:23

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