

# CHRISTMAS

December 2009

Dear friends,

(Galatians 4:4-5) But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

How often do we stop and think about these verses in relation to Christmas? Recently, I have been teaching through the life of Christ in Sunday School. I began the series by teaching about the 400 years of apparent silence between the Old and New Testaments. This time where God the Father seemingly was not speaking to His people and yet there was much that He was doing to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I thought about this verse in relation to our ministry and how it seems sometimes even to me that it is taking so long to build this work. This past year in our ministry, we have been praying and working to build a core group of people from which to organize a church. The process has been slow and there is still much to do, but we have seen some progress over this past year and some growth that we believe will stand. Some who we thought had made decisions and wanted to grow in the Lord have fallen away, but the Lord has given good fruit to take their place. Valdo, Aeldo, Suzineide, Ivanildo, Glauciene, Bianca, Wilke, and Girlene have all come to Christ this past year. My hope is that they will be baptized before the end of the year. Aeldo has already asked me when we are going to start organizing the church and that is good news. Cynthia is preparing a Christmas play with the children even as you read this letter.

All of you have been so patient with us since we began our ministry. You continually pray for us and support us, some even raising our support even though we have not been able to come back for furlough. Many of you we have not been able to see for five years or more and yet you continue to love and support us. We are amazed at God's grace through your sacrifices, and our gratefulness is greater than any letter could adequately express.

As we approach the Christmas season, I can't help but think about all the work that God the Father was doing behind the scenes for those 400 "silent" years and how much it meant to all of us that He did. Christ came at the perfect time, in the perfect place, to work His perfect work so that all of us, Brazilians, Americans, or whatever nationality can know the peace of forgiveness of sins and certainty of our eternal home.

Know that we love and appreciate each of you, churches and individuals, so very much. If you have the time and access to the internet, take a moment and look up our new website:

**[www.dickensstory.com](http://www.dickensstory.com)**

Cynthia regularly updates our blog and she does a fantastic job. We, as a family, wish you all a Merry Christmas and we thank you for all of your prayers, love and support.

...Because He first loved us,

*Joel E. Dickens*

On behalf of Cynthia, Morgan, Aydan, Daniella, and Abigail

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