

Prayer Requests

- ◆ Evangelism
- ◆ New Converts and Discipleship
- ◆ Family Health
- ◆ Joel Smothers Family support
- ◆ Building and Construction
- ◆ Car Fund for vehicle in Brazil

Dickens Digest

Jan 2019

Days of Praise

There is much to be thankful for! I suppose if we were truly honest, all of us should be able to say that. Every year, we evaluate, meditate and plan for the coming year. This past year, the Lord has brought us many blessings and we anticipate the great things that the Lord will do in 2019. As I meditate on what the Lord has done the past couple months, it is impossible to not praise the Lord! My pastor Scott Baxley and nine of our church family spent a week with us at the end of August and it was a truly wonderful time! We were so thoroughly encouraged by their visit and I got to teach Sunday School in English and translate for my pastor. Pastor discovered a new favorite food (Brazilian pasteis) and everyone got to eat a churro. During their visit we celebrated the Lord's Supper together and baptized 5 new members! We heard testimonies from Justin Baxley and Cody Rayburn and got to hear our church family sing in English. The Lord knit the hearts of our people with theirs, and we pray that it leads to great things in all of our lives. The week after they left, I was involved in a Bible conference in Salvador with a national

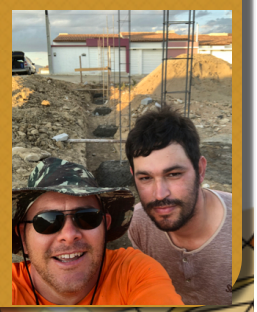
pastor and his church as they celebrated 50 years as a church. It is such a blessing to see a thriving conservative church that is reproducing itself many times over! I taught three lessons over the course of the three day conference and the fellowship and preaching was more than uplifting. In November I was able to teach a seminary class in the interior on our regular schedule of classes and we held their graduation on the 17th.

The big news is that "WE ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION!" Yes, in November we began construction on the church property. The actual building has not begun yet, but it will be starting as soon as we have the land prepared. We are in need of another \$30,000 to get all the way to the final stages of the first phase of the building. Some may ask, "how can I help?" Think in these terms: Two weeks pay for the builder is \$275. A sack of cement is \$7. A truckload of sand or gravel is about \$120. 1000 bricks is about \$100. We are so thankful for all of the gifts that the Lord has given through so many of you. God has been and will continue to be so good to us. Thank you, Lord!



In Other News

The month of October brought the much anticipated presidential elections here in Brazil with the conservative candidate winning. He is being called the South American "Trump". We have already heard about pro-America changes to tourist visa approval. The end of November I was invited to preach in an evangelistic conference in Salvador with fellow missionaries Leland Johnson and Wesley Palla. The attendance was higher than anticipated and several adults and children made professions of faith. One of the most encouraging things was seeing the church there get excited about bringing visitors to church and sowing the Gospel. Pray for the Lord to lead as we try to extend these evangelistic efforts.





Kidz Korner - Going to Bible Conference and Starting Senior Year (Morgan)

The Bible Conference that Dad and I went to was quite an experience. The lectures were extremely interesting and spiritually building, and the intervening breaks provided me ample opportunity to make some new friends. I was quite disappointed when the time came for us to return home. However, God has allowed me to keep in touch with my friends via WhatsApp. Not long thereafter, I began my senior year of high school, which has gone quite well, thus far. I am currently at my semester exam time and am looking forward to starting the second half of this year. Looking past the end of my senior year, I am unsure of what God has for me. I ask prayer for God's direction in my life. I have a desire for aviation, but I am not yet sure what God's plan is. I ask that you pray for me, specifically, that God will provide the funds for my return to the U.S. and that God will direct to a college and course of study. I want to be what God plans for me to be, and I know He will guide me while I follow His Word. I thank you for your constant prayers, and I love each and every one of you as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In Her Words - Cynthia Dickens



Were any of y'all in AWANAs? Maybe some of you still are! Wednesday nights at the church where I spent most of my childhood were some of my favorites. Recently, as I was listening to the last chapter of Romans and all of the specific people who Paul greets and remembers there, I was taken back to my AWANA days. Although those days are far behind me now (we won't go into just HOW far!), when I was a Cubbie/Spark/Chum/Guard/JV (those rank names probably date me enough!), AWANA stood for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed. And to go along with that acronym, II Timothy 2:15 is indelibly etched in my memory. As I listened to Romans 16, the following words perked my ears, "Salute Apelles approved in Christ." A quick search revealed that he, Apelles, is the only man in the New Testament aside from Jesus Christ to be specifically designated in such a way. Yes, we see Paul encouraging those in his fledgling churches and demonstrating just how to strive for the stamp of God's approval, but only Apelles is recorded as "approved." It would be easy to spend time wondering how he came to merit that status and/or lamenting that we don't know more about him; but our all-wise God chose to keep the details a secret. You know, I believe it's quite probable that Apelles was approved because, despite the pull of the flesh, he strove to do and think and be, quite simply, what God asked of him - day by day, moment by moment, in situations either mundane or extraordinary. And maybe God didn't give us the details illustrating how or why Apelles was approved, because it's not for us to copy someone else's life but, rather, to pattern our own as HE lays it out. With the Bible as our how-to guide and with prayer to whittle away that which hinders our walk with Him, perhaps one day God will be able to stamp us, like Apelles, "approved."

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