

# Dickens

# Digest

## Nov/Dec 2019

### A Lot to Be Thankful For!

It has been said, "God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!" Someone recently asked if we run like this all the time, and my response was, "Not if I can help it." Since July as I prepared for my trip to the states, until now, we have been running nonstop, but in the midst of it, God has truly been good to us. We welcomed the Smothers family in October to begin serving here with us in Belo Jardim. Pr. Ray Haskett, his wife and a member of their church arrived the same day because that weekend we celebrated the ministry jubilee for James Nash with whom we have



served here in Brazil since our arrival. God has been so faithful to Bro. Nash over his 50

years of ministry and it was such a blessing to be able to surprise him. Cynthia has been battling viruses and throat infections since I returned in September, but the Lord has been good to her and she seems to be much better. The kids are all doing well, except for the fact that they wish they did not have to return to their school work.

Morgan has been taking seminary classes with the school down in Salvador where I teach two classes each year. He is hoping to formally enroll there in January and take the classes by internet. He would like to start tutoring English students for work, but an opportunity has opened up with the possibility of him moving to Caruaru and helping a fellow pastor and church. In September and October I taught New Testament Survey. We should return to making our trips to the interior for seminary classes in January, but we will only be traveling twice a year for those classes. The church is growing in attendance and faithfulness which is bringing with it new challenges. One of those is the need for a nursery. Noel Smothers is organizing our nursery ministry, and the Lord has been good to open the door for us to rent the upstairs apartment of the building we are currently using. This means that Joel Smothers and I have more work to do, but he does not have to know Portuguese to remodel. God has been so good to us, and we are thankful for each of you for the part you play in our family and ministry.

### Prayer Requests

- ◆ Firm Foundations Bible Studies
- ◆ Family Health
- ◆ Building and Construction
- ◆ Smothers Family - Language Training
- ◆ New Ministry Opportunities



### In Other News

We have a new vehicle! Through a gift from Manchester Baptist Church and some other gifts, we were able to purchase another vehicle. A 2014 Nissan with under 30,000 miles. It is an automatic which will provide Cynthia the ability to drive when I leave on trips. This also means



Morgan is even more excited about learning to drive. Pray for us all!

Our building construction continues to be

paused as we resolve document issues with our non profit status both here and in the states. God has provided \$24,000 toward our building fund which combined with the current exchange rate should allow us to get the building well underway when we finally get all of our documents approved. We ask for prayers for these things to get resolved as quickly as possible.

## Kidz Korner - What is Your Favorite Thing About Christmas? - All the kids

Morgan, "Being able to call family and friends back in the states even though we are far away. Being able to be around our family even when we physically can't."

Aydan, "That's a good question...the cookies!"

Daniella, "Watching my siblings faces beam when they open their Christmas presents from me."

Abigail, "All of it. We can do things like decorating all together. Getting to decorate the Christmas tree."

Dad always hopes for the spiritual answer, but the kids are honest, and they always love and participate in the Christmas hymns and special presentations about the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.



## In Her Words - Cynthia Dickens



What do you do when you have no one to talk to? Maybe that's a little simplistic, because I don't mean the simple act of "talking." I guess I mean communication, in all of its complexities. There are so many people who find themselves in the situation of having no one with whom they can communicate, and I don't pretend to think that the application of what I'm about to say is easy in any way. Neither do I pretend to think this is a new breakthrough on the subject. Rather, it's something of which I have to constantly remind myself. God is enough.

Yes, I know it to be unfailingly true. But there are moments when I'm standing figuratively alone in the midst of a situation that breaks my heart and demands I find a shoulder to cry on, but I know that finding such a shoulder would serve no godly purpose but may even worsen things, in the long run. It's emotionally and physically draining (THAT may be the understatement of the century!) to be teetering on the fulcrum of the "how can I bear this?" seesaw ... casting desperate glances all about, looking for someone to help me balance, to share the burden, to cast a lifeline ... yet to know that, despite all of the precious, caring, praying people about me, none can provide what I need. Only God is enough.

Only He knows me better than I know myself. Only He will listen patiently to my flawed view of things (even though His knowledge of both my side and all other sides is perfect). Only He will keep my sin-tainted, natural-human-response words and thoughts and opinions secret. And He does all of this in order to console, correct, and encourage me onward, as needed. Only He knows the path on which He's leading me and what the end of our walk holds. Only He stops at times to huddle with me in a place that feels so crowded, yet so shut off. Only He offers true release from the bonds of despair and despondency.

Please, don't mistake my meaning here. In no way am I encouraging anyone reading this to shun Biblical counsel offered by those around you. There is nothing wrong (rather, there is everything RIGHT) with seeking guidance from a godly leader in your life. Without a doubt, God can use someone else to comfort, encourage, and correct us in accordance with His Word. My thoughts here reference those times that so many face on a regular basis - times when those to whom we would run may be hurt in their own spiritual walk by our struggles, times when the well-meaning sympathy of others may be what our flesh would like but may not be what our spirit needs, times when those we deemed trustworthy are suddenly and quite irreversibly NOT, and the list could go on.

But the truth remains, no matter how desperate the situation; and I cannot survive without the near-constant reminder that ... God is enough ... for me and for you.

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