

# Dickens Digest April 2020

## Providence in the Pandemic

Psalms 4:6

There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

Many of you know that for the last 7-8 years, our state and region have been suffering with severe drought. As the Covid 19 pandemic began to creep across the world and invade Brazil, the Lord was providing rain for our area of Brazil. The above picture was taken of the reservoir behind our house at the end of March. Here you will see the same picture when we moved in to the house in June of last year. The



reservoir is at over 60% of total capacity. God has blessed our area with rain and good health even as we all confront the difficulties of this time. The church has seen increased numbers in our services before the lockdowns and mitigation restrictions took place. A new family has been coming who were invited by some men of our church who work with the husband. In January we began making plans to expand our Sunday School classes and in February start a Junior church class on Sunday

preaching service. We were concerned about teachers for all of these new ministries including the nursery, but the Lord provided. Noel Smothers (wife of Joel Smothers who have come to partner with us), took the lead for the nursery ministry under Cynthia's supervision. Morgan stepped up to lead the children's church with the help of Joel Smothers. Our people stepped up and we now have 5 Sunday School classes which began the first Sunday of March, however, with the lockdowns, we have had to move all of our services online. God still provides, and has allowed us to use Facebook and Zoom to continue with all of these ministries. Our people have been excited about these new opportunities and we pray that when all returns to a more normal routine, we will see that excitement continued. One thing that has truly blessed my heart has been how some of our families have grown spiritually during the pandemic. God shows every day how He works in hearts even as we are limited.



Final SS before the lockdown!

## Prayer Requests

- ◆ Family Health
- ◆ Building and Construction
- ◆ Smothers Family – Language Training
- ◆ New Ministry Opportunities
- ◆ New Families Visiting Church
- ◆ New Sunday School Classes



## In Other News

We appreciate your prayers for our family and ministry. Cynthia was having some significant health problems, but finding the right doctor has helped us discover that she was having severe esophagitis which is being treated, but has required some changes in diet which can complicate her Type1 diabetes. This also places her in the high risk category should she contract Covid19 so we greatly covet your prayers for her health as well as ours.

Morgan continues his studies in the seminary here and is a tremendous asset with the children's church and evangelistic outreach Bible studies even as we attempt to do everything online. The girls take turns helping with Nursery and Aydan helps with leading the song service for us.

As we wait to take the next steps in the building project, God has been multiplying the funds that have been given as the dollar has gone from about 1/3.5 to 1/5. Better \$1=5 Brazilian. Praise the Lord!





## Kidz Korner - Aydan the Farmer

Well, to start off, my first experience was with pumpkins. That did not go well because some worm ate it. My second experience is with watermelons. These watermelons are growing wonderfully. I've been trying to water them every day and keep my eye out for worms or other harmful bugs. Hopefully, later this year we'll have big, juicy watermelons to eat. God has been good, and I thank Him for protecting my watermelons up to this point. I Corinthians 3:6b says, "God gave the increase." This helped me to remember to pray that God protect my watermelons because I know that the watermelons would not grow without God's help. Also, God sent many wonderful rains over the last few weeks that thoroughly drenched my watermelons.

## In Her Words - Cynthia Dickens



Many times I start my musings here with a question, but I reckon that's because the musings so often start in my head with a question. :) So here goes ... does anyone else ever feel guilty for needing help - whether it's physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.? As a missionary wife and mother, I'm supposed to be the one who offers help, right? It's been that way for so long (and not likely, Lord willing, to change anytime soon!) that at times I am utterly lost, when I'm knocked upside the head with the fact that I need something. And I don't know about you; but for me, sometimes it really does feel like a smack in the face - jarring and uncomfortable! And I'm asking myself in this moment ... how do I deal with this Biblically? In these confusing and tiring moments, it's easy to leap to agreement with the ME-centric philosophies of the world which essentially tell us to focus on ourselves and ignore anything and anyone else that begs our attention or disturbs our tranquility.

"You be you!"

"Follow your heart!"

"If someone can't accept you for who you are, they are not worth your time."

"Don't let someone else steal your mental health."

And the perhaps-simplistic point of this is ... there are so many sayings like that thrown about now-a-days. While on the surface they may seem reasonable, the danger of following such advice can be far more insidious than many people are willing to admit. If I can excuse selfishness by calling it "following my heart" or better yet "mental health," then Satan already has significantly more than a foothold in my life. If a bad attitude toward or being inconsiderate of others becomes "just being me" or even "psychological healing," then my wounds become of my own making and continue to fester worse than ever. Now, please, don't think I'm advocating masochism either. Seeking or allowing repeated abuse (emotional, verbal, or physical) from others is not OK. Ever. And there are times when we all need comfort, healing, and support. But God teaches us that the best way to receive those things is to make a habit of giving them.

Because, you know, God always - at some point and in ways far beyond our own generosity - gives back to us that which we offer to others. It's the "you get what you sow" principle, right? Why don't we see on social media more memes about sacrifice and careful sowing? I suppose it's because sacrifice does disturb our selfish tranquility; and sowing the right kind of seed is nothing if not sacrifice. So while it may seem like I've wandered from the feeling-guilty-for-needing-help theme I started with, God has used this musing of mine to remind me that, no matter what I'm going through, I can still sow ... while being careful about what I sow. Feeling guilty about needing help or not, He still has a purpose to fulfill in and through my life, as long as I am the "me" HE wants me to be. As I tackle that task daily, I thank God for each of you who are praying for me and who are also working to please Him by being the "you" He wants you to be. May your sacrifice and sowing bring you to embrace some less popular memes ...

"You be as God wants you."

"Follow His heart."

"Accept others for who they are, gladly giving your time and life as 'worth it' to reach them."

"Don't let anyone steal your spiritual health."

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