

# Dickens Digest

## November 2025

### Mission Trip

About 14 years ago, I had the privilege to begin teaching Bible institute/seminary classes here in Brazil. In the beginning, we would travel about 600 miles one way and teach over the weekend every two months. Over time that has changed and now I teach each semester online for about 30 students. This semester, beside teaching two classes, I was able to accompany a group of the students (including Daniella) on a mission trip into the interior. The above picture was taken while we were out on evangelism in this area. You will note that it looks like white beach sand. However we were about 800 miles from the closest ocean. The shadows make it clear that it is a harsh environment, but the Gospel can reach literally anywhere someone is willing to take it. The Lord never ceases to amaze me how He can use a trip like this to set young people on fire for His work. Daniella came back with a renewed desire for her call to missions and the ministry. She knows that as a single young lady she cannot pastor or lead a ministry, but she wants to do all she can to help and support. All of the young people from the Bible institute that went on the trip were talking about the need in that area, and I firmly believe some future pastors and missionaries were amongst those who went. September brought the Bible conference in Salvador again this year and Morgan was able to come with me for the

conference. It is always a blessing to get to travel with our children and see them excited by the possibilities in reaching more of Brazil. The church here in Belo Jardim continues to advance. We have seen attendance increasing which has been a blessing and the young people continue to get involved. They want to get involved in evangelism more so we need to do some planning in order for that to happen. My trips to CTMBC have not been as frequent since September, but we did spend a couple of days before the mission trip helping prepare the dormitory for the upcoming graduation conference in January. This past month, I have been able to let the men of the church preach and teach so that I can evaluate them and give them advice on how to better their preaching and teaching. It is a blessing to have men who can preach and teach. I am praying for two of them in particular who I feel may have the call of God on their lives. Obviously, only they and the Lord can make that clear. Please pray for God's direction in their lives as we have been praying for the Lord to raise up a man who can take this work. Pray for souls to be saved. The teenage son of one of our church members recently made a profession of faith! His parents were overjoyed! A month ago, an 80 year old man with whom I have Bible studies trusted Christ! Please pray for these new converts. Thank you all for your prayers and support. Happy Thanksgiving!

### Prayer Requests

- Pray for new converts (Pietro and Leninho)
- Pray for discipleship and development of leaders
- Pray for the church to find a permanent place
- Pray for Morgan and his internship
- Pray for Aydan, Daniella and Abigail in their studies.

### In Other News

September/October were not the kind of months that you wish for. Cynthia fell taking our cat to the vet and severely sprained her ankle. She has been recovering for almost two months and not been able to drive or do many of the things that she normally does. I had to cancel some trips to preach and help new works, but then I hurt my shoulder and that certainly did not help the situation. We were a couple of pathetic creatures for a while and the kids stepped up to help. We are both doing much better and Cynthia is not quite back to normal, but on her way. Aydan has started working basically the same type of job Morgan was working. He thoroughly enjoys it and since he has just finished Bible institute he is thinking about his next steps. Daniella continues studying in the Bible institute and helping in the ministries here. Abigail has finished high school and continues her ministries in the church here. Morgan will graduate from his internship in January and is praying with our home church RIBC about going back to help there and prepare for deputation. Please pray for CTMBC and new student/interns. The facilities there are coming along, but the training center needs new students if it is going to continue to grow. It is such a joy to work with young people and see the Lord working in their lives. Thankfully even with the difficulties Cynthia and I have had over the last couple months, the ministries here continue and God has blessed. Thank you all for your continued prayers and support for our family and ministry!





Father's Day  
cookout!  
Father's Day  
is in August  
here in Brazil.



Men from one  
of the  
churches that  
participated in  
the Bible  
Conference

Preaching and at  
the Bible  
Conference



Pastors at the Bible  
Conference in Salvador



Our Children's Day activity was  
a family cookout!



Cynthia spent some  
time recovering from  
her ankle injury. At our  
church activity she had  
an attendant nurse  
(Bianca) taking care of  
her.



Evening service at the  
church in the interior on the  
mission trip.



Visiting CTMBC with the seminary  
students on the way home from the  
mission trip.



Final class of Biblical Geography  
that I taught this semester.

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## **In the Groove?**

We use that phrase “in a groove” to indicate routine - something that is familiar, maybe even comforting. A groove can take many forms, such as a daily or weekly schedule, a relationship, a mentality or particular approach to handling situations. So what happens (what do we do) when the groove is disrupted? Life presents us with many opportunities to realize that ... like it or not, change happens. Grooves shift. Things “go off the rails.” That bend in the road we couldn’t see around presents challenges we could never have imagined. Maybe our health (or that of someone close to us) turns everything topsy-turvy. Maybe our household routine is upended with our children’s growth phases. Maybe our job is restructured, throwing everything we knew and planned for out the proverbial window. Maybe someone I’ve come to depend on deviates from “the norm.”

My own personal tendency is to “hermit” when I’ve been hurt or, especially, when I find I’ve hurt someone else. The introvert philosophy says that avoidance is the best medicine - not avoidance of the consequences, but avoidance of that which created the hurt to begin with. Makes all the sense in the world to an introvert; while to an extrovert, one favorite encouraging phrase is “If you fall off the horse, get right back on!”

But if you’re an introvert, you like those familiar grooves (that which extroverts disdainfully call “ruts”). They are, in fact, the very pillars of your life. As mentioned above, sometimes the groove shift is out of our control; but what about when God asks us to change or step out of a well-worn groove?

While God is marvelously unchanging, there is no virtue in me clinging to “who I am.” Something I read years ago and repeat frequently to myself (and others) goes something like this ... “God loves me exactly as I am, but He loves me too much to leave me this way.” If I am unwilling to change for Him, then I am just like Israel in Isaiah 63:8-10 - rebellious. That’s a tough pill to swallow for an introvert. We like consistency and routine. We feel like we’ve done a good job when we stick to our guns. In the face of betrayal or upheaval, it feels good to assert, “I haven’t changed!” But often, God wants me to change ... change so that I might reach people outside of my comfort zone, change so that His name be lifted up rather than my own constancy, change so that He can teach and bless me with things impossible to encounter in my beloved groove.

The only groove about which I should be unyielding is my relationship with God Himself. All the rest? Well, those grooves need to be more like switchable train tracks with the controls given completely over to my Divine Engineer. His expertise at steering my life is unparalleled. His hand on the throttle is never too heavy nor too light. And when the discomfort of switching tracks feels overwhelming, the balm He offers can, with time, both assuage and restore that which seems beyond repair. So, I’ll keep working at willingly stepping out of grooves that feel necessary to my introverted self, in favor of the tracks that God wants to lovingly set me on; because the map that He has laid out for my life is far above any of my introversion-inspired ideals!