

# Dickens

# Digest

March / April 2025

## Joséisms

"I know a God!"

"I'll bring 'em to church. God's gotta save 'em!"

We have decided that we will call statements like these "Joséisms". José is the night guard around our area here and about 2 years ago he began to help us. Quickly he started attending church services and began Bible studies. He has little formal education and can barely read so Aydan basically read the lessons to him. A little over a year ago he made a profession of faith, but even before that he was bringing everyone he knew to church. At that same time he wanted to see his son Vitor get into church. We tried to start Bible studies with Vitor, but he never really showed interest. Once in a while he would come to church, but his wife Aline was studying with one of our ladies. Praise God! Last week both Vitor and Aline trusted Christ as Savior. José was ecstatic! This week he



told me how he was telling his friends about Jesus. One of them has been struggling and asked if José knew

someone who could "cure" him. José said, "I don't know about a healer, but I know a God!" Then he recently told me that he doesn't know all the verses about evangelizing someone, but he knows how they can hear them so he said,

"I'm gonna bring 'em and God's gotta save 'em!" In Bible college our president Graham Lewis used to say, "Well, glory!" It has been a fruitful first couple of months of the year. I have been traveling much helping CTMBC and had the privilege to take a group of our young people on two trips to the training center. We went in January to help with projects. We went again for the Bible conference there where I hurt my hand. We visited at the beginning of March to help evangelize. These trips have ignited an excitement in our young people to serve the Lord and they want to do more. God has also been working in the church here not just in the salvation decisions, but in the spirit of the congregation and attendance. We pray this continues and the Lord blesses. I continue to travel to help in the state to our north with the church plant there and I was able to teach a three week course on Biblical anthropology this last month. Be praying for the men's retreat coming up Easter weekend. We will be hosting Pr. Daniel MacAvoy as our guest speaker. God sure shows Himself powerful on our behalf and José is right, "I know THE God!"



## Prayer Requests

- Pray for new converts
- 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

One of the challenges of being a missionary family and having your children growing up is that they begin to choose their own way. Daniella recently told us that she is sure that God has called her to missions! All of our children are very close and have a wonderful relationship. With the training center being started and Morgan training there, some great opportunities have arisen for our young adult children and other young people from the church here to learn hands on what ~working for the Lord~ is all about. It's one thing to be involved in your church, and quite another to spend a week under the hot sun doing construction, evangelizing in a different place and generally doing mission "work". We have been thrilled at how the Lord is working in the young people here in the church in Belo Jardim. Our prayer is that the Lord will raise up young men and women for His ministry. The



training center in Petrolina is crucial in that work. Cynthia has seen some encouraging signs in the ladies in the church here. She has

begun studies through books written by good Christian authors as a means to help the ladies discern what is good literature. Recently she has begun a study through a book on Christian self discipline and the ladies seem quite interested. Continue to pray for Cynthia and the kids (yeah they're not kids anymore). God is so good to our family and ministry. Thank you for having a part!





Can't visit the training center without being ready to work!



Aydan getting on the bus to help at the training center for a month.



Kaiky and João Pedro found a "pool".



Young ladies ready for church visiting the training center.



Yep! Tried to break my hand playing sports with the young people.



Missionary James Nash, founder of the training center with some of us helping get things started.



After church on Sundays has become a time of fellowship and growth for our people.



Church service at the training center while we were visiting.



Cynthia and I ran into a couple from the states while we were on our "date". Rare to meet other Americans here.

**Personal Contact:**  
Joel & Cynthia Dickens  
CP 139  
Belo Jardim, PE 55155-970  
prjoel619@gmail.com  
(804)451-1327 - Skype  
+55 (81)98299-9177 - Whatsapp

**Sending Church:**  
Roanoke Island Baptist Church  
Pastor Scott Baxley  
1234 Hwy 64/264  
Manteo, NC 27954  
(252)473-2892  
www.ribaptist.com

**Mission Agency:**  
World Wide New Testament  
Baptist Missions  
PO Box 725  
Kings Mountain, NC 28086  
info@wwntbm.com  
www.wwntbm.com  
(704)730-1440



#10 To remember to care the right way – the way that pleases God

The Lord has given me a vivid imagination, and as with everything, Satan is pleased when I choose to use it for things that do not draw me closer to the Lord. Such as ... worrying about the things that have gone or may go wrong instead of trusting that God truly is working all things for good (not necessarily the world's definition of "good" but, rather, a Biblical definition). Or ... imagining other's intentions and meanings as bad or selfish or immature rather than bringing into captivity to HIM every one of my thoughts, intentions, and motives (after all, I cannot control anyone else's). Or ... becoming so invested in another's life that their missteps and lack of fellowship with God are viewed by me as my own failure.

Frequently, even though we may work to do what is Biblical in the face of others' seeming disregard, some things that I've found to be true are as follows:

- It's easy to get sidetracked by the disbelief, discouragement, or even anger that comes with watching a loved one - family, friend, or other to whom we're ministering - go astray from the Lord's will.
- It's easy to feel responsible when a loved one makes a bad choice, including feeling guilt over having not prayed "the right way" or having not offered to them the "love and support" needed. Sometimes the person in error even levels such accusations, making the guilt that much weightier.

When those very human and mistakenly-deemed-noble feelings overtake me, what should my response be? How do I care the right way? While this discipline is something that I'm certainly still learning, some appropriate responses, that God has led me to, include:

- Immerse myself in the truth of God's Word. It will never point my walk or my emotions to the wrong path.
- Remind myself that each one of us is responsible to God for our decisions. While no one else will answer for me, I, too, will not stand before Him for someone else. When I've done what God has asked of me, there is no righteousness in blaming myself for someone else's decisions.
- Run to God for comfort and support. Only He is enough. Only He can truly help me wrangle the human emotions that, at times, threaten to drown me. I can, in His presence, mourn another's choices and be sure that His own grief far exceeds mine.
- Continue to love and pray for the person/people in question. While the weight of their choices is not mine to bear, it is my privilege to carry them and my care for them to the Lord. Again, He is enough - for me and for them. May I never be so arrogant so as to not pray for someone who has betrayed my care for them! I, too, betray Jesus Christ's care for me, when I choose wrong; and He never abandons me.

Whatever situation I'm facing, I find it extremely important to evaluate my own behavior before others and my input to their lives; because my actions and conversations may very well affect them and their decisions. I ought not take the above attitudes without, at the same time, allowing God to show me where I should change to glorify Him. No, I'm not responsible for others' decisions; but I must not allow a haughty or self-righteous attitude to replace the care that God would have me exhibit for others and for my influence in their lives.

Some things that I find myself repeating in prayer before the Lord are "Lord, you know what he/she needs, and only You can BE what he/she needs" along with "Lord, please, give them what You know they need in order to be what You want them to be." Despite my deep love in Christ for someone, my perspective on and care for their life is not as perfect as that which my loving God has. By trusting Him (and working to follow Him), my care for others will be far more effective than if I follow my human instincts for what it means to care.

And isn't that what brings peace in any situation? True and complete trust? Trust to listen to my Lord, to talk to Him, to follow Him, to rest in Him. No person (and certainly no power or thing!) can offer me true peace. But my glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ not only can, but does offer ... oh, so perfect peace!

*Isaiah 26:3*

*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.*