



Andy and Kati Walsh

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Location: Brazil



What we do: Working with churches and NGOs in Florianopolis towards social justice for the marginalised, helping people find hope in Jesus.

Dear friends,

We're pleased to report that we're on track as we approach the five-month milestone in Florianopolis!

As a family we feel that we're connecting well with people from different parts of the community. Eva is doing very well at school, making friends and coming home from school speaking more Portuguese each day.

Our focus in this opening period has been to initiate relationships with appropriate Christian leaders across the city to enable us to better engage in outreach and evangelism into the hard-to-reach communities. The headway made in this regard over the last three months has inevitably helped us to settle quickly, make friends and of course integrate into the culture. Consequently, this has helped us to understand the local challenges and the main areas of need.

As we became more closely acquainted with our church leaders at Vineyard Floripa, and they more closely understood who we are and the scope of our work with CMS, the elders approached us to become "Leaders of Mission". We are delighted to take this appointment to reinforce our missional focus in the church and form part of the leadership team.

The settings where we will be active will be diverse. However, our objectives in terms of outreach, evangelism and discipleship will broadly be the same. As a couple we feel very much affirmed for the work we will be involved with here in the long term. Therefore it's with great satisfaction and anticipation that over the next 12 months+, we see our work unfolding across the following five areas:

- ▶ **Street Evangelism** – We have been asked to co-lead this activity, which is already underway through the Vineyard. The plan here is to develop the upcoming leaders who are involved and for the ministry as a whole to have a greater impact in reaching the lost in the suburb where the church is located. While people we meet hold a broad concept of God and Jesus, very limited numbers of people have recognised their need to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. It's exciting to be part of this ministry because people are so receptive to the gospel and receiving prayer. It's therefore a dynamic environment for encouraging and practising spiritual gifts.
- ▶ With members of our Vineyard mission team we're **visiting a local favela** called Siri. It was through forging a relationship with Pastor Guimarães, who leads an Assembly of God church in Siri, that we were able to securely access this favela. Without making this essential contact, going into this favela really would be a



Eva dressed up for her first concert at school.

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bad idea given the links to serious crime and gang involvement.

On one occasion with the pastor we were invited into a family's home. We shared time getting to know each other, more closely understanding the local issues and praying together. It's clear that there's been violence, deprivation and hopelessness here. With a high proportion of children here, the pastor has identified that work with them as a priority in this favela. At this stage, given the complexities and risks, we move forward slowly on this area, while we get to know the pastor better and pray about if/how we should move things further forward.

- ▶ We have been teaming up with a local missionary called Gilson Batista, the leader of Projecto Siloé with a 30-year track record of **evangelism into drug rehabilitation centres**. These are rural and dispersed venues which adopt a Christian ethos. Typically groups of 25 to 40 men and women gather to receive Christian input under their timetable of activities. Depending on the venue, there is opportunity to share testimony, preach the gospel and participate in informal church service. It's so lovely to see certain residents take up instruments and lead worship.

This is another dynamic situation where many people are broken and in despair. Given the cultural orientation here in contrast to our experience in the UK, we find people really come with a fervency in their attitude when seeking Christ. On one occasion when inviting people to respond to the offer of prayer and in making a commitment to receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, most if not all the residents took paces forward as they sensed the Lord's presence.

- ▶ Outreach and evangelism at **regional hospital Sao Jose** is now a regular activity where we join Pastor Paulo Prado and a team who pray in pairs for the lost and the sick. Andy is inclined to be present at the A&E ward, which often opens up opportunities to pray and share God's love. It can be quite difficult here of course given the difficult situations people arrive in. Therefore, occasionally we sense it's best just to hand out a Christian tract, be present and "on-hand" here.
- ▶ Our final area is **prison ministry** attached to Associação Delta led by Pastor Antonio Alvenir, who is very well regarded given his 40-year track record of prison ministry. Having completed introductory (chaplaincy) training, we're awaiting prison clearance to access the establishments operating new COVID-19 regulations for visitors. Pastor Antonio confirmed that generally prison ministry is where there's the greatest need, yet the fewest Christian people willing to help. This while prison ministry is the most fruitful and rewarding. Clearly this is an area we hope will gather pace in the next few months while Kati continues to pray whether she is inclined by the Lord to go into the women's prison.

In summary there's already plenty of opportunity here for us to continue learning and developing. Thank you all for your support and we'll keep you posted. Here's a short video to share more details and provide some prayer pointers: <https://youtu.be/VCA5FZoMOao>

Andy and Kati



Photos from top to bottom: Prayer and evangelism at the city hospital; Getting to know favela Siri with Pastor Wellington Guimarães; Andy with members of Associação Delta, Pastor Antonio on the right; Serving at a church-led event for the poorer communities.



Going further with Church Mission Society

Adelante: Friday 30 September and Saturday 1 October 2022.

A hybrid event – in-person and online – to celebrate, learn about and pray for mission in and from Latin America. Book at churchmissionsociety.org/adelante

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