

Andy and Kati Walsh

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The call in action

Dear friends,

We are all so pleased that we made it to Florianopolis on 21 January as planned. At certain points last year we did wonder when this would happen for us!

It's now been four weeks since our arrival and we are pleased to be living in a flat on a short-term let. It's in a good location, a short walk away from Vineyard Floripa and Eva's new primary school, with good access to local amenities. Eva's doing really well at school and making new friends, despite not being conversant in Portuguese yet. Being such a social little girl, we're confident that she will soon be enjoying life here even more, as she engages in some new activities including capoeira, a form of dance with deep roots in Brazilian culture.

Saying farewell to our family was always going to be hard. We said goodbye to Nora, Andy's grandma who is 104 and looked after in a care home, not knowing whether we'll see her again. Nothing had prepared us to have to say goodbye to Andy's family the day after the death of Bernadette, Andy's 31-year-old sister, moments after giving birth to her son Tim.

A day that should have brought so much joy to Bernadette and our family has been marked by such grief and shock. Needless to say we're absolutely delighted that Tim was born healthy, is a beautiful baby and Aaron, his dad, is doing well under the circumstances. All our family are doing okay although it's still very painful and this process will take time.

Saying goodbye at the airport under these distressing circumstances after such a long period of anticipation was very tough. On the outbound flight Andy was reminded (and encouraged by) the verses relating to the cost of following Christ (Luke 9:57-62) and pursuing God's Kingdom. We are allowing the Holy Spirit to minister into this situation and shape the way forward for our purpose here at this time. We are thankful to CMS, who have offered their support and who continue to pray this through with us at this difficult time. We'd like to take this opportunity to also thank all of you for your prayers and kind messages in the days following our arrival.

On Saturday 5 February, we were pleased to be introduced to the leadership team of Vineyard Floripa. For a church with a smaller congregation of around 80 people, comprising families and young adults, it's so encouraging to see how actively involved the church is in the local community. It certainly punches above its weight! Later in the evening Andy went out with a team from the church to pray and to talk to folk on the street about Jesus. It was interesting to observe how this is done here. The group met to pray, then split into pairs and went out to approach people from a place of truly wanting to befriend people. There was a debrief at the end and Andy was able to encourage the team and share ideas which we could possibly take forward.



Name: Andy and Kati Walsh

Location: Florianopolis, Brazil

Our call: To bring the light of the gospel to marginalised sectors of the community through the unifying support of the local church in Florianopolis.

Our role: To work with churches and NGOs towards social justice for the excluded and marginalised, to help them find life-changing hope in Jesus.



Eva excited for her first day at school

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The following evening we were presented as a family to the church congregation. By this point the senior pastor, (our brother-in-law and fellow CMS mission partner!) had already made the congregation aware of our arrival. As you can imagine, our welcome and reception was very warm, in keeping with the Brazilian culture! We can foresee that in time we will feel at home here in Florianopolis as we integrate into the local culture and develop strong, accountable Christian relationships.

Before we embark on outreach activity into some of the tough areas of the community, and I suppose this goes without saying, we recognise how fundamental it is to develop and maintain a strong routine in our walk with the Lord and our family life. We understand that in the long run this will lead to a better outcome and is key to avoiding adverse stress levels, burnout or disillusionment.

Andy is also exploring some theological training through the Vineyard here and can report on progress in due course. As a sidenote we're reading some books that Colin, mission learning manager at CMS recommended to us. We are really enjoying *In Search of Christ in Latin America* by Samuel Escobar and *Reading the Bible with the Damned* by Bob Ekblad.

Connected to this, we're praying to develop appropriate partnerships with local leaders, even if it takes longer to get new initiatives off the ground. We've already been approached by a "bishop" from an Assemblies of God church. It was made clear to us before long that significant financial investment on our part was being sought to launch their new ministries. I've since understood that titles such as bishop can be used lightly here as they can be self-proclaimed!

Soon, we have the opportunity to meet the chaplain of the youth offenders' institute, who we hope can provide access into Florianopolis adult penitentiary. Kati is interested to develop links with a chaplain who visits the women's prison. Before long we can see that a comprehensive induction will be underway!

We would therefore value prayer as we seek the Lord's direction for our mission here and focus on justice in this upcoming period. We're sensitive to the continuous signs of economic and spiritual poverty around us. Please pray for wisdom and discernment in this very different culture we find ourselves immersed in and for how to build good foundations and connections for the future.

Finally, since our arrival, there have been two terrible natural disasters in Brazil resulting from a burst dam (Bahia state) and landslides (Rio de Janeiro state) with many thousands displaced, killed or missing. Once again, the government does next to nothing to help. Please keep the people affected by these disasters in prayer.

Andy and Kati



Photos from top to bottom: Andy, Kati and Eva presenting at Vineyard Floripa; Kati's parents travel from Brasilia to make it for Eva's third birthday; landslide caused by 240mm of rainfall in just over two hours

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