



# 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,

As we conclude our opening year and reflect on all that has taken place we continue to pray, discern and follow God's lead for the year ahead. Significant strides have been taken to establish ourselves as a family in church life, get set up in our home and in the community so that we can more readily mobilise the work we are called to. We realise we have matured more together as individuals and as a couple than in any year previously. It's been our most challenging year as a family and yet one which has been marked by joy and affirmation around our call, which instils a profound sense of peace.

Eva has been doing fantastically at school! Eva's Portuguese is already on a par with her English. We encourage Eva to speak English at home and read books to her in English as we would love for her grow up bilingual! Perhaps it comes with the territory, but for most of Eva's opening year at school, she has been battling with a succession of colds and chest infections. We've also received a succession of blood test results with an anomaly, which has caused concern, and we are taking some precautionary actions. So we'd really welcome prayer for Eva's health to settle. Aside from this, Eva is very energetic, enjoys school and has made some friends.

This year the Holy Spirit has been clearly sharing the Lord's burden for us to preach the gospel and bring the lost and the broken into relationship with Jesus. "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts" (Proverbs 20:27, ESV). With this, we have been growing in our awareness of how only the Light of Christ can shine through our regenerated spirit, and in renewing us each day, equip us to reach people with the Good News.

We have invested considerable personal time to prepare and ensure we can engage this work in the right way. This has been facilitated by forging strong relationships with local partners who are already engaged in work across hospital, rehabilitation centres, a favela and in the prisons. It was great to receive Andrew Johnson, responsible for CMS mission strategy in Brazil, in early October. Andrew shared a few days with us to check how we are, better understand the local context and review progress. There's still much to grasp and we continue to orient ourselves to ensure our work is adapted to these diverse contexts. For example it was useful to visit the favela with Andrew to reassess how we engage the community and manage the risks involved by working alongside the leader of a favela-based church and in turn supporting their initiatives.

In this regard Kati has been instrumental in helping Andy fine-tune the gospel messages, being sensitive to



*A family outing with other parents from Eva's school.*

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cultural nuances and helping with interpreting how the Spirit is moving locally. Here we are able to share a link to an example of evangelism in a local marketplace. Of course this is adapted based on the differing settings where we engage. Please be advised that this evangelistic activity may appear different in terms of what is deemed effective in the UK. However this is the approach that the local church prefers to get behind here! [https://youtu.be/S\\_wDzGuuclg](https://youtu.be/S_wDzGuuclg)

Over the last several months, due to certain complications that have transpired in Vineyard Floripa, the church where we are based, the church has transitioned to a new leadership structure. It's been a difficult and painful process for all the church members. At the same time, we recognise the Lord's hand in the timing of our arrival as church members. Our involvement in this area has primarily been around ministering to those directly affected through prayer, mediation, counsel and consolation.

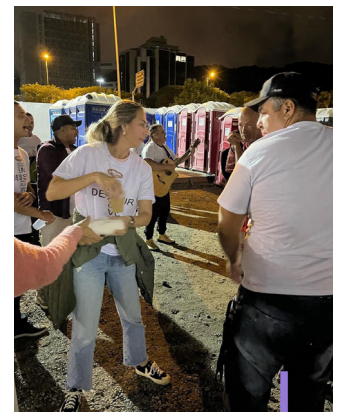
In terms of our primary mission objectives, Andy has now secured access to two state prisons: a remand prison and penitentiary for serious offenders. It is in the prisons that I (Andy) feel I'm personally most able to respond to the Spirit's guidance and how the Lord wants to use me. On Tuesdays and Fridays, working alongside Pastor Antônio, we enter the prison yard and preach the gospel, share testimony and worship the Lord together. We regularly draw circles of 10–20 men and lead people to Christ. Many of the men are very receptive and those that have previously made a commitment to follow Jesus are fervent in their prayer and worship.

We provide follow-up and pray for the men in their cells. Once each term, for those ready to make a declaration of their faith, we also baptise prisoners in a paddling pool. It is in the prison and the rehab centres that we sense that we will be engaging new believers with discipleship training. In the meantime, Kati continues to wait for her security clearance to be processed for the women's prison.

Due to different laws in Brazil, it is common that men are incarcerated for years and later get released without ever having received a trial. For certain offence types, the charges filed by the prosecutor are sufficient to send people to prison for indeterminate periods. This happens because the Brazilian government does not allocate sufficient resources to process the volume of cases, reflecting a severe breakdown in justice. In consequence I find that a high proportion of men need consolation due to the immense pressures of not knowing how their lives will unfold or even if they can maintain their family relationships. Often in these circumstances people find out when they will be released all of a sudden and generally after a three to four year period, depending on the severity of the alleged crime.

Please pray for our mission call continue to made clearer and take shape as we faithfully step out in engaging people in diverse situations across the city. We are always so thankful to you for your prayers and support. Every blessing in this upcoming Christmas period.

Andy and Kati



*Photos from top to bottom: Preaching the gospel to approximately fifty men in a drug rehab centre; Volunteering at a family event in the favela Siri; Andy with the prison ministry team (Pastor Antônio is in the centre); Kati, attached to a homeless outreach project which focuses on prayer, evangelism and food parcel distribution.*



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