



Andy and Kati Walsh

Link Letter no. 6 | April 2023

Contact details:
af_walsh@outlook.com



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 approach 15 months in Florianópolis, we find that we are well-established in our way of life as a family, as members of Vineyard Floripa and serving on a number of fronts across the city. With the unfolding of time, we are becoming clearer still with the areas we are to focus on, the timeliness for our being here and *how we are meant to do this*. In the case of the latter this will be a continuing area of focus.

It is of a great importance to us that Eva is happy, healthy and doing well at school. Having an outgoing personality, Eva is popular in her class and is almost on a par with the other 4-year-olds in terms of her Portuguese, which is fantastic! Eva has the native accent, which puts her Dad to shame! As a family we only speak English at home to ensure Eva grows up bilingual. At home we also are teaching Eva how to read and write which is perhaps a little advanced. Eva thrives at children's church at the Vineyard each Sunday morning, even though all the children are older.

At the end of December, we had the wonderful privilege of being invited by CMS to join with our partners in mission going to Ushuaia, Argentina, the most southerly city in the world. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit the region, and to network with other missionaries serving across Latin America. We received Bible training on missions, with indigenous tribe leaders from northern Argentina sharing their experiences of being engaged by CMS over many years.

The highlight for us personally was the contribution from Pastor Javier Campero, a leader of "Iglesia Gran Rey" local church, who provided us with a compelling account of the very first missionaries that went to Ushuaia (1844–1887). In fact Ushuaia is where the story of the South American Missionary Society (SAMS) first began. Of course, SAMS only merged with CMS in 2010. We were overwhelmed by the harsh living conditions and inspired by the personal sacrifices these pioneers made, as they persevered in establishing Christian mission stations among the Yamana, a nomadic canoe-people living in the southernmost channels of the Tierra del Fuego. Overall, the experience we had in Ushuaia, despite this being for a few days only, was very helpful to us as new mission partners and in orienting ourselves towards working as part of a larger team working with the same objective albeit across diverse contexts.

Over the last few months, while we continue working in partnership with local leaders, it has become increasingly evident to us that we also need to take responsibility for being ready at short notice to fill gaps and



Eva putting into practice her new-found art and craft skills.

Support Andy and Kati Walsh:
churchmissionsociety.org/walsh

**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



lead in certain situations. Often we find activities are not particularly structured or organised and we have to be patient and flexible in the way we work with people here. This is accentuated in our ministry settings, i.e. prisons, drug rehab centres, hospital and street evangelism. We are learning when it is best to support and be “on-hand” while on other occasions needing to step up and lead. We sense that in this upcoming 6–12 months, we will need to transition to taking the lead role more in order to progress our work.

We are pleased that the restructuring process at Vineyard Floripa has concluded. Kati and Andy form part of a larger leadership team where we all have clearer

accountabilities. As our relationships have become more profound, with greater awareness around our areas of strength, the leaders have sought to draw more on what we are able to offer. In this upcoming period, for example, we are seeking to train church members how we can all become involved in local mission.

Our work in the favela has needed to change in order to work around risks in working in this environment. Kati now takes the initiative to volunteer in a local project called “Familia de Cristo”, which Vineyard Floripa supports in a variety of ways. Working with the team, Kati is engaged with prayer ministry, evangelism and helps to distribute food parcels to the residents of a local favela as well as street homeless people on weekday evenings.

Andy goes into the prison regularly to preach the gospel, and invite people to respond to a call to follow Jesus. As I (Andy) have been accompanying the leader, observing the ministry Pastor Antônio has been leading for the last 33 years, I've been attentive to the fact that due to prison logistics, we're rarely afforded opportunity to meet particular men on a recurring basis.

We are directed by the staff to visit different wings in each of the two prisons we go into together. For this reason, the emphasis to date can only be on evangelism. We often share space in a courtyard with the inmates, but on other occasions groups of 10–12 men huddle around us on the other side of the bars while we preach the gospel. We pray for them and their families. We note the names and prison numbers for those who wish to be baptised in the prison and these moments are always very exciting.

So with some of these constraints in mind, coupled with the missional areas that we are called to, Andy has met with senior officials in both prisons to present details of a discipleship course (Prison Fellowship International) to provide follow-up for those individuals that make a commitment to following the Lord. This would mean I could deliver an 8-week course in some of the classrooms that are normally used for literacy and numeracy lessons. These are very confined spaces but we could get 8–10 people in attendance there each time. We would welcome if you could join us in prayer for a good outcome!

Andy and Kati



Photos from top to bottom: With the CMS mission team and our Latin American partners at Ushuaia, “fin del mundo”; Kati serving in the local favela; Baptising new believers in the Florianopolis prison.



Going further with Church Mission Society

Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

Please note that opinions expressed in link letters are those of mission partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400. Church Mission Society is a mission community acknowledged by the Church of England. Registered Company No. 6985330 and Registered Charity No. 1131655 (England and Wales) and SC047163 (Scotland).