



Andy and Kati Walsh

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Location: Brazil



What we do: Working with local church partners in Florianópolis, helping people in challenging contexts to find hope in Jesus

Dear friends and supporters,

First and foremost, our time in the UK as a family has been a real blessing. We are deeply moved by the overwhelming support we have received from each of you. Your prayers, encouragement and of course generosity enable us to continue into this second term and we cannot thank you enough for standing with us in this mission. We also had a wonderful opportunity to relax and rejuvenate as a family, which was much needed following a productive opening term which was marked by some interesting challenges!

Psalm 40:1-2 says, "I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure." To me, these verses convey the idea that waiting on the Lord is an active and intentional practice, requiring both patience and a deep-seated faith in God's goodness and faithfulness.

There's nothing worse than walking through "mucky mud" that hinders your progress and may even pull off one of your shoes. Sometimes we too feel like we are being hindered. Yet these Scriptures serve as a source of hope and encouragement for believers, reminding us of God's compassion and unwavering commitment to those who put their trust in him.

Imagine the difficulty of waiting without knowing when or from where help will come. This is the reality for many men and women incarcerated within the unjust Brazilian prison system, where more than half of the prison population is eventually released without a trial or a conviction.

Showing men and women in the prisons who Christ is, according to the Word, is becoming clearer as our purpose as mission partners. It could be considered a summary of the gospel when Paul says: "Because the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to enlighten us with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6). So when we preach the gospel we provide a clear depiction of Jesus, usually drawn from one of the gospel stories so that the men and women will understand the essence of salvation through Jesus but also perceive more of his character and presence. We preach in the courtyards, through the cell doors and are committed to conveying the meaning of the gospel effectively through delivery of a structured Bible course, accredited by Prison Fellowship, in three prisons in Florianópolis.

Our pilot course in the women's prison was completed in May 2024, with each session accommodating 12



Kati and Eva enjoying the activities at the mission training event at All Nations College

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With each other
To the edges**



women – the number of women in each cell. With the governor's approval, we recommence on Monday 5 August and our hope is to eventually reach all the women across the remaining nine cells, cell by cell, transforming the prison from within. We aim to commence new course terms for all three prison establishments by September 2024 while also leading informal church services in the Palhoça penitentiary.

Despite some positive developments, we face significant challenges. While the governor of the women's prison approved us to continue when we met in July 2024, this support was contingent on prior approval we had negotiated directly with the judge for prison sentencing. The governor gave the impression that she is only accommodating this course because she is obligated to, even though it is the only available programme which focuses on rehabilitating people. Although we gathered much positive feedback from previous participants, the governor showed scepticism and we noted her negativity. This attitude is reflected across the wider systems, creating barriers and unjust conditions. We are confronted by negative attitudes from prison governors and guards, many of whom are openly hostile to the gospel. This prevalent attitude adds another layer of difficulty to our mission.

Pastor Antônio, who we walk closely alongside, shared a profound insight based on his 36 years of experience working in the prisons: "The prison is a place the local church turns away from due to the immense challenges, yet it is here where ministry is the most fruitful."

Please pray for this mission: that we would be granted favour by key decision-makers and that doors would open so that the Kingdom of God can advance further as we transform lives through Christ's love.

In addition to our family time and mission work, we had the privilege of participating in CMS's people in mission conference at All Nations College in Ware, Hertfordshire. This event was a significant milestone for us. Receiving prayer from Archbishop Nick Drayson and a certificate from CMS's mission director, Andy Roberts, I was commissioned to serve in a pastoral role with Vineyard church and to recognise my pastoral ministry in the prisons. This followed additional theological training and a lengthy discernment process that included consultations with pastors Andy collaborates with in Brazil. This commissioning and certificate is not only a personal honour in recognition of ministry in Brazil but also a testament to our shared commitment to this mission so far in this journey.

As you can imagine, preparing this update at the beginning of August, after nearly four months away, we now look forward to returning to Brazil and getting going again. Eva is certainly excited to return to school to reunite with her friends! We are also eager to support the leadership at the Vineyard Church where we are based.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support. May God bless you abundantly for your kindness and dedication.

Warm regards,

Andy and Kati



Photos from top to bottom: Andy being commissioned by Archbishop Nick Drayson and receiving his certificate; participants engaging in the pilot Bible training course at the women's prison of Florianópolis; enjoying a nostalgic visit to Roundhay Park, Leeds, with friends – just like old times!



Going further with Church Mission Society

Adelante: 6–7 September 2024. 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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