

MAY 2025

Visiting Brazil - so many stories to tell!



A glimpse of heaven. That is how I (Linda Fitzmaurice) would describe so many of our experiences in Brazil. Different languages and ethnic groups represented, yet we are all serving the same God!

Sue Fallon and I had the wonderful privilege of visiting the work of Missão Emanuel do Brasil (MEB, EI in Brazil) in 2 regions: Minas Gerais and Mato Grosso do Sul. Brazil is a vast country and a lot of our trip involved travelling: 2 international flights, 4 internal flights, nearly 2000 kms by car and 2 time zones in just under 3 weeks! And we only visited two little parts of Brazil (see map above). It makes me appreciate how much it takes for Fred Silva (General

Secretary Missão Emanuel do Brasil) to visit the work of MEB.

It was wonderful to experience life in Brazil, but even more exciting to find out about the work that EI is doing in Brazil. In the Montes Claros region we participated in the Ninheira project and then visited the Quilombola communities. We met some of the MEB board in Belo Horizonte and then went to Campo Grande where we spent time at the Terena Bible School.

We have SO many stories to tell, that we cannot fit them all into one Down to Earth. We are hoping to share our stories over the next few months, in publications and social media.



Jurema, Sue, Tarcísio and Linda

The MEB Regional Representative in Montes Claros is Pastor Tarcísio Porto. We are so thankful to Tarcísio and his wife Jurema, for hosting us during our time in that region, with Tarcísio doing

the bulk of the 1000kms driving! Tarcísio is pastor of the 7th Presbyterian Church of Montes Claros, an MEB partner church.

In 2016 Tarcísio's church participated in the RENOVA Conference, a Christian network of churches of different denominations and local NGOs that are working to connect people and organisations. During this event, they made many contacts that lead to some of the work of MEB in the region. One of these was contact with Pastor Gilmar...

A quilombola is an Afro-Brazilian resident of Quilombo settlements which were first established by escaped slaves in Brazil, slaves who escaped from slave plantations that existed in Brazil until abolition in 1888. Some of the Quilombo we met were 3rd or 4th generation descendants of the original settlers.

Pastor Gilmar



Tarcísio and the 7th Presbyterian Church of Montes Claros partner with Pastor Gilmar in one of the areas where there are Quilombola communities. Pastor Gilmar (featured centre with Tarcísio Porto, left, and Fred Silva, right) has an amazing story as to his involvement with the Quilombola.

Pastor Gilmar was homeless for many years before he became born again and felt called to become a pastor. He had a clear call from God to work with black people. One day he was driving

around the area, exploring and wondering where God was leading him, when he spotted a black man standing next to the road. Pastor Gilmar stopped to chat and ask directions. Much to his amazement, the person asked him "What took you so long? I have been waiting for you for 2 weeks!" It turned out that God had warned him that He is sending a pastor to bring the Gospel to the community, and he had waited next to the road for 2 weeks for pastor Gilmar to appear!

What really makes this story extra amazing, is that the Quilombolas homes are dispersed in the area, making them an 'invisible' community. Yet, God had brought them together!

Pastor Gilmar joined Tarcísio, Fred, Sue and I on our visit to the Quilombola communities. Faustina is community leader in the Picada village, but unfortunately she was away during our visit. We did meet with Lucia, Faustina's daughter, and was fed a delicious lunch by Faustina's sister, Maristina. While we were enjoying lunch, she told us a little bit of her story: she used to be the shaman before she became a Christian. She does not regret giving up this role and testifies that her life is much calmer since she is no longer the shaman. What a great testimony of God's goodness!

Since he first started coming alongside the Quilombola, Pastor Gilmar has established a church, built a church building and is in the process of building a home for a pastor, who he is hoping will come to minister to the people! Pastor Gilmar lives in Montes Claros and visits the communities as often as he can, preaching at least once a month.

Many Quilombolas live in poverty, but they are fiercely proud of their inheritance. We visited some people who live in poverty indeed, but also others who have worked hard to lift themselves up. One such lady is Dominga, who lives in a beautifully maintained home. She proudly invited us to see the many fruit trees she has in her garden, and gladly shared coconuts and oranges from her trees. It was a privilege to meet her, and see her expressing her pride in being and living life as a Quilombola!



Dominga

Meeting the MEB Board

While in Belo Horizonte, we had the opportunity to meet with members of the MEB board. Sue shared with them about some of the work EI is doing in Tanzania. It was good as MEB and EI Tanzania are forging a reciprocal relationship.



The church in Picada

We had the opportunity to visit some of the households in the area. Pastor Gilmar has a great relationship with almost everyone in the area, whether they go to church or not! He demonstrates a real agape love for the people here.



Fred, Sue, Linda, Pastor Rodrigo Lins, José Monteiro, Ilma Monteiro and Carla



Linda, Carla, Fred and Sue

We are so thankful to Fred and Carla, who hosted us while we were in Belo Horizonte. Fred did an amazing job during the whole of our time in Brazil - introducing us to Brazil, the culture, the people, the food... We even saw a real live toucan and a glorious parrot! And we ate piranha soup!



In the next Down to Earth, I'll tell you more about the visit to the Ninheira project (in partnership with the 7th Presbyterian Church of Montes Claros and Sementes do Vale) where EIUK is also partnering with a gardening project. We also had the privilege to spend a week at the Terena Bible School, meeting the staff and students and have heard many wonderful testimonies of faith through generations!

Please pray for the work of MEB in Brazil, for the MEB board, for Fred, Tarcísio, and his son Arthur Porto who is also working for MEB. They do seek the will of God in everything they do!

Sue did it!



On 4 May 2025, 40 years to the day that Sue Fallon, General Manager of EIUK, started her calling with Emmanuel International, she abseiled the Spinnaker Tower! This was to celebrate God's grace and goodness over 4 decades of her service with EI, but also to raise funds for EIUK.

It was slightly windy but Sue managed to maintain a steady decent. The other person doing the abseil at the same time was blown about a bit by the wind and knocked into Sue, but not putting her off her stride.

Sue was supported by a group of people from her church, Andy and Angela Sharpe and Alison Smailes from the Board, and Linda from the office. Those who could stay had a lovely meal together afterwards.

You can watch a time lapsed video of Sue's decent on <https://youtube.com/shorts/jQHmu8aYAfs>.

Sue raised nearly £1900! Thank you so much for your support. It is very much appreciated!