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SWBA NEWS!

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South Wales
Baptist Association

Team from South Wales travel to Brazil to share the love of Jesus...

During August a team of ten travelled on a three week mission trip from South Wales to Para De Minas in the south-east of Brazil. The team was led by Fortunato Santos, who has been minister at Sardis Baptist Church in Resolven for 23 years.

He was joined by seven people from Sardis Baptist Church, two from Central Baptist in Tredegar and one from Christ Church, Aberdare. For Fortunato, it was a return to the village of Tavares, the place he lived and was in church membership before he came to minister in Wales. His passion to go back on a mission stems from his passionate desire for others to come to know Jesus.

He said, *'The area I come from is not as good as other parts of Brazil for the Christian faith, so taking the gospel to people in my area is very important to me.'*

During their time, the team were able to engage with four local churches, four schools, a place for people with learning disabilities, a nursing home and a drug rehabilitation centre. Evangelistic opportunities were taken to share testimonies and tell people about Jesus.

Normally it is not possible for the churches to get into the schools, but in sharing from the cultural heritage of

(Continued on P2)



'The Team!'



Sharing the love of Jesus

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Welcome!

As I travel around South Wales, one of the striking features in many towns and villages are the number of empty chapels. A significant number of these have fallen into a state of serious disrepair



Recent census figures help us understand why this might be the case. Twenty years ago, at the beginning of the 21st Century, around 72% of the population of Wales identified themselves as Christian. At the last census in 2021, this had fallen to 43%, with, for the first time, the majority ticking the 'no religion' box. As more older people identify as 'Christian' and more in the younger generation state 'no religion', this is a trend that seems likely to continue.

Looking at numbers alone, our Baptist family in South Wales reveal that many of our churches are both older in age profile and smaller in number. Will we simply be adding to the number of empty and derelict chapels in the future?

Realistically, there are churches that will close and their buildings may lie empty. However, by no means do the figures tell the whole story. Throughout the Association, there are stories of church planting and exciting new expressions of church.

Bethania Church in Aberfan is one story of a derelict church being revitalised. Golau Baptist Church in Llanelli is an example of a new church deliberately seeking to reach those who might find the bridge to an established church too big to cross. The Sudbrook Church plant is reaching into a small community. Others such as Bryn Sion Baptist Church are seeking to revitalise a church that would otherwise have closed.

These are all exciting stories of people with a vision to share the good news of Jesus. One of our values as an Association is that we are: **Passionate for Mission**. In this edition, we hope you enjoy the stories of hope that Baptists in South Wales are not in retreat but rather pioneering new expressions of church in order to share the love of Jesus with those who don't yet know him. There is hope! And there are new and exciting stories still being written of chapels and churches, not empty and derelict, but full of life! Praise God!

Mark

Brazil Mission Trip... (from p1)



One of a number of school visits...

Wales, they were able to not only talk about what life in Wales is like but also tell Bible stories. One pupil now aged 16 remembered Fortunato from a previous mission trip nine years ago! In the evenings, evangelistic services were held in the churches, again with the opportunity to share testimonies and the Word of God. One week there was a 'holiday club' which saw in the region of 80 children attend over each of the four days.



Trip to Rio

A particular highlight of the mission was a trip to a Men's Christian Drugs Rehabilitation Centre. After a testimony was shared, Baptist Minister, Peter Davies, preached

and this was followed by another pastor giving an appeal. Six men came forward to commit their lives to Jesus in response.

Before travelling just under £5000 had been raised to give to the centre and nursing home to support their work.

The trip ended with three days spent in Rio with the opportunity to take in famous sights such as the statue of Christ the Redeemer and Copacabana beach.

Summing up the trip Fortunata says, 'It is a great blessing to have people with me for all that time and do discipleship and biblical teaching. I love that!'

Are you interested in joining the next trip planned for 2026?

If you are interested, do contact the Association and we can put you in contact with Fortunato.

OUR VALUES

- Passionate for Mission
- Innovative and Visionary

- Generous and Relational
- Committed to Justice

Building relationships in Sudbrook...

Jeremy Lock is pastor of a pioneering work in Sudbrook, a village located near the two Severn bridges.

He, along with five others, are partnering with Magor Baptist Church to build bridges into a community that will help to make Jesus known.

Jeremy says: ***Please pray for God to confirm our mission verse "I have placed before you an open door that no-one can shut." -as doors are opened for the gospel within the community.***

This account is a conversation I had when I was out near Sudbrook with a grandma this week. I'd been praying and the Lord miraculously kept showing me school children with their various parents and grandparents.

Jeremy: Hello, I believe your name is Jane Griffiths (not real name). I have the privilege of taking the school assemblies in Magor and ARW primaries where your grandchildren attend.

Jane: That's right, their names are

Jeremy: one of the grandchildren used to attend SuperHeroes at Magor Baptist where I help. It was great to meet the family. Do you still attend church as you once did?

Jane: Not so much now - just occasionally with the grandchildren.

The conversation was a bit fuller than this as you can imagine but this is an example of God's joined up way of working. It took me a while to see the family links but, praise Him, He knows.

Home Mission grant supports Golau Baptist Church plant...



Over the summer, Lisa Isaac completed three years of training at Cardiff Baptist College to become a newly accredited minister. During that time, supported by Greenfield BC in Llanelli, she ran a number of groups for youth and young adults with the aim of reaching out to those who might not feel comfortable in a normal church setting.

As relationships have grown with those attending and at the completion of her training, Lisa has felt led to plant a new church. God's amazing provision has ensured two buildings have become available. 'World Horizons', a missionary training centre is used for a service on Sunday at 4pm – deliberately timed to avoid family sporting commitments that often take place in the morning. The evening youth gathering at 6pm allows youth to join in the time of worship and stay on afterwards. 'The Goods Shed', has been renovated to form a community facility and includes a train carriage. Lisa has plans for a Renew Wellbeing café, as well as a homework club in this space.

Alongside all of this is a Young Adults Life Group, bible studies and socials.

'Golau' means 'light' in Welsh and it is clear through Lisa's passion and gifting there are those who are now able to experience something of the light of Jesus in their lives. This is the beginning of a story and we look forward to hearing more in the months ahead.

Discover more at:
www.goloubaptistchurch.org/

Like & Follow Golau Baptist Church on Facebook to keep up to date with what is happening.



If you would like to support the Association, please scan the QR code or go to:

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/631022/Making_a_donation.aspx

Bethania Chapel, Aberfan... bringing light and new hope

Matt Tricker has been pastor of Jerusalem Baptist Church, Pentrebach, for over twenty years. For a number of years he was praying for the village of Aberfan.

And then he felt God gave him a verse: "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide" (Isaiah 54:2). Some others in the church were also led to this verse and as they prayed they began to understand that God was leading them to plant a new work in Aberfan. This was shared with the church who discerned God was speaking and therefore this was a vision to be supported and encouraged.

As he prayer walked around Aberfan, Matt passed a derelict and vandalised church and felt God say, 'this is the place'. He found out who owned it, contacted him and was surprised to simply be given the keys to the building.

Since then, around £300k has been spent in renovations. God's provision means this has already been paid off through a mixture of grants and generous giving.

And now the church is open. Over the first three months a regular service at 3pm, a children's club and Foodbank have opened. There is a regular coffee morning and Bible Study



and recently the church held its first baptism. Matt said, "I am amazed at what has happened. On a Sunday we are gathering between 30 and 50 people. It is something of the Lord that is happening here."

Matt's enthusiasm is infectious as he tells of four separate households attending from one street, Bryn Golau – which means 'The Light Hill'. One person said, "God has come back to Aberfan – it felt like God left when the disaster happened, but now He has come back"

Prayer Diary...

Each week pray for an Association Churches, asking for God's blessing on them and fruitfulness for the sake of the Kingdom. Any more specific prayers requests for their week, we will share them through the E-news.

20 th Oct	Mumbles Baptist Church
27 th Oct	Narberth Baptist Fellowship
3 rd Nov	Norton Baptist Church
10 th Nov	Orchard Place BC, Neath
17 th Nov	Pantygydr BC, Swansea
24 th Nov	Penylan BC, Newport
1 st Dec	Ponthir Baptist Church
8 th Dec	Providence BC, Mountain Ash
15 th Dec	Raglan Baptist Church
22 ^d Dec	Richmond Road BC, Cwmbran



What is the vision? Aberfan is a deprived area – poverty is high, crime is high and drug use is high. But the vision is that souls will be won for Christ, discipleship will happen and that this new church will be a shining light, offering hope and a way out of despair.

For more stories across South Wales Baptist Association, please do see our website and follow us on Facebook and Youtube.

www.swba.org.uk

"Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide"

Isaiah 54:2