

# thewhitesinspain

March 2017

Dear St James,

Granada has treated us to a huge range of weather this spring, from -10 in our town (which is unusually cold for here) to a dust storm from the Sahara that rained red dust and covered everything. The Sierra Nevada is currently hosting the World Snowboarding Championships and the mountains are looking really bad with dirty red snow. Now the warm weather has arrived and we are enjoying temperatures of 27 and had the first swim in the sea of the year! It's been a year of UK weather condensed into a few weeks.

We had a good start to the year with a trip back to Valencia in Jan visiting friends, neighbours and the people connected to the churches and ministry. There have been changes, people coming and going, and restructuring to consolidate the 3 churches into 1 for the time being. It seems that this is a season of pruning and seeing people's motivation for coming and their commitment. There is always a spectrum in any church but it's very interesting to see how many people struggle when church is no longer about a Sunday meeting. Because of problems with the police and authorities the church in our old town Puzol has not been meeting in a rented location for nearly a year. It's become a series of house churches and many people stopped coming. There are cultural issues, both secular and religious, but more than that it shows peoples lack of understanding as to what it means to live and be church rather than go to one. Lots to think about as we are starting out here wanting to build well with foundations that will last.



## Living in tension

In January we had to say goodbye to 4 different families we have been journeying and building with. One were a young Christian couple, originally from Liverpool, who had come to work with Ambassadors in Sport and whom we had 'adopted' as we felt we should invest in them. The others were a single mum, Rebecca and her son Airam and a family with 2 children both of whom I

had met in the park before we lived in La Zubia. Both are teachers and have moved away for work. The family with 2 children have moved to the coast 40mins away and we met up with them last Sunday and hope to keep that relationship alive. Rebecca has moved to Edinburgh, she went on an amazing journey with God and changed loads in the short time we knew her. We have connected her with friends who go to a good church in the city and pray she makes

View of our town La Zubia with the Sierra Nevada behind



Christmas Day in Granada

God a priority in her life.

The other couple we have lost are Corin & Carmen. He is from Bath and she is born and raised in Granada. She has moved close to Seville for work and he may follow when her contract is more stable. They also have been on a journey with us getting to know God. We have always wanted to be generous with our time and the Gospel and we want the best for our friends so are excited they have found work when it is so hard here in Spain. However, we want to build leaders and a community that can stand on its own so it's personally hard when you see good people move on. The tension is how to hold things lightly and at the same time be deeply committed and build for the long term. How do you invest in people each time like it's your only chance, because it might be, whilst having a vision for how they can grow and be discipled?

## New friends

As we have said goodbye to some friends God has opened new relationships with 2 mums from the boy's school and their families. We have also had more contact with our neighbours and have met more people on the estate where we live. We are regularly meeting up and sharing life with our contacts as much as we can and Dave & Kelly are doing the same. We plan to have another Messy Church type event before Easter where we

hope to build on the Christmas event. Before this we are wanting the group to connect and gel so have planned some times where we meet together and share some food with as many of our contacts as can come. Yesterday we met for a picnic in the forest above our town. We had around 25 including our 2 families and it was an amazing time of building relationships, in the end lasting 6 hours! One of the families we had only got to know in the past few weeks.



## Flourishing

Our boys are so important to us and recently God gave us a word about them flourishing. In the natural the education system in Spain is very poor and Leo has been struggling as he is not getting the input and attention he needs to develop. It's a long story but we are faced with a decision whether he stays in his current school or moves to another in our town that has a special class for children with additional needs. He is very intelligent but struggles in large groups without 1-1 help, we know God has the perfect place for him so we really need some divine wisdom quickly as we have to make a choice in the next few weeks. Please pray for an amazing outcome and a place where Leo is loved and can flourish!

Please pray that we keep connecting with the right people, that there is a hunger and commitment among them, and that we find ways to help them in their journeys to Jesus.

Pray for an increase in the supernatural through our words and actions, that the foundations of this community will be built on encounters with Jesus and not just religion or program.

Pray that the boys will thrive at school, grow in their 2 languages, and that we will know how to support them best.

Thank you for being part of this!

Love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel