

# thewhitesinspain

May 2016

Dear St James,

Since I last wrote there have been some huge developments in the process of moving to La Zubia and buying a house there. Easter was a time of waiting as everything with the house we wanted to buy had fallen through. We wanted to do something as a family to rest and get some space to pray and process what was happening. Our neighbour in Puzol (whose daughter is Leo's classmate) is Portuguese and has often said we should come and visit her in the village where she grew up – so we did! We made a 2500km road trip across Spain and into rural central Portugal. It was an amazing time seeing the incredible landscapes of Spain from dry plains, to green valleys and snow capped mountains. We stayed in a tiny village where some houses still don't have electricity and the community farm the land around their houses. The family we stayed with were so generous to us and have over 120 family members living in this tiny village. We ate their own pork cooked over an open fire with vegetables from their own land. It was amazing how we could understand each other completely although we spoke to each other in different languages. It was a time just to listen to their stories, share meals and remember the simple things in life! It just confirmed to us again the importance of sharing meals together and is something we want to be so central to our life when we move to our new home. The boys loved getting dirty, exploring and got to ride around the village in a tractor and trailer which they loved.



## The hidden things

In April we went down to La Zubia with Dave & Kelly and their family, and a Romanian lady and her 2 children who were also exploring whether they want to come and be part of our new community there. We rented a big house together which was fun, 5 adults and 6 children! We had a list of 6-7 houses to look at and the only house in the whole town available for rent. The night we arrived we went to the house we have been trying to buy to pray. God has been speaking to me about Joshua and how he inherited the Promised Land. He fully relied on the power of God and His strategy and His weapons were praise and worship. We both felt that I should walk round the house 7 times as a prophetic act which I did and just worshiped Jesus. The last time I did it barefoot to say that the land there is to be Holy as it where God is. It took about 1 hour and I had very strange looks from some of the neighbours but didn't care. We had been given 3 independent prophetic words: One from our friends in California was that God had prepared something hidden for us that would be revealed at the right time. Our friend June had the word 'suddenly' and some leaders from Bath city church, who had never met us before, prophesied at Christmas that something was going to happen regarding our move that would be sudden, unexpected and change the direction, but that God was in it!

To cut a long story short our first day in La Zubia we found that all the houses on our list had suddenly been sold the day before we arrived (some of which had been on the market for 5 years!!) or taken off the market! We were also told that the house we wanted was not for sale at any price as the owner wants to stay there indefinitely!! It was now less than 6 weeks until we needed to move and we were left only one possible house but it seemed like a huge compromise to the vision God had given us. Liz went to look at estate agents to see if we had missed anything but honestly I had no expectation of there being anything new because everything nowadays is online on the same property websites. There was 1 in the area we liked, way above our budget but we felt we should check it out.

'God has something better!'

As we were driving there I said to Liz how I was disappointed as we wanted a house that felt like a retreat. I said I just want a simple house where we can live with people, where I can have a wood burner, build the boys a tree house and keep chickens. When we lost the other house everyone said 'God has something better', I know the theory but this annoyed me because I couldn't see how it could be any better as the other was so perfect. La Zubia is a small town and I had researched every road and knew there wasn't anything being advertised. We pulled up outside this house which is in the next road to our previous dream house! Every time I walked around the house praying if I had turned around I would have seen it. We go in the gate and both just stared at each other! There was a tree house in the garden, all the heating is by wood burning stoves and the house comes with chickens!! (which is not normal!) It is so much bigger than the other house and would give us everything we dreamed of in terms of hosting people, teams and also renting space as a rural B&B. It was built 10 years ago by a family who moved in with 2 boys the same age as ours! It has an amazing enclosed space where Leo could be free without us worrying about him running off. It's on the side of a mountain but only 3 mins from the school in the car and 10 mins from the city of Granada. This house was completely hidden as it was not advertised on any of the normal property websites!

Suddenly!

It was on for nearly 80,000 more than we could pay. I made an offer the next day, for a fair but much lower price. This still left us needing another 50,000, so I asked if we could maybe buy their mortgage off them. The estate agent said I am friends with the director of the bank in Granada, if we drive now we can meet and see what is possible. Less than 24 hours later as we drove back up towards Valencia we had an offer accepted, contract to purchase signed, deposit paid, bank account opened and mortgage application started!!! There are so many parts to this journey to share but to keep it brief we are now very, very close to finalising everything. God is taking us for a walk so far out on the water we can't see the boat anymore! As I write this our house is packed up, Liz flies back to the UK with the boys on Wednesday, I will be driving down with all our stuff and Dave & Kelly's stuff to store it all in the garage of a house we don't own yet or have a mortgage approved for! I will then be living in a tent until everything goes through and we are believing that I could be living there by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June!

This word about Noah keeps resonating with me. Noah didn't wait to see the clouds before building the ark! He built; he prepared knowing that God is faithful to His word. If we knew how everything will work out in our lives we have no need of the substance we call faith, 'being certain of what we do not see'. In the natural everything about this is crazy yet we have such peace and confidence that God will come through and that we have to walk this journey, it's not an accident! The whole process of the other house raised our expectation and helped us prepare to be able to consider a house like this. It has come about by the incredible generosity of a few individuals, by selling our house in Liverpool, by a mortgage which we were told based on our income is impossible and a gap which we know God will fill. God is amazing!

Believing for the greater things!

In the midst of all this God has encouraged us by giving us a glimpse of what He wants to do in this part of Spain. I had ½ hour off from house hunting one afternoon and went to the park with the boys. I saw a guy my age with 2 young children and introduced myself. Shortly his wife arrived and we got chatting. They are from the area born and bred and are really keen to meet up and come round our house with their children, so we exchanged numbers. Just then a single lady with a baby overhears our conversation so I start chatting with her too. She is interested to practice English and has only been living in the town a month. We also exchanged numbers and when I was in La Zubia this week we met for a coffee. The current house owners want to meet up when we are living in town and the estate agents son has invited me to play football with him! Without even living there God has already connected us with key people in the community who we can build relationship with.

Please pray!

Although we have been planning and preparing to move for over 18 months the final part has happened very quickly and we find ourselves with very little time to say goodbye. This is one of the painful parts of the missionary lifestyle! We have shared our lives for 5 years with the people in our town and the towns where we have churches. We have many friends here and our boys are very much loved in the school and our town.

Please pray that God helps us to leave well and helps us in the first stages of being alone again and missing our community.

Pray that the mortgage is approved and the rest of the money comes in very quickly as I don't want to be in a tent for weeks!

Pray that the ministry we are leaving behind with flourish, grow and find its own identity in God.

Pray for the boys that they will transition well into our new life and that we can secure places for them both in the same school ready for September.

For Liz and I as we will be apart for several weeks and especially for her as she has the boys on her own.

God bless you and thank you for being a part of this,

Love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel