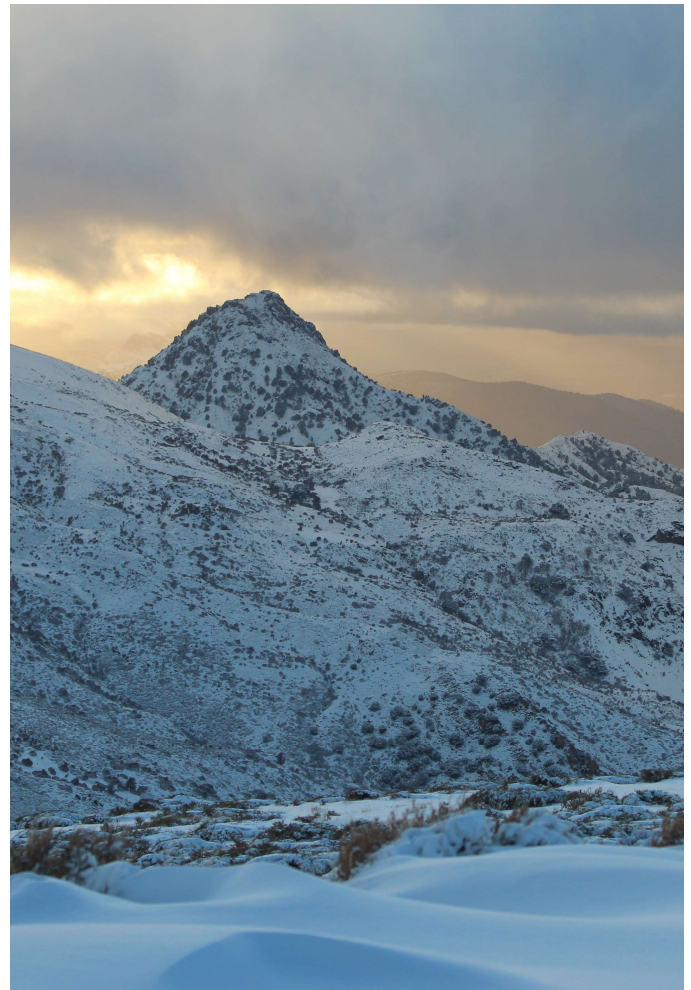


# thewhitesinspain

July 2018

Dear St James,

Greetings from a now dry and hot Spain! The 2 weeks of rain continued and we ended up having 2 months of rain. It was the most in Granada for 100 years and meant that the snow fell on the Sierra Nevada deep enough to bury buildings. It was much needed as we have had 7 years of drought since we lived in Spain, but Spanish houses aren't designed for rain so we had leaks everywhere and a flood in our basement. Our wood burner was alight every day from November through to April. It was amazing to see the transformation; where we live is normally dry and dusty but suddenly was covered in life, flowers and plants. The lakes filled up to the brim and rivers started flowing again. It was an amazing picture of unlocked potential, seeds lying dormant waiting for the rains to wake them up. It's an obvious spiritual picture but what struck me was how quickly it happened, not years or months but days, even hours. Spain is waiting to experience the love of The Father and life of Holy Spirit!! That is our longing and passion to see every person we encountered being awakened by His love and presence.



All things working for good

We mentioned in our last letter how we felt that God would work through the robberies to bring awaking and connection in our community. Well it happened!! Through this process we have got to know everyone on our street and many in the wider community. So many amazing God connections and a sense that people want to get to know each other. They have formed an official resident association and going to the meetings has been a really good way to be present and become a familiar face (even if they are incredible slow and boring!) A few weeks ago there was a paella for our community with over 100 adults and children present, so many great conversations and connections. This is in a place where people have lived for 12 years and didn't know their next-door neighbour! We have continued to build relationship with our immediate neighbours and the English couple opposite have become good friends, we are always in and out of each other's houses. I have had amazing chances to share my testimony and The Gospel with them. Please pray from them (Royston & Angela) that Jesus may become real to them.

Hard times!!

This year has been the hardest we have had personally in our 7 years in Spain. It took quite some time to get sorted after the robbery and we then had the constant rain, leaks and flood in the basement. Around Easter time Liz began to feel anxious again and we had change what we were doing so I could be around much more to look after the boys and her. It is a process and we both have things that Holy Spirit wants to change in our lives. Liz has been having some counselling which is helping, and we had

some timely visits from people who have spoken into our lives and prayed with us. What we are understanding more is how stress can look very different for individual people and the way it then manifests itself. We forget sometimes, because it is our 'normal', that living in a different culture, in our second language, with two beautiful but very demanding children, without a regular income and without support of family and a church close by can be stressful. On top of that there is the challenge of building something from scratch where almost everyone we are in relationship with wants to take from us rather than give. We don't often feel this as stress and this is the life we have chosen and see it as a privilege not a burden, but we need to learn to be kind to ourselves.

At the perfect time God sent 2 amazing couples to minister to us. One we have never meet before, an amazing couple called Wayne and Hilary from Australia who got our contact from mutual friend and came to Spain to pray around the country and stopped off to see us. God really connected our hearts and they brought such wisdom and encouragement when we needed it. The others where Bert and Margaret, a Dutch/South African couple from the UK whom we knew during our time in Liverpool. They are pastoring a Church in the North East of England and were here on holiday. We are so amazed how God would send these people from across the globe, without them knowing anything of our situation, just at the right time!! We are looking to build connections and raise our pray covering as this is so important. We keep walking on knowing and trusting that Our Father knows what He is doing with us!



What does church look like?

Often people ask us 'What are you doing?' or 'What is your church like?' They are good questions that always take us back to the reason we came to Spain. Our desire is to introduce people to their Heavenly Father, His son Jesus and the Holy Spirit, that they personally may grow to have relationship with them and to follow and obey. Our focus has never been about meetings, although they have an important role, but more about wanting to bring The Kingdom everywhere we go in our daily lives. This is harder to explain or put in a box - which maybe is the point!! Our biggest focus has to be time! Spending quality time with people where we listen to them first before telling them what we think. 2 weeks ago we had a couple over for dinner whom Liz had met in the park. We listened to their stories, everything about their lives and families and then they asked us straight, what does it mean to be a Christian. 2 hours later we had covered a lot of ground and they are really hungry to hear more. These things can't be rushed. Life often looks like this and we have meet many new people over the past 2 months and had chances spend quality time with them. This happens alongside investing in the people we have journeyed with for longer. There are a few couples now who want to understand at a deeper level and our friends Dave & Kellie are meeting with them for this. Our desire is that people reach the point when they can do what we have been doing with them with their own family and friends!



It also means for us to have a Kingdom perspective. We don't view people as potential 'members' of 'our church'. We want to help people explore God and their own calling and dreams irrespective if they become part of the community here or not. Liz has started teaching some private English conversation classes as a way to connect with people and I continue to use small design projects to meet with and invest in men, who are hard to reach as they usually work throughout the day.

At the start of July we travelled to Cadiz, about 4 hours away to spend some time with a couple Corin & Carmen who were part of our community in the early days and have moved away due to work. It was an amazing few days hanging out, sharing life and ending up doing some relationship counselling with them. We were excited to hear that Carman has started attending a Church in her town there. Although we would love them to part of the community here the reality is they probably won't, but we still want to invest in them and see them knowing God and journeying with Him. We still have our bi-weekly gatherings and have a small core and a transient group of people coming to see what we are about. This is fine as we want to sow generously without agenda knowing that it is Jesus who builds His Church. (Below are some photos of our gatherings)





## Please Pray

Please pray as from September we probably won't be having gatherings in our house as it is now too small. We are exploring the option of renting a place in our town for a few hours. This will involve us finding the right place and then a financial implication as well. We need to hear God on this!

We are currently in the time-consuming process of sorting out our status here in Spain. No one really knows what will happen after Brexit and because we have been here 7 years we can apply for residency. This is a complicated, bureaucratic process. Please pray for favour that all goes smoothly.

## Back to the UK

Tomorrow we fly from Malaga back to the UK for a 5 week visit to see family, friends and visit many of you who partner with us. It is a fun time but hard being on the road and changing locations with the boys. We want them to have fun and rest as we do ourselves. Please pray this happens!

Please pray for protection over our house as it is a long time to be away.

Pray for vision, rest, Divine appointments and that we can communicate well our hearts and passion for Spain.

Chris is going on a Spiritual healing retreat in Scotland in August and we both are having some led healing retreat times whilst we are in Kent. Please pray that these will be significant.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you in person over the summer. Huge thanks again for believing in us and journeying with us!!

With much love,

Love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel

