

# thewhitesinspain

March 2021

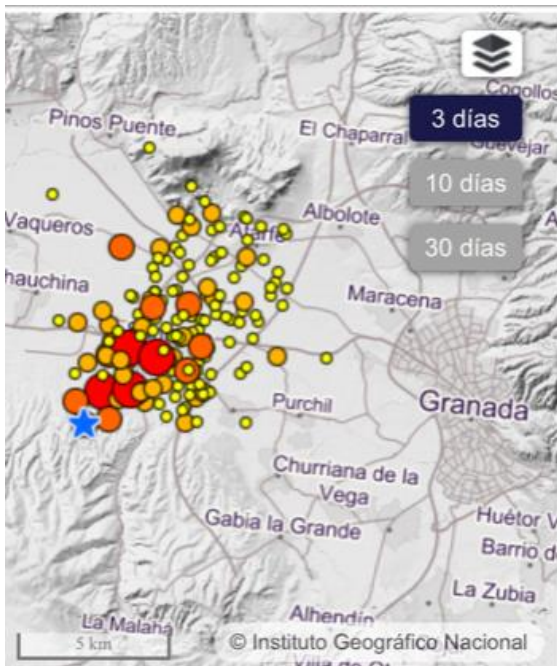
Dear St James,

Spring has finally come to Spain after a wet and cold winter with some of the coldest temperatures for a hundred years recorded. We had below -10C in Granada but outside in the countryside they had more than -20C. After several years of dry Springs we finally had rain and it felt more like living in England. It was much needed as we have had several years of drought in Andalucía. Although we missed family and friends it was really good to spend Christmas here and connect with our friends and community. We shared a Christmas eve gammon with our English neighbours, Royston & Angela, and then went to theirs on Christmas day for an English roast. Over the holidays we were able to connect with individuals in our home or single families outside. Some of our Spanish friends were happy to brave the freezing temperatures to go for walks but most locked themselves away inside. Considering the restrictions and weather we had an amazing time sharing life, food and stories with our friends and felt many relationships really deepened and went to a new level of trust and openness.

Socially distanced Christmas walk



Moving and Shaking



January got off to a shaky start with a few weeks of earthquakes! (The map shows the number over just 3 days, red ones are over 4 magnitude). In total there were nearly 1000 just in January, most were too small to feel but there were at least 10 over 4 magnitude (the greatest being 4.5). We always knew we lived in an earthquake zone and that these are very normal, but they were big enough to shake the house and for large numbers of people in the city to leave their apartment blocks and seek safety on the streets one night. Many people were scared as one day they predict a large earthquake here and after a year of Global pandemic people were wondering what was next. One of my Atheist friends asked me if I thought God sent the earthquakes! It opened up a brilliant opportunity to share with him about who God is and His nature and character. That His heart is to seek and save a not to destroy. During this time Liz was unwell with a bad ear infection so it wasn't the best start to the year.

## New shoots

As we have navigated the constantly changing restrictions we have tried to meet as much as possible with our community. We have also felt as a team that it is time to be more regularly present, visible, in our town centre as often we are in homes meeting friends there. Dave & Kellie (the couple we work with) have been going into our town 2-3 mornings a week asking God for opportunities to chat and pray with people. I can't share all that has happened here but they have had amazing encounters where God has given words of knowledge, words of encouragement and loads of people open to receive prayer for a situation or physical healing. Many people have felt the presence of God and several people have received a tangible, measurable instant healing on the streets. More than that we have had a time where they have met 4-5 Latino people who have some Christian background and who what to meet up for discipleship and to study the Bible. Its strange as in 4 years living here we haven't really met any Latinos (In Valencia there where loads and half our church there was made up from people from Latin

America). Although our heart and focus has always been to reach the Spanish it seems like God is bringing these people to us so we want to run with this. At the same time Liz and I have been having amazing encounters with people we have known for several years but not seen in a while. One time we went for a walk up a mountain near where we live. It is very remote and there were maybe only 5 groups of other people on the whole walk over about 3 hours. 3 of them we knew! Sam's tennis teacher, one of Liz's students whose husband Chris spent a lot of time with pre Covid but we haven't been able to meet. More amazingly a Spanish family Chris met in the park before we even lived in La Zubia 4 years ago. They came to our church once in our home but then moved 2 hours away to Malaga. There they were on this mountain, we reconnected, and they have now moved back to our town!! Just on Sunday we went to the beach to celebrate Mother's Day now we can travel a bit more. It's a place we never really go and there were not many people as its out of season. Within 5 mins of getting there we met one of Liz's students and her mum, had a great chat with them. Then as we sat having lunch a family we know from our town walked past! We had a great time catching up with them too. It seems like these people are on God's heart as wherever we go they are there too. We just want to keep saying yes to God and trust what He is doing.

## Time to step out

To build on this theme, as a team we have been dreaming for a while about having a physical space on the highstreet. We have done house church and café church but want an everyday place where we can meet people and they can come to us. We never wanted a classical church as the space always gets outgrown and they are a huge drain on finances and resources for really just a few hours a week. Instead, our vision is to create an extension of our homes on the highstreet. Essentially a lounge where people can come, sit, have a good coffee and come into God's presence. We can have small discipleship groups, community projects to gather small groups and create a small community where people know if they want to talk about God or their lives it's the place to go. We want people to see that following Jesus is a daily walk not an event.



To cut a long story short this week we are about to sign the contract on a small shop in the centre of our town. This is very exciting but also a huge leap of faith. We all see God's hand in it and its relatively cheap, but we don't have the money yet to cover even the monthly rent. We are confident that God will provide as He always has. The rent is 350 euros a month plus tax, we then need to cover utilities and the furnishing and set up of the space. It is only 10m x 10m and we want it to feel cosy and welcoming. Our plan is to serve good coffee (bean to cup not full Italian setup) cold drinks and some homemade cakes/biscuits. We need around 7-8000 euros to cover the setup and first year rent/bills.

Right is a photo of the outside and the 2 images below we have done to show the kind of ambiance we want to create (the wide angle makes it look much bigger than it is). The furniture won't be designer but we want it to be nice so people feel comfortable and welcomed. Chris will be able to do all the building work, fitting a small serving area with sink etc and making the toilets disabled access.

We have found there is never a 'good' time to take risks, we can only follow God's whispers and trust Him. We have had early favour with our town council and the owner of the premises which has really encouraged us. We feel there is such a need that now is the time and we want to go for it.



We know many of you have been so generous to us over the years in your support, but if you do feel like you could contribute in some way we would be very grateful. We were thinking of creating a wedding list style form so people could sponsor various things, for example buy a few mugs, a rug or a kettle etc. We will not send this out with this letter but if you are interested please let us know and we can send you the details.

We are so excited when we meet people who keep asking 'where can we find you?', 'where can we talk more?' to be able to say to them, 'go over there and we can have drink and chat. God speaks to us a lot about how He is calling people 'Home', back to Father, back to relationship with the Creator. We believe this space will be 'Home' for many people

Thank you for sharing this journey with us, for your emails, prayers and generosity. Without these we could not be here in Spain so thank you again, God bless you,

With much love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel.