

thewhitesinspain

March 2019

Dear Friends & Family,

Greetings from sunny /snowy Granada! It is one of my favorite seasons at the moment, Spring comes early in Spain so we had flowers out the first week of Jan, the birds are singing, bees buzzing in the flowers and we look out to the snow-capped Sierra Nevada. Although it has been subzero some nights in the day it can hit 20C which is so nice. This week Liz and I fulfilled a dream to have a skiing lesson together. It is our 3rd season living here with these amazing mountains on our doorstep but it hasn't been possible to go before. A friend of ours picked the boys up from school and looked after them for a couple of hours so we could make the most of our time on the mountain. It was an amazing experience and so good to be able to do it together.

Building Momentum

As we shared in our last letter we now have a venue where we can gather for family church and have committed to be there every other week on a Saturday afternoon until the start of summer. We feel it's really important to be consistent and to try to model what we believe gathered Church should look like. We are constantly thinking how we can explain/demonstrate how to have a dynamic, daily, supernatural relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit within our culture and context. The people who come have no knowledge of the Bible nor any concept of who God is (if they even believe in one). Their only point of reference has been a Catholic schooling which, for most, has caused them to reject anything to do with God or religion.

This presents an opportunity but also a huge challenge as we have to work to dismantle some of the assumptions and bad theology they have about God and church. As we shared before there are practical and cultural challenges to gathering people regularly in Spain but we are committed to be there no matter who turns up. We have been averaging around 18-20 (including our 2 families). One week no one turned up but we still had church with our 2 families. As it is a public space we meet in people were around watching what we were doing. We have always had the desire to be interactive and help people develop their own relationship with Jesus rather than just teaching from the front. This means a very short interactive talk based on a single verse and theme. We then split the adults and the kids and have 2 discussion-based times (different for the kids and adults) to hear what people have understood and think about what has been said. Sometimes we have had that time together and used artwork or something practical to respond to God. This has been hard for our friends as the Spanish can be very loud in some contexts but very shy when it comes to expressing personal things. Please pray that people can feel safe enough to be open and vulnerable. It has been exciting to regularly have new families come, we just long to see a regular core growing. We know this will take time and every week there have been key moments and conversations.

Laying the foundations.

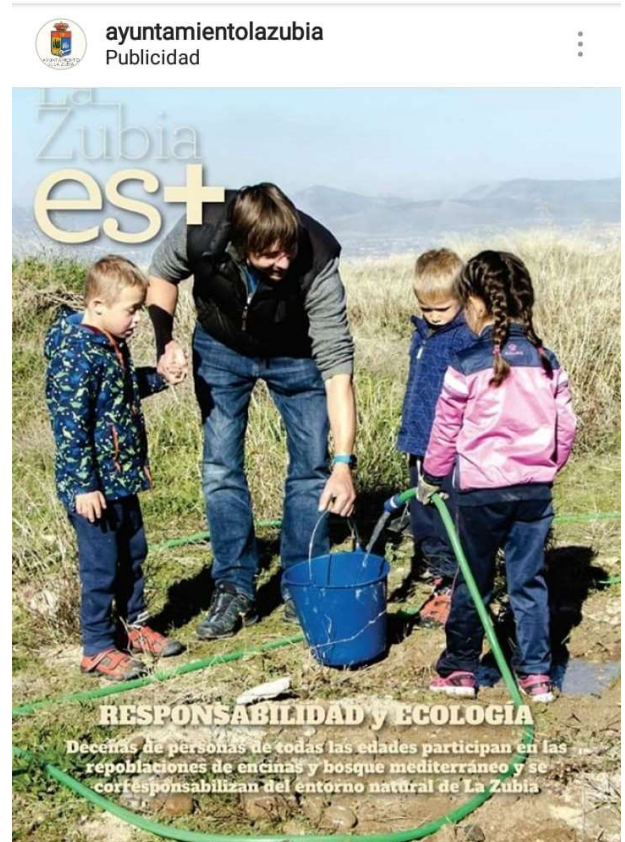
As I am sure you are all sick of hearing it but Brexit (whatever that means) is nearly upon us. Although we are not worried, because God is above all this, it does have practical implications for us as our country leaves the EU. We mentioned before about gaining our residency and sorting our healthcare. We came back after Christmas to a letter saying we didn't have health cover after all!! It has been another 2 months work, plenty of paperwork and appointments, but I am now pleased to say as of 2 weeks ago we are finally in the Spanish Health system!! We still have to sort out Leo's status to access extra help for him, apply for a family card we can now get and sort out our driving licenses as they won't be valid from the end of March! As they say in Spanish 'poco a poco' (little by little) but it is good



to have things formalised. We would value your prayers for our financial situation because as we enter the Spanish system we have to fully leave the UK one meaning we will lose some help we were receiving for Leo and as a family because I was still paying taxes in the UK. We don't know the full picture and God has never failed us yet but it could mean between 30-40% reduction in our monthly income.

Model Boys & New Teacher

A few weeks ago one Saturday morning we volunteered at a community tree planting event in one of the parks in our town. We went there to get to know more people from our local community and do something fun with the boys. It was really good to meet new people and we ended up chatting to a Portuguese man who has just moved to our town. Chris has met him for a coffee several times and it turns out he is a Reiki master. There are so many people we meet interested in Eastern/New Age religion, he is heavily involved and in a very dark place but we know Jesus wants to meet him and it is good to have contacts with the leaders of these communities. A few weeks after this event we started getting messages from friends say we are 'famous!' It turns out a photo taken at this event made front cover of our community magazine which is probably seen by about 10,000 people. People have been stopping us in the street which has been amusing as it really is a small thing. However, it has been good as we want people to know who we are.



Leo's teacher retired at Christmas and we had been praying for her replacement as the system for selecting teachers here is a bit of a lottery. We were so excited to see His new teacher, Maria, is young, smiley, full of energy and has just come from Bristol where she was teaching before! Another amazing part is Leo's old teacher, who lives in our town, has Leo for an afternoon each week whilst Sam plays football because she loves him so much and still wants to be part of his life! The Spanish do have an incredible love towards children and it really fills our hearts to see how they have accepted Sam & Leo into their hearts and lives.

Family den building on a school holiday this week for Andalusia Day

Please Pray

Liz has recently lost 2 students due to their work commitments so she is looking to find more people. It has been such a good way to connect with our community and one family has come to church through this. We have had some more 'divine appointments' recently meeting new people and families who we are looking to start journeying with. We really need to hear Holy Spirit every day as to whom we should spend time with, we can't give our time to everyone and want to sow where there is openness.



Please pray for open hearts and opportunities to speak into our friends lives
Pray for the rest of our admin to get sorted smoothly and quickly.
That we would have more people committing to the bi-weekly gatherings

With much love Love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel