

thewhitesinspain

Oct 2015

Dear St James,

I apologise for the amount of time since I last wrote to you, moving the family back to UK for summer and then re-starting life here again is part of this life that I find really difficult and always takes time to get back into a routine. Changes in language, weather, clothes, side of road to drive on, culture and lifestyle are all things we have to adjust to, alongside living out of suitcases with 2 small boys. We are very blessed to live with Liz's parents whilst we are back but it's not home; we were also on the road a lot clocking up 2500 miles travelling from east, to west, to north and even west Scotland! Although we found it very cold (almost 30 degree temperature difference the day Chris travelled back) it was nice to be able to sleep at night! It was a really good time of networking, visiting friends, family, churches and people who have a connection with the work here. We had a really enjoyable holiday in Fort William with Chris's extended family which included the obligatory climbing of Ben Nevis (just Chris and his brothers, with their wives and kids).



Orphans

After more than 4 years here trying to reach people, starting churches and supporting people in their journey with Jesus I am reflecting once again on what is the Gospel. I am more aware every day of the incredible love God has for the world, that He doesn't want anyone to miss out yet often I/we can think if we did more; more events, preached more, shared 'the Gospel' more, invited more people to church then more people would be saved. Isn't God constantly, day and night, reaching out to people that He loves with a passion without measure? So often our church experience is event driven/focused, outreaches, church meetings, prayer meetings etc. This might have some effect in a driven, Western culture but for most of the world, including Spain, this is a foreign concept. People in Spain don't want to come to events, they want to be with their families, they are often not that driven or committed to the meetings we call 'church'. Why should they be? Maybe they are better at saying, 'actually I don't buy this, I'm not going to do this to please you'?! They do whatever makes them feel good in that moment. They think and behave like orphans!

Most people behave like orphans because that's what they feel like! Orphans aren't committed, aren't ambitious to climb the ladder of church discipleship/leadership, don't think about others or the bigger picture! What an orphan needs is an encounter with the most amazing Father; full of love, grace, mercy, a father who doesn't rush in and change everything but gently captivates hearts, frees people with un-conditional love and empowers them to believe, in a different way to live, and in a future. A father who doesn't say 'now you are home here's the rulebook and code of conduct you now need to follow'! I think so often I have missed this in my desire to win souls, we can say we love people but do we? Do I? Do we love with an agenda to get people to come to a meeting or do we love as an unstoppable flow from our hearts that comes from being completely in love with Jesus and the Holy Spirit burning and flowing in us? I have witnessed more fruit and transformation in people's lives, who still would not be welcomed in many churches, from just loving them without agenda, just because that's all our Daddy does!!

Let's be lovers not salespeople! I can learn sales technique from an evangelism course; I can only love by first being a lover of God! This is something I can't fake, but the beauty is it frees me from striving,

performing, being results driven, and numbers driven and gives me permission to be me! That's what a hurting world needs, me to be fully me, you to be fully you – fully alive!

Loving the orphans in Naquera

In Naquera we have so many broken people joining the family there. Broken physically, mentally, emotionally yet coming along because there they find a love that speaks to that child within them crying in the corner just wanting someone to notice, love them where they are.

When I look at many of the people, some in their 50s, my heart breaks as I see this little child and think of how much their daddy loves them. This week we celebrated the 10th birthday of Tito. (the boy on the right) His mum, Gloria, is a mother to 5 kids, beaten up for 25 years by her husband, who also beat the children; she now has breast cancer along with smashed teeth and a broken nose. Tito was wild when we first met him and some of my team saw him as a problem. He's half starved and eats all the food like it's the first meal he's had all week, and it might be! I said we just need to love him, he will behave later but first he needs to know he is loved. I invent games to play with him, make him feel important and valued and each week he responds more. For his birthday we gave him a little cake and a present, he sat through the worship for the first time; at the end we prayed for him and blessed him. This week he prayed himself for the first time in his life! This boy is so precious and is one of thousands here in Spain who without an encounter with God life will be a struggle for survival. His mum Gloria is slowly starting to trust Jesus but its small steps. But as our goal is love she can take as long as she wants!



Boys and Men

In early October I went back to the UK for a flying visit to speak on a men's retreat in Croyde, Devon with Welton Baptist Church who are one of our partner churches. There were 20 men and I taught on Identity, Vision and Discipleship over Friday-Sunday. On the Saturday morning there was the opportunity to go coastering, which means jumping of cliffs into the sea in a wetsuit, which was a real treat! The weekend was a really powerful time with a real sense of hunger for more; and real honesty and openness from the men. Please pray that this is the start of a new season amongst the men in this church and that it spreads to influence the culture across all the men. The weekend after was a long bank holiday in Spain so we took the boys camping in the mountains 2hr northwest from Valencia. It was a really important time as a family enjoying the simple life, food cooked over fire, autumn colours and a slower pace of life. 3 degrees at night was challenging but we all really enjoyed the family time!

What's next

We have just come back from a time in Madrid (just Liz & I) for a Danny Silk conference which was very good and an amazing time for the 2 of us to spend some quality time together. We have had a steady stream of family and visitors (including your very own Emily Wingfield) which comes to an end this weekend. We are busy in Naquera building the team and people there, still working with a church in Valencia in the areas of how to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a lifestyle and also supporting their men's outreach. The boys are busy in school and nursery and Liz is still running her ladies group. Please pray for more opportunities to love people, for more people to have encounters with their heavenly father and for rest and joy in everything!

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

Love Chris, Liz, Leo & Samuel