

Welcome to the spring 2021 edition of *Spotlight on Spain*

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INTRODUCTION

At this time last year the pandemic was just about to hit Europe and obviously has now affected almost every country in the world.

Once again the Easter processions are cancelled in Spain but people are encouraged to book domestic holidays to boost the economy and EU citizens are also welcome.

The Mission churches and the Mission House have had to cancel activities or have changed their way of doing things, learning to use various forms of online media such as Facebook and Zoom. The Lord has used these means to unleash the gospel, the word of God is still preached and goes out to challenge, bless and save.

Some have left off attending the services, whether in person or online but others, using the anonymity of the internet, have been listening in. The church in Manzanares held a baptismal service and Aurelio is a recent convert (see News from Manzanares). There are people in Moral who are more receptive to listening to the good news of the gospel. God's word is not chained nor can it be. (2 Timothy 2:9).

NEWS FROM MANZANARES

What an encouragement in that a baptismal service was held in October when a lady of 73 and a teenager of 17 were baptised. Although the number of people able to attend was greatly limited due to the restrictions, some family and friends were able to view the service online via Facebook.



Facebook is also used to transmit the Sunday services for those who cannot attend and there are about 15 non-Christians who do so. Prayer is asked for Aurelio, a contact from the food distribution programme who has recently been converted.

Manolo is asking that we all pray that God would open the ears of the Spanish people to hear His voice shouting from heaven through this worldwide pandemic, so that they would return to Him.

Family matters

Manolo had an operation to remove part of his intestine in order to deal with the problems he has with Crohn's disease. The operation was more extensive than the surgeon expected it would be as there was much inflammation. We can report that the intervention was successful and Manolo is making slow but steady progress and he is now back at work.

NEWS FROM MORAL DE CALATRAVA

Covid-19 affected 12 members of the church but all have recovered well. The town was seriously affected by the virus and some restrictions are still in place there and throughout the country. They have had periods when the churches were able to hold services and others when they had to remain closed.

A family in Granátula, a town nearby, has been in contact with José Luís; the couple have asked for prayer for their adult son who is severely epileptic and sometimes harms himself. The family is interested in studying the Bible, which is difficult due to travel restrictions, but contact has been maintained. Please pray for that situation.

SGM workers' meeting

José Luis reported that the Spanish Mission Council met in January and for the first time in 20 years the Mission was unable to organise the yearly evangelistic activities due to the uncertain situation regarding the pandemic.

Family matters

José Luís, Noemí and Eric all contracted the virus, but thankfully Natanael remained clear of its effects. They all recovered well. Noemí asks for prayer as she continues her Open University course. As a family they are conscious of the need for your prayer support and send greetings of love and gratitude.



José Luís, Eric, Natanael, Noemí

NEWS FROM SANTA CRUZ DE MUDELA

As with the other churches, there have been times when the church services have had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Isolation and not being able to get around is particularly affecting the elderly church members, both physically and emotionally.

Prayer is asked for Paquita and her husband Antonio who has had surgery for a malignant tumour in the colon; he has been undergoing chemotherapy. He is also awaiting surgery for a heart operation. Antonio has heard the gospel many times but still prefers to "do things his way".

Fernando and his father have maintained their interest in the gospel although Sergio has not always been able to meet with them. A family from the nearby small town of Almuradiel is interested in maintaining contact and meeting with Sergio as the pandemic restrictions permit.

Family matters



Jennifer

Jennifer started secondary school in the autumn and is happy there although she finds it difficult to study and to relate to her peers. However, thanks to the speech therapy sessions she has together with sessions with a Specific Language Disorder therapist, she gets the help she needs to cope.

Chani continues to have problems with her shoulder due to a fall last summer for which she continues to need physiotherapy.

NEWS FROM MONESCILLO MISSION HOUSE

The only activity that can take place in the Mission House is the monthly theology course organised by SEFOVAN. José and Lidia's prayer is that the House would soon resume its activities. A year with hardly any income has dangerously diminished the already fragile financial situation. However, they are trusting in the Lord and His provision.

Family matters

The family, apart from Lidia, have had coronavirus but recovered well. Abigail has enrolled on the SEFOVAN training course and is enjoying it. Josué is in his final year at sixth form and, much to the joy of his parents, has recently asked to be baptised.



Josué, Abigail, Lidia, José

OBITUARY: MATTHEW HILL (1939-2021)

Matthew Hill, who died on 22 January 2021, became widely known throughout the United Kingdom during his period as Home Secretary of the Spanish Gospel Mission and did much to raise the profile of the Mission amongst churches.

Born in the New Forest, he was converted in his teenage years and his life was Christ-centred from that point onwards. It was not long after leaving school that he was accepted to study at Birmingham Bible Institute and on leaving there he and Jean, who he had known from their teenage years and who he had recently married, left for the unknown territory of Stockton-on-Tees to take over the running of the Quayside Mission. This was a place of refuge for the homeless and a gospel ministry was also carried on there. A daunting prospect for a young couple but, with the Lord's help, they laboured there until it eventually closed down as a result of town centre redevelopment.

A group of believers who had gathered there for worship formed Stockton Independent Evangelical Church and called Matthew to be their part-time

pastor. For a number of years he combined that work with the job of being what was then known as "an ambulance man" and he recalled that, when on an "on call" shift, much sermon preparation and study took place in the ambulance station staff room. Eventually, the church was able to invite him to become full-time in his pastoral work and this he gladly did.

In the late 1980s he began to feel that his time at Stockton was coming to an end and in 1989 he was appointed as Home Secretary of Spanish Gospel Mission, for whom he had been area representative in the north-east for a number of years. This fulfilled an interest in gospel work in Spain going back to the early years of his Christian life. After 27 years in Stockton, during which time Matthew and Jean's children, Matt, Lorna, Helen and Grace had been born, he and Jean moved to Grassmoor, near Chesterfield as this central location was helpful to his new ministry. For 15 years or so he visited churches, produced magazines and prayer news and did the administrative work of the Mission. His enthusiasm for the work of the gospel in Spain took him to every part of the UK and he visited the Mission churches in Spain twice a year.

During this time he was a faithful member of Holmgate EC in Clay Cross and continued an active role in the life of that church after his retirement in 2004, preaching there and at other churches, running the bookstall and generally playing a vital part in the work of the church.

In his spare time he was a great lover of railways, poetry and books and he was a much-loved husband, father, grandfather, brother, pastor and friend. In all his activities, he was faithful to the Word of God and concerned for the glory of Christ, in whose presence he is now and for ever.



TREASURER'S REPORT

For the year 2020 we had a deficit. The expenditure has reduced compared to 2019, due to our decision in 2019 to reduce our support for the workers in Spain. We were able to maintain that level of support for the workers during 2020. We also had a legacy which helped reduce the size of the deficit. So far in 2021 our support has enabled us to maintain our level of support for the workers in Spain, who like us have experienced Covid restrictions. We pray for blessings in 2021 as we look forward to a post-Covid future.

Income and expenditure for 2020

Income	£42,724.46
Expenditure	£53,164.87
Deficit	-£10,440.41
Start of Financial Year Balance	£31,543.38
Closing Balance	£21,102.97

PRAYER DIARY

Sunday

Pray for God's word to go out with power.

Monday

Give thanks for the preached word.

Tuesday

Pray for contacts with needy families in Moral and Manzanares through the food distribution programme.

Wednesday

Pray for the church in Moral and the conversion of the young people.

Thursday

Pray for the church in Manzanares and contacts in the English class.

Friday

Pray for the church in Santa Cruz and the conversion of families contacted through the schools and the children's club.

Saturday

Pray for the Mission House, that it will be able to resume its activities this year.

CONTACT DETAILS



***A work of faith and labour of love
for the glory of Christ
until He comes.***

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