

WELCOME TO THE SPRING/SUMMER 2024 EDITION OF SPOTLIGHT ON SPAIN

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TESTIMONY

My character and background

I have always tended to be acutely fearful, introverted and had great difficulty communicating, especially in expressing my feelings. I preferred to be alone because I could not cope with any adversity. My ways were indecisive and pessimistic. With no self-esteem, I lived as a hermit. I had occasional panic attacks when my heart raced, I sweated profusely until I got exhausted and dizzy. I became agoraphobic.

However, occasionally, on a good day I asked that someone with a car would help me to try to go out into the street which I had not been able to leave for 25 years! When some workmen came to my house, my parents told them about me. A bricklayer came to try to help me and offered to take me out in his car! A few days later he returned and offered to take me to the park, and I accepted his help. We went to the park, got out of the car, and went for a walk. It felt so good! I remained calm and well so when we went back home, I realized that my request had been heard by the Lord and that He had sent this bricklayer to help me.

This man's name is Germán and today he is my great friend. I will always be eternally grateful for what he did with me and, of course, all the credit goes to the Lord who made it possible, and I will never thank the Lord enough for this; perpetual thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ always, because He helped me, He is still helping me and I am sure He will help me in my life. And little by little I went out more and more, first in his car and then walking and, well, step by step, I am

overcoming this situation. I went first to the supermarket with Germán and then to the pharmacy, and now I can go alone to the supermarket, to the pharmacy and I can go out on my own anywhere.

And I decided to go to the evangelical church to thank the Lord for everything he has done for me; I am always thanking Him and will continue to thank Him. Always, ever praising Him for His love!

My parents died, and I never thought I could live alone, but the Lord is giving me the strength to overcome this great loss. However, now I know the Lord and accept Him as my Saviour that wonderful gift of grace is mine. I decided to be baptised and now attend all the church services and meetings.



This is my story; what I was, how I was saved and what I now am. The Lord has helped me and become my strength in weakness. How can I thank Him enough! I also want to thank Pastor Sergio and his wife Chani, and Jenni their daughter, for their affection, love, generosity and help, from the bottom of my heart. Also Germán and Eva and the other brothers and sisters in the church.

May the love of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit bless your hearts always.

Fernando Marín

NEWS FROM SANTA CRUZ DE MUDELA

Baptism

Last summer the church held a baptismal service for Fernando Marín (see his testimony on the front page). The Lord gave this extremely shy man the strength to testify to his new-found faith, witnessing to his relatives and neighbours and the congregation about the work of the Lord in his life. Please pray for Fernando that the Lord would keep him firm in his faith. He is following the SEFOVAN Bible study course, is always willing to help where he can and attends all the church services.

Evangelism

At Christmas a special service took place and a number of people attended, including a couple from a neighbouring village, and much to the church's surprise, the mayor of Santa Cruz and a town councillor. They stayed for the whole service and for refreshments afterwards. It was a good time of witness and evangelism.

Every week Sergio and Chani visit Tainej, who lives in Viso del Marqués. She reads a lot and shows great interest in hearing and knowing more about the Lord. There is less contact with her husband Emilio as he spends all his time at work. Please pray for this couple.

Prayer is asked for the preparation and carrying out of the Holiday Bible Club to take place at the end of June. Last year the church was encouraged and challenged by over 40 children attending.

Family matters

At Christmas Sergio, Chani (with Jenni) were able to visit their elderly mothers in the Canary Islands. They ask for prayer for their daughter Eli, her husband and their three daughters. Eli and her husband have hardened their hearts against the Lord and against Sergio and Chani. As a result, Sergio and Chani are unable to visit them.

Jennifer's studies are going quite well. This is her last year at the local school; then she needs to go to Ciudad Real to study for a specific job. She still has weekly appointments with her occupational and speech therapists.

NEWS FROM MANZANARES

Holiday Bible Club

Last year's Holiday Bible Club was well attended despite the intense heat, with 35 children attending through the week. It was held in the small square near the church, enabling conversations with the

parents who brought the children. New Testaments were given to each family on the final day. Please pray for the Lord to bless this year's club in the same way. It will be held from 24 to 28 June. The church is grateful to the Lord for the opportunity to share the gospel with the families.

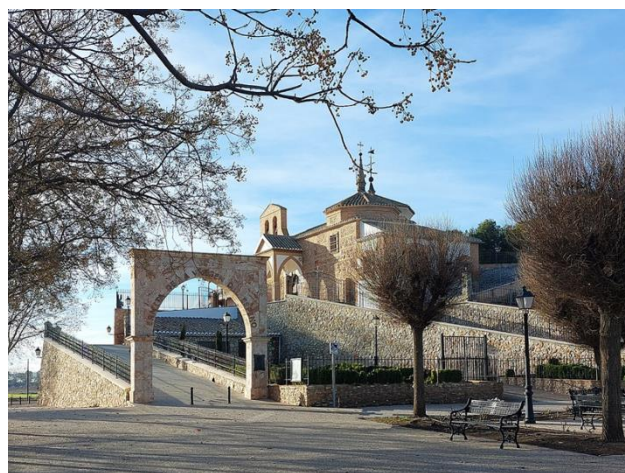
Evangelistic campaign

This took place last July, when nine towns in the region were visited. 30 workers were involved from the Mission churches and the church in Valdepeñas, as well as a church young people's group from the EXODUS ministry.

This year the campaign will take place from 11 to 21 July, and EXODUS will not be sending a team this time. Please pray for the Lord's blessing on the events in the town squares, that people will be challenged by the gospel, ask questions, and take the literature available.

Membrilla

The church has a particular concern for the small town of Membrilla, which has withstood all efforts at outreach. House-to-house literature distribution continues. At Christmas there was an opportunity to sing carols in the town's Social Centre and in the main square. Please pray for the people of this superstitious ultra-Catholic town. They offer gifts to their patron, the Virgin of the Thornbush, including money.



Virgin of the Thornbush sanctuary, Membrilla

Pastoral matters

Recent news includes contact with an Argentinian family who run a café in Manzanares. There are eight adults and three children. The mother was brought up in an evangelical family but married a Mormon and joined that group. They all attend the church and are very interested in learning about the gospel. Manolo and Toñy meet with them in their café each week, where they study the Bible together. Please pray for this great opportunity, that the Lord touches their hearts and that each will submit to Him.

Baldomero needs special prayer. Converted from a life of drug addiction and suffering illness as a result, he lives with his father and brother, who are both addicts themselves. Please pray that his trust in the Lord would remain firm in the midst of this trial.

The Spanish government has changed how it distributes food aid to families in need. The families will be sent cheques rather than being given food from various distribution points. The church does not feel qualified to assess families and distribute money but will instead continue to help with food distribution out of its own resources.

Family matters

After suffering a painful illness for three years, Juana, Toñy's mother, went to be with the Lord at the end of August last year. In October Vicente, Toñy's father, who has dementia, moved into an old people's home and is receiving the care he needs. José, Manolo's father, is also a resident there.

Manolo needed an operation to deal with an abdominal hernia last November, and his gall bladder was also removed but he continues to have inflammation and values prayer.

NEWS FROM MORAL DE CALATRAVA

National Day of Spain

On 12 October each year Spain marks its national day or *Día de la Hispanidad* (Spanish Day) with a public holiday. The day coincides with the celebration of Christopher Columbus' first voyage to the Americas. It is also known as National Armed Forces Day; it is celebrated with a huge military parade in Madrid.

Some of the churches in La Mancha have a 'Day of Friendship or Fellowship' where they meet to hold a service, have lunch together and enjoy fellowship. Last year this took place in Moral de Calatrava. The speaker was from an evangelistic ministry called The Red Box; its name derives from the fact that the evangelists stand on a red box in one of Madrid's main squares to preach the word of God. The theme was *Why and How to Evangelise*.



The local ministers' fraternal organised the event and last year also organised a retreat for themselves and their wives which was held at Monescillo. A special time of teaching, discussions and fellowship was appreciated by all who attended.

Pastoral matters and discipling

Discipling classes have been taking place with a number of people which have been very encouraging: Encarna with Marianny, Noemí with Maria Nieves and Tere, Andrea and Yolanda. José Luis is discipling Antonio. Please pray for these people; some are Christians and some not.

Many of the older folk in the church have health problems including Paula, Maribel, Amalia, Alberto, Ambrosio and Cati.

Outreach

One important opportunity for outreach is through women's coffee mornings as they are evangelistic in nature and many women have been contacted this way.

Mariana, a young Ukrainian woman, is reaching out to children in the town by means of a Bible Adventure Club. Eight children attend the club, and this gives opportunities to speak to the parents too.



SEFOVAN Bible training by extension

This course continues and in January José Luis took part in a training workshop online to qualify as a teacher of the course himself, and also to open other training places if the opportunity arose. He recently travelled to Tenerife to teach a class there. He would appreciate prayer for wisdom as he takes on this new ministry.

Family matters

Noemí's parents are increasingly frail, and she needs to visit them every few weeks – no easy task when the journey takes at least eight hours as they live in the northwest of Spain.

José Luis and Noemí regularly request prayer for their sons, Natanael and Eric. They are both well physically and enjoying life, but neither has any interest in spiritual matters.

NEWS FROM MONESCILLO MISSION HOUSE

Bilingual camp

The Covid pandemic had meant that the bilingual camp could not take place for three years, but last summer it was possible to resume this activity. A smaller number attended than in previous years, and some families needed financial help to participate.

Prayer is asked for this year's camp, for the children to be challenged by the Bible stories and kept safe and well during their time together. It will be held in the first week of July.

The craft workshop

In recent months, nine ladies have joined the workshop. One of them, Loli, has recently borne witness to faith in the Lord. Her fiancé is not a believer; please pray that he is saved.

New activities

New initiatives have started this year, including workshops for young women, facilitated by two women from the European Christian Mission, which also has workers in La Mancha. One of these is Noemí Valero, Manolo and Pepe's sister, who also serves in the church in Manzanares.

There is also a new meeting for older ladies. They meet to have coffee and then have a time of devotions and discussion.

Practical projects

There is always much practical work to complete as the Centre is used increasingly for church retreats and young people's events. Pepe has been refurbishing the floor in one of the larger dormitories. Please pray that his strength holds up and he is kept free from accidents.

Due to a very large gift from a generous person, sufficient funds have been sent to buy all the outstanding mattresses needed for the beds in Monescillo. Pepe and Lidia were humbled before the Lord, praising Him for the generosity of this brother in the UK.

Family matters

Pepe's father has settled well into the care home, which is quite close to Monescillo. He still has the energy to help out by tending the home's garden.

Prayer is asked for the Lord's strength in the work and for wisdom to carry out the ministry in the Mission House.

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for the glory of Christ
until He comes.***

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