

# Free Presbyterian Youth Council



'Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth' - Ecclesiastes 12:1

## REPORT ON 2010 SUMMER OUTREACH TO SPAIN

By Ruth Knowles (Ballymena FPC)

This year I had the opportunity to take part in my first Gospel outreach when, in September, I travelled to Spain with 9 other young people from our churches. We flew into Malaga airport where we met Joy Gillespie who we were spending the week with. After a 4 hour drive we arrived at Joy's home in Cortijos Nuevos, a village in the hills of southern Spain. The church services are held here on a Sunday and we had the great joy of attending the church on the Sabbath morning. After the service we enjoyed fellowship with the congregation, some of whom had to travel for over 30 minutes to get there. On the Wednesday evening we also had the privilege of going to the prayer meeting, held at the home of one of the church members. Here two members of our group, Mark Anderson and Elizabeth Carson, had the opportunity to give their testimony and we felt the Lord's presence with us.

We spent most mornings during our trip travelling to the surrounding villages and towns distributing tracts and reaching every home with the gospel. However, the main reason we had travelled to Spain for the week was to distribute tracts at the festival of the "Virgin of Cortes". This festival takes place every year on 8<sup>th</sup> September in honour of the Virgin Mary. The catholic people believe that she appeared to a shepherd boy many hundreds of years ago and told him to build her a church at Cortes. Many of the Spanish people will walk for days from other villages in their bare feet to attend the festival. The people carry a statue of the Virgin Mary from the town of Alcaraz to the sanctuary in Cortes where it is kept throughout the year.

While we were giving out tracts we had an opportunity to go into the Sanctuary before the parade arrived. The faith that these people have in the Virgin Mary is unbelievable. People have written letters to thank her for answering their prayers. Cancer sufferers have thanked her for being healed and brought their wigs as proof to show they have recovered. Others have brought baby clothes thanking the Virgin for children they believe she has given them. One lady who had written a letter had cut off her long hair and displayed it on the wall of the sanctuary as an expression of thanks. Also there are queues of people lining up to give the Virgin their money and at the end of the festival they have to airlift the takings out of the sanctuary as there is so much money given.

We received mixed responses from the people. Some were willing to take the tracts gladly and others took them and put them in their pockets to read later. There were some of the people who refused the tracts or took them and discarded them. A few even voiced their anger at our attending the parade.

During our time in Spain we had the opportunity to visit a Moorish castle in Segura and also travelled to Granada to visit Alhambra, a 12<sup>th</sup> century fortress. We also had an opportunity to swim in a river however few attempted to stay in the water more than 2 minutes as it was so cold and some even had blue feet after their paddle! We would like to thank Joy for all that she did for us while we were there and inviting us into her home for the week. Also we would like to thank the Boyd family who invited us to their home for lunch. We enjoyed a great time of fun and

fellowship as a group and the Lord's presence was continually felt during our trip. Please pray for the church in Cortijos Nuevos and the great work that Joy and the Boyd family are doing there. Finally I would ask you to pray for Spain, that it may experience the blessing of revival which it has not yet received.

*“And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.” Mark 16v20*



**The congregation in Cortijos Nuevos along with the Youth Council outreach team**