

Dornan Family Update October 2017

And then there were two

With each one of us there are first and last days to all things in life. A first and last day at school, or work. With families there are lots of these days. From the moment you hold your child in your arms to the last day they want to hold your hand. Some of the days drift past and you don't even realise they aren't part of your life anymore. Lesley and I walked through Toys-r-us a while ago and realised we hadn't been there in years, we didn't even know the last time the boys stopped asking to go there.



Josh leaving Chiang Mai for Belfast

This summer was another last for us. Josh finished his six month training school with YWAM and decided to move back to Northern Ireland. It wasn't easy. We booked tickets, packed up his stuff and put him on a plane back to Belfast. There is a reality that bites when the two of you sit at the table together, look at the door and realise that your child isn't going to walk through it any time soon. Sure, we've had lots of dinners with just two of us, we like each other so that makes it easier, but this is different, there is a sense of loss, grief even, marking the the end of this season of your life as your kids move from dependence to independence and don't need you like they did when they were small.

This summer has been hard for us like that. We've said goodbye to too many friends as they moved away. Not just down the road but to other countries and even continents. We get this every year, but this year seemed harder, not just one family but several, close friends that take time to replace and leave holes in your life. It's part of our reality living away from our home country in a community that is more transient. We

keep going however, open our hearts to new friends and families that come our way, we start new first days with new people hoping the last day doesn't come too soon.

There are of course a few up sides. For an introvert like me it frees up lots of alone time. Lesley and I have established a new weekly date night which has been fun to do and important to make as we readjust to just the two of us. We are grateful for all the ways we can communicate as a family over video and keep in touch even without being geographically close.

Home in Belfast

Last time we wrote we were about to head home to Belfast for a month in May/June. We had a great time, felt so welcomed and at home. We were back for the month in our old house, trying to get it fixed up a bit after 9 years of tenants. That bit is still in progress. We enjoyed being back at our home church and getting a chance to connect with old friends and our new pastor. Since it was a work trip rather than a holiday we were busy most of the time. Thanks for those who took time to see us, care for us and for those who gave to us so generously. We left Belfast exhausted but with our hearts full.

On the work front.

Beside pastoring our own church in Chiang Mai, we are also involved in helping to develop Vineyard churches in Thailand. Andrew met with a small group of Vineyard leaders to look at a development, growth and training strategy for our churches here as well as how we might involve and include countries where the church is more developed. We'll have another meeting with a slightly bigger group to flesh out the plan with practical details. Andrew will also attend the summit of Asian Vineyard leaders in November.

Birth Across the Borders

Lesley ran a three month project called Birth Across the Borders (BAB) with Ulster University and Chiang Mai University looking at infant and maternal mortality. The project has now moved to the next stage of gathering data and stories from villages in Karen State in Myanmar/Burma. The project will enable her to collect information on the healthcare needs of mothers and infants particularly in the months surrounding pregnancy and birth. This kind of evidence helps to plan interventions which will save lives and lead to better health outcomes in communities. This project, while just in one state, should give enough evidence for the need of a national survey as part of a larger scale project. This month Lesley met with key leaders of the Karen Department of Health who have given the green light for the project at this stage and are keen to support it to the next stages of development as well.



Lesley with nurses from Myanmar at BAB workshop

New Opportunities

Lesley has been working for the Faculty of Medicine at CMU for 5/6 years now. This year she was asked to join the Faculty of Nursing as a research fellow to continue her research in the nursing/social science fields rather than medicine. We are excited about this new move as it includes research and teaching with the faculty. We are also grateful this will continue to secure a visa and the right to work while we remain in Thailand.

Earth Mission

Lesley spent a couple of weeks training in public health to the new intake of students. The birth house project that some of the CFC men were helping with in March is going ahead as part of larger inpatient facility to meet the need of those who need surgery on 24 hour care.

Upcoming events and training

Community Development education training in October
Helping one of the international churches use their centre to reach the wider community
Asian leaders summit
Lesley speaking at a conference
Nepal follow up training for Grief and Trauma workshops

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