



The BONHAM Family

This month, September 18th to be exact, marks 1 year that we've officially been "on the field." Well, on the field in a training program, that is. But either way, it's a year away from everything we knew before, a year in a foreign land with a foreign culture, a year struggling through a foreign language. The first year of our missionary career is under the belt.

It's easy to look back and give a list of all the things that have happened in the past 12 months. Of course, there are the obvious things... we have learned *a lot* of Spanish. We're far from fluent, but we are conversational enough to have real, significant relationships with people that go beyond the surface level. We've learned a lot about what it means to live and operate in a place that's far different from what we knew before. We've served in 2 churches and observed the leadership development of a new church plant.



We've visited some cool places in the city, adjusted to high-altitude living, and I can even cook a few Colombian meals.



Then there are the team dynamics. We grew to a 3-family team made up of our family, the Kines family, and the Gutierrez family. We visited some potential ministry locations, spent a lot of time praying for guidance, and eventually began making plans to move our team to Arequipa, Perú. We welcomed new team members through the birth of Carter Kines and Simeon Gutierrez.

And of course, our own family dynamics have changed as well. In the past year, our twins have turned 3, learned Spanish, and gained a new Spanish-speaking brother. After more than 2 years in the process of adoption, we met Luís and gained custody on July 25, and he officially became a Bonham on September 2nd when we signed the adoption decree. Having 3 young children the same age, combined with the fact that Luís doesn't speak English has thrust us into a whole new realm of parenting that we weren't quite prepared for! Our house is a little louder, our days a little busier, our floors a little messier, and our hearts a little fuller.

Like I said, those are the easy things to list. But it's difficult to sort through the changes that have taken place on a deeper level, and even harder to put them into words. In the past year, we've learned to cling tighter to each other in our marriage and to make "loving well" an even higher priority than before. We've learned that making time to meet with the Lord in the morning before the



house becomes loud and busy is no longer just helpful, its *essential*, and that the refreshment and fulfillment we find there can't be found anywhere else. We've learned that prayer and accountability with our teammates is more important than we'd ever realized. We've learned that we are messing things up constantly, that stress compounds everything, and that the only way to manage being on a team or in a family in the middle of the mission field is to repent quickly, forgive quickly, and offer up as much grace as possible. Asking for forgiveness has become the norm, as has thanking the Lord that he has given us such dedicated, loving, and broken people to walk this journey with us. We've found dark, sinful places in our hearts that we didn't know where there before, but we've found the Lord constantly meeting us there and covering us with grace and mercy.

It's been a hard year, and an amazing one. Of all the things we've learned, I think the biggest one is that *we're still learning*, and I don't think we'll ever be done. I think we'll probably feel like brand-new, naïve missionaries for the rest of our lives, because I can't quite see how anyone could ever feel like they've got this whole thing figured out. But in the midst of it all, we know that this is where we're supposed to be, and we love it despite the hard parts. We're amazed and thankful for the ways we've seen God's faithfulness in Year Number One.

And as far as Year Number Two is concerned...ready or not, here it comes!!



We invite you to read about the rest of the families on our team. it is hard for us to give a true reflection of all that the Lord is doing in our lives apart from sharing about our larger family here in Bogota.

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