



# *The Stubenrauchs in* **THAILAND**



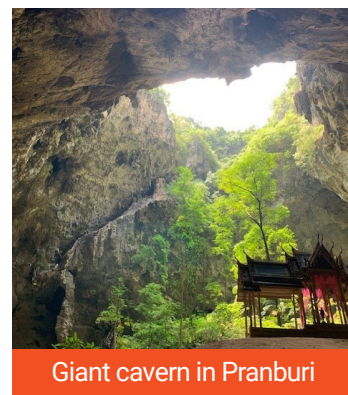
## DEAR FRIENDS & FAMILY

June 2023

Hello from sunny Pensacola! **This newsletter is the strange and wonderful tale of how the Stubenrauchs exited the country of Thailand and entered the United States.** I hope you enjoy it! Writing this down has reminded me of the faithfulness of God in our lives...again.

It took months of packing, weeks of being in transit in another province, almost two whole days of travel and a lot of your prayers to get us here! The months of March and April were very dedicated to going through over 20 years' worth of books, kids' artwork, blankets and linens, toys, tools, dishes, photos, furniture, and lots of stuff. **I could have never imagined packing my entire house into two suitcases per person, two carry-ons per person, and two medium-sized boxes per person, even after all the travel and furloughs and moving around we've done over the years.** This was a different sort of letting go.

**Brian said all he needed was his Bible and his clothes. One friend said I should light a match and walk away. Another friend said I should not forget to pack things like a pair of scissors and some forks and spoons.** There were so many happy moments as I watched young, homeschooling, missionary moms walk away with armloads of books they could never find on that side of the ocean. There were new friendships made as quiet neighbors came out of the woodwork to ask about our furniture sitting in the carport and our plans. Friends working on new property could use the tools and new missionaries with a big family made use of those bunk beds! The joy and the pain of goodbyes and new beginnings has seemed unending. As we said goodbye to Thai friends and missionary friends our hearts were full. **To see with our own eyes what God has done in relationships spanning decades in a place where we weren't even born feels like more than we can hold.** I think I'd have to write a book to tell it all.



Giant cavern in Pranburi



Family hike



We have the best friends in the world!  
They drove 7 hours just to tell us  
goodbye at the Bangkok airport.

The plan was to leave Chiang Mai together and head to South Thailand for a few weeks before we left for America. Our landlord wanted us out of our house in Chiang Mai, and we were waiting for our missionary house in Pensacola to be available. It seemed like a perfect window of transition. **In the wee hours, a few days before we were to leave our house for good, Mercy woke up with appendicitis and needed emergency surgery.** While thanking God that we were still near good hospitals in Chiang Mai, that her appendix hadn't fully ruptured, and that our international insurance would cover it, we adjusted our travel plans and were held by Jesus and our friends and family. Our family in America prayed close to their phones, texting at all hours, and immediately volunteered to get Mercy a new Kindle when a motorcycle taxi ran over hers. (True story!) One friend came to the ER immediately. One friend texted and called all day in between counseling clients. Friends sent food and brought food. Other friends were praying together for Mercy as the husband went in to defend his doctoral thesis! His wife sent him a thumbs up (during his defense!) from across the room when Mercy came out of surgery. Other friends took our boys to play and distract them in the middle of this unexpected turn of events. Our Globe member care team was praying and on call with encouragement and wisdom.



After a couple of days in the hospital and a couple of days at home, Brian and the boys headed to South Thailand a few days before Mercy was cleared to fly. Friends sent them off with suitcases galore while Mercy and I stayed with wonderful, longtime friends for a couple more nights. **Finally, we all arrived in the south, which ironically (or unironically) was where we started our missionary journey as newlyweds. As we spent our last weeks there, I realized that I sort of felt like a kid coming home to the familiar climate, food, and dialect.** We were really just kids when we landed almost 22 years ago.

**We landed at the Pensacola airport five weeks ago, after 40 hours of travel, to the beaming faces of our Charity Chapel church family.** Kids from the youth group and our dear, dear friends were there to give us hugs and push luggage carts. It was a whirlwind of laughter and affection. They gathered us up and dropped us off at the missionary house where we will be staying for the foreseeable future. **The fridge and pantry were stocked, there were welcome back cards and posters, and a giant pan of mac and cheese awaiting us!** Within a few hours, Asia had joined us for the summer, and we were home.



Creed caught a little guy

Over the past weeks we've been settling into our new life here. We're slowly starting our new responsibilities as assistant directors of member care with Globe, and Brian has started his part time role as assistant pastor with our amazing church, Charity Chapel. **We get to keep doing the things we love to do, but now with different people groups.** Global missionaries and Americans.

We have loved continuing our training under Globe's member care department and beginning to have more hours to meet with missionaries who are needing someone to come alongside them. **Everyone needs someone in their life that they can share their troubles with.** As I've said before, missionaries often have almost no one in this role in their life because they are so busy being that for others. I'll be telling you more about what this really looks like very soon.

As the days go by, **we are seeing the need in America that so many of you have tried to tell us about over the past few years.** After listening to a distraught woman tell Brian about her life in the neighborhood behind our church, we were made aware of the Fentanyl addiction problem that is almost literally in our church's back yard. We are definitely on a new learning curve. I told Brian that I want a shirt that says, **HOPE DEALER.**



Buddhist New Year called "Songkran" is the biggest water fight in the world.

We want you all to know how thankful we are for your continued prayer and support. When we shared our vision and what we felt God was asking us to do in this new season, we weren't sure about the responses we would get. Every one of you that we talked to said with resounding joy, "America needs missionaries! We are glad God is bringing you back at just the right time!" All of you got behind our burden to see missionaries looked after and walking in wholeness. **Thank you! It is our privilege to partner with you.**

Love, - *Brian, Mary Beth, Asia, Mercy, Micah, Tyndale, Creed, and Davy*



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