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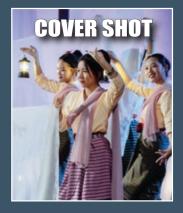
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**Fay Inman** 

Advocacy Coordinator

**Aaron Hart** 

Communications Coordinator / Editor



Photographer: Captured and supplied by a local church photographer.

Location: A church near Chiang Rai, Thailand.

**Equipment:** N/A

Situation: Girls from House of Grace-

Thailand in a Christmas play.

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# The Highest Form Of Thought

How gratitude shapes our faith and future

#### BY TRAVIS RUTLAND

.K. Chesterton was a wonderfully talented British writer and philosopher in the early part of the 20th century. He was also a very serious Christian. One of my favorite quotes of his is, "I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought..." What a magnificent concept and a huge challenge to each of us.

You might have heard the saying, "There are no atheists in foxholes". That is probably true. Most people, in their moments of most desperate need, will cry out to God. However, I would add this caveat to that saying which is, "Very few mature, balanced Christians are

created in foxholes." Why? Because the foxhole mentality is to cry out to God in the moment of need. However, the instant that God intervenes and the crisis passes, we forget everything we prayed for and promised God, and just move on.

This is the reason why what Chesterton is saying is so important. Saying thank you reminds us of the need that we had and forces us to be grateful to the

person that helped us. Or to God when He moves on our behalf. Or, on many occasions to both. For example, when we have a crisis, God works through another human being to help us in our most anxious hour. Our response cannot be a casual muttered thanks as we continue on our way. This is not what we as Christians should be about.

Christians should be the most thankful people on the planet. We should be the first to say thank you. Saying thank you should not be a routine whisper uttered with a complete lack of enthusiasm. Instead, saying thank you should spring out of us with unencumbered joy. We should say thank you for every compliment,

thank you for the financial blessing, thank you for the help, thank you for the encouragement, thank you for the assistance, whatever form it takes. It is our highest form of thought and one that we should exercise much more frequently.

So, let me now participate in that highest form of thought. Because of you and your generosity, we were able to reach our matching gift goal of \$500,000! We





only had a little more than 4 months at the end of 2024 to try and raise that matching gift, and you in your faithfulness and generosity made it happen. I was absolutely blown away when I got the final report two days before Christmas, confirming that we had reached the final goal and raised a total of \$1 million. I am so grateful to the matching gift donor, but I am also grateful to each of you. Your willingness to get involved made this happen. This matching gift will be such a tremendous blessing to our work in both Thailand and West Africa. Our ongoing goal of expanding our work in both places remains possible because of not only this matching gift but because of all that you do.

In trying to teach children manners, you will often hear parents tell the kids that please is the magic word. I actually do not agree with that. In my opinion, the magic word is thank you. Thank you keeps us humble and reminds us of our blessing. So, on behalf of everyone at Global Servants, thank you! None of this is possible without your prayers, your faithfulness, and your generosity. For all that you have done and continue to do, I say thank you. All of us at Global Servants are blessed to partner with you to help and serve others. Thank you! ◀

TRAVIS RUTLAND has worked for Global Servants since 1997. He currently serves as the President of Global Servants. In addition to his role at Global Servants, Travis is the Lead Pastor at The Church at Liberty Square in Cartersville, Georgia. A native of Georgia, Travis holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree from Southeastern University. Travis has been married to his wife, Courtney, since 1997 and they reside in Cartersville, Georgia. They have three sons, Mark, Owen and Liam.

## Birthdays, Elections, And Dying Young

Reflections on life, faith, and the power of a merry heart

#### BY DR. MARK RUTLAND

y 77th birthday, in 2024, happened to fall on Election Day. Let me say without apology, I got what I wanted and what I barely dared to hope for. I stayed up until 3:45 am, flipping back and forth from one news channel to the next, just waiting for the final results. I studied the faces of the various newscasters as shock and despair filled the countenances on some channels and hope and excitement flooded others. Alison, who had confidence in the outcome, calmly went to bed and awoke with a single statement: "I told you so."

Now, I look ahead to birthday number 78 and I wonder what this year will hold. I do not know that but I know who holds 2025. That is in whom I place my hope. No president, no government, and no leader of any kind is our ultimate hope and confidence. No president is perfect; certainly not Donald Trump. He is the president I wanted, the birthday president I suppose I should say, but he is WAY NOT PERFECT. God, however, is perfect and He loves us despite our imperfections. It is into His hands that we surrender our ways and our years and our lives. He is able to keep that which we commit unto Him against that day.

I do not know what 2025 holds, but I am going to KEEP ON KEEPING ON as long as He gives me strength. I am going to keep on going, giving, learning, and laughing. I will especially keep laughing, right to the end. I do not intend to go gentle into that good night. I am going to rage against the dying of the light. If you do not know what I mean by "raging," you should read my newest book. If you do not know what dancing has to do with it, you need to read my newest book. If you don't know why we should try to die young you have to read my newest book. If you need a laugh, especially if

you need a good laugh, you absolutely must read my newest book; KEEP ON KEEPING ON: HOW TO DIE YOUNG AS OLD AS POSSIBLE.

This book is for mature audiences only. I will not decide if you are mature enough for this book. However, here are some clues. Do you know what a hula hoop is? Have you ever played with a Slinky, used a rotary phone, or mailed an actual letter? If you answered yes, then this book is for you. I want this book to be an anthem to joy, love, and laughter. I want to announce, as it says in the book, "Old don't gotta mean, mean." The Bible tells us that a merry heart does good like medicine. So, get this book and take your medicine like a big boy or girl. I hope you will get this new book today and laugh your way to longevity.  $\P$ 

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DR. MARK RUTLAND is the Founder of Global Servants. He is a New York Times Best Selling author, educator, charismatic leader, businessman and a nationally recognized figure in Christian higher education. Dr. Rutland has been married to his wife Alison for more than 55 years now. They reside in the greater Atlanta area. For more information about Dr. Rutland please visit (drmarkrutland.com) and follow him on X (@drmarkrutland).







## **Unwrapping Love: Christmas At House Of Grace**

A celebration of love, giving, and new beginnings

By Fay Inman

hen someone asks you about your favorite Christmas memory, what comes to mind? When you ask that question to the girls at the Houses of Grace, you hear, *LOVE!* Most girls at both homes come from impoverished

environments where gifts and celebrations are nonexistent. When they arrive at the homes, most have never celebrated a birthday, and some do not even know when their birthday is. Most have not heard of Jesus, unconditional love, or the kindness of complete strangers. They have come from a world of hurt and neglect. The new girls at House of Grace-Thailand arrive before the new school year begins in April or May. In June, the home celebrates birthdays with one large celebration.

The birthday celebration is a shock to the new girls and it takes time for them to understand that a sponsor they have never met is celebrating their birth.

In six short months since their first arrival at House of Grace, it is time to celebrate Christmas. They have attended chapel,



Bible study, and church off campus. They have heard about the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ. Some have accepted Him as their Lord and Savior. The gospel of Christ is new to them, because the main religion in Thailand is Buddhism, practiced by about 92% of the population. Most people

from the hill tribes believe in animist rituals, connecting to the spirits of nature. For most of the girls at House of Grace-Thailand, they are the first Christians in their families. Where Christmas is an inner celebration of God's love for us by sending His Son, it is also an opportunity to share that love with others.

The plans for Christmas celebrations begin in October when all the gifts for the sponsors are mailed to the Global Servants home office. Then, in November, the plans





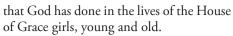
for the Christmas pageant begin. The older girls, in grade ten through university and vocational college, write the script, assign parts, plan the music, and, with the help of the staff, plan outreach gifts. This Christmas production is performed in the villages, with dinner, presents for the children, and coloring books about Jesus. It is a celebration where the entire Gospel is presented to young and old.

This same production is repeated at their local church and at House of Grace for visiting teams and alumnae. The alumnae at House of Grace-Thailand support the girls throughout the year with gifts, financial support, and mentorship. At Christmas, alumnae bring their families; their children consider the home a place of love and laughter. House of Grace-Thailand has never been an orphanage but

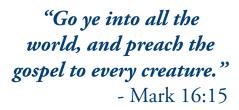




a home for children—where God can Save Little Girls for Big Destinies. Every year, the girls at House of Grace are reminded that God has saved them for a specific purpose. Christmas is a time to witness all



Two visiting teams were on campus for Christmas 2024. A few members of these teams had been to House of Grace-Thailand before and felt they were returning home to their extended family. Because of sponsors and financial supporters like you, entire villages in the mountains of Northern Thailand have heard the Good News of Jesus. Their children have been fed and given a book in their native language explaining the love of God. As we look back on what we received for Christmas, we are grateful for what you have given. Your committed financial support enables the staff, girls and alumnae of House of Grace-Thailand to:



We all celebrate the magic of Christmas. It is a time of love, hope, and promise. It is the one time of year when we make the time to get together with friends and family we have missed all year. We celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christmas is a special time for all the girls at House of Grace-Ghana and House of »





Grace-Thailand. It is the one time of year when they are the benefactors, not the beneficiaries. Each girl prepares gift cards for their sponsor families and financial supporters. Whether it is an ornament for the Christmas tree, a hand-painted watercolor card, a journal cover, or even a Kente stole, all are an act of love and bring joy to the giver. Sponsors celebrate their gifts differently, placing them on the tree, in a frame, or in a vase on the table with all the gifts through the years. These gifts become conversation pieces for friends and family. Families pray over their sponsored daughters daily, especially during the Christmas season.

**Natcha S**, wrote to her sponsor about her first Christmas at House of Grace, "This year is the first year that I feel God's love for me."

Charunee C, studying in China with a program through Rajabhat University, wrote, "It is not that I am unhappy here, I just miss my country, Thai food, I miss my friends, I miss House of Grace. Christmas is not fun like it is at home." Girls away from the home because of school are homesick for

House of Grace. The traditions, the love, the food, the excitement.

**Buder B**, who is in the final stages of her internship at Kantary Hills Chiang Mai, was able to practice her English with all the tourists coming through the resort, but her heart longed to be at House of Grace with her family.

Suthima C, is in Nursing School and her second year of internship at the hospital. She was unable to go shopping with the older girls, but she made it home for the Christmas celebration because it was held later. She was excited to see the teams on campus, to celebrate Christmas, and to recharge.

Jennifer A, "The joy of the girls wasn't just about the presents; it was about feeling seen, loved, and cared for. I'm forever changed and I can't wait to return and see those sweet faces as we pull in the driveway!"

Glenn B, "The biggest takeaway for us, was the involvement of the ladies

who were previously at the House of Grace. There have been many instances where their impact in the community continue years after they physically leave the campus."

**Steve B**, "Watching the expressions of happiness on the girls' faces is one of the greatest experiences of a lifetime."

Howard S, "As part of our Christmas celebration, we do our best to give thoughtful gifts to each other—some are hits and some are misses. But, the one gift that never disappoints is the one we receive from Rattana. We know that Rattana worked hard in preparing the gift, and we love the Thai cultural aspects of the gift. We hang the gift up in our tree every year. Lisa and I pray daily for Rattana—for her health, her studies, and for her getting closer each day to Jesus. We cherish the letters we receive from her, as well as the pictures and videos. We are so thankful to have Rattana in our lives, and we are so blessed to be a very small part of the incredible work of Global Servants."



December and the start of January are filled with festivities at House Grace-Ghana. Because of your generous, committed support, the girls have participated in many celebrations surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ. Even though Ghana gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1957, many traditions are based on British customs. The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols popularly associated with King's College, Cambridge. The girls participate in this structured scripture reading with Christmas carols throughout. Participating is an honor, and the shyest girls will rise to the occasion. The girls also participate in the Trinity Foundation Church Service.

Presents under the tree follow a Christmas luncheon, and no celebration is complete without dancing—lots of joy-filled dancing.

The season's highlight is the fufu feast, a vibrant celebration of West African cuisine.



Mrs. Comfort and the older girls pound a mixture of boiled cassava and plantains into a doughy, smooth, sticky substance formed into a round ball. This ball is used to dip a light soup of goat/mutton. Eating utensils are not required; this is a handson experience for everyone. A feast of fufu is a highly anticipated meal, savored by everyone.



FAY INMAN is the Advocate at Global Servants. With over 30 years of experience as an advocate nationally for girls. Fay has been married to Kenny for over thirty years, and they have two daughters: Kennedy, Gussy and grand-baby Ophelia Fay.



### Lake Bosumtwi: Ghana's Meteoric Wonder

estled in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, about 19 miles southeast of Kumasi, Lake Bosumtwi is the country's only natural lake, formed by a meteor impact. Covering approximately

square miles and reaching depths over 260 feet, it is a breathtaking natural Surrounded wonder. by lush forests and rolling hills, the lake provides vital resources for local communities, offering water, fishing, and recreational opportunities.

For the girls at House of Grace-Ghana, visiting Lake Bosumtwi is always a special experience. They enjoy

> its peaceful beauty, learn about its unique geological history, and spend time together in reflection. The lake's atmosphere serene offers a place for rest and renewal, reminding them of God's presence



in creation. It serves as a testament to His handiwork and inspires gratitude for the natural world He has entrusted to us.







very April, Thailand erupts into celebration with Songkran, the country's traditional New Year festival. Running from April 13-15, Songkran is best known for its lively water fights, symbolizing renewal and a fresh start. Families come together to show gratitude, seek blessings, and celebrate new beginnings. While Thailand now recognizes January 1 as the official start of the calendar year—a change made in 1941Songkran remains its most significant traditional New Year celebration.

At House of Grace-Thailand, our girls eagerly anticipate this joyful time each year. Laughter and excitement fill the air as they take part in the festivities, reflecting on God's blessings and the promise of a new season. More than just fun, Songkran serves as a reminder of renewal, thankfulness, and the strength of community.

Beyond the water fights, the festival is a time of reflection, generosity, and strengthening relationships. Communities gather to share meals, encourage one another, and step into the new year with joy and purpose. For the girls at House of Grace, it's an opportunity to celebrate how far they've come and look ahead with faith and confidence, trusting in God's continued provision.

## Partner Spotlight /



## **A Purpose Beyond Ourselves**

How Global Servants helped us discover a greater purpose

By Buddy and Gigi Maughon

everal years ago, we became aware of Global Servants through attending church services led by Dr. Mark Rutland.

The more we learned of the important work Global Servants was doing around the world to help children who had no hope, we were compelled to become involved. We wanted to know that our contribution was truly making a difference in the lives of these children.

As we read about Global Servants and their mission, it was clear that we had found the organization to share what God has blessed us with. The hope and new life poured out on the girls in Thailand have truly touched our souls. The good people we have gotten to know at Global Servants, Dr. Mark Rutland, Travis Rutland, Ronny Brannen and others, are just the best of the best! To see young girls who would have been lost, gain knowledge and a relationship with Jesus Christ, receive a

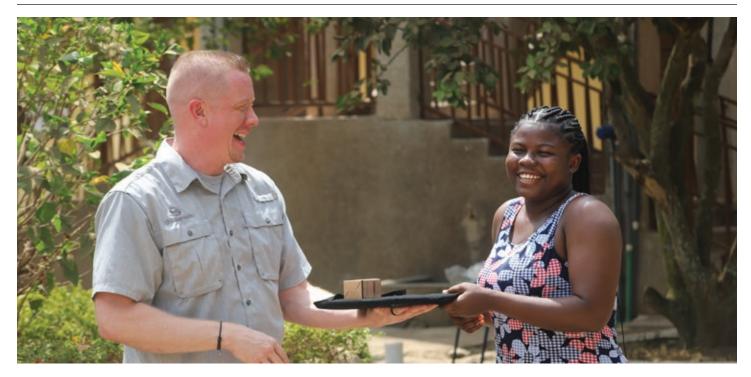
loving home, and obtain an education that would not have been possible otherwise is a blessing to our hearts and souls.



If you are looking for a place to share your blessing, and one that truly benefits those in need, you need look no further than this wonderful organization—Global Servants. ◀

BUDDY AND GIGI MAUGHON are the proud owners of Bare Bones Steakhouse in Buford, Georgia. Buddy has spent over 60 years in the meat industry, beginning his career as a butcher before fulfilling his lifelong dream of opening a steakhouse in 2015. Gigi, a Georgia native, worked in the medical and pharmacy fields before joining Buddy in the restaurant business. Together, they have built Bare Bones into a beloved staple in Buford's historic district. Married since 2001, Buddy and Gigi share a blended family of four children and nine grandchildren. They enjoy traveling, good food, and preserving Buford's rich history. When they aren't at the restaurant, you might find them dreaming of their next adventure—perhaps a train ride across Canada.

## Ministry Update /



## **Fresh Faces, Fresh Vision**

Welcoming new leaders and embracing a season of growth

By Ronny Brannen

t's hard to believe that this is the year 2025. It seems like Y2K was yesterday, and wow, things have changed. I would never have imagined that I would talk to people on my watch or make a call to Thailand or Ghana and see the person I am talking to. Things are changing, and every new year brings with it new opportunities-and that is true for Global Servants as well. As we venture into this new year, it brings us to a new season and has introduced us to new faces. It is always exciting here at Global Servants as we welcome new girls in Thailand and Ghana and share new adventures with our churches and school in Ghana. But this year has also brought us new changes and new faces on the home front.

As many of you may already know, Tyler Ellis who has been with us for many years as our COO, has accepted the position of Executive Pastor for Living Hope Church in Merrillville, Indiana. Even though he and his family have moved to Indiana he still works with us and has become our Director of International Operations. He will

continue to manage our overseas operations by coordinating trips to and projects in Thailand and Ghana.

If you have called the Global office, you have probably spoken with Nathaniel Vinke. Nathaniel came to



Global Servants in December 2023 as our Office Manager, but he is now our Director of Partner Relations. He works with our church partners and is working to develop and recruit new church partners to help build God's Kingdom together.

Also coming on board as a new staff member is Steve Birmingham. Steve is



our Director of Donor Relations. He is working on developing new donors to come alongside Global Servants to support and further our work in the world. Steve was on our board of directors but stepped down to serve as an employee of Global Servants. Steve also works at The Church at Liberty Square where our president, Travis Rutland, serves as the lead pastor. At Liberty Square, Steve serves as their missions pastor.

Not only has God brought new faces into the office of Global Servants but He has also brought us new faces and voices to our board of directors. We now have three new board members. They are Heather Gill, Justin Senesi, and Tony Vismor. First, we have Heather Gill.



Heather is the lead veterinarian of Cedar Animal Hospital in Richmond Hill, GA. Heather and the Gill family have been longtime supporters of Global Servants. She and her mother have sponsored many girls in Thailand and Ghana for many years. Heather was the first sponsor of one of our higher education girls in Ghana and she has supported many projects with her heart for the mission work we do. Next, we have Justin Senesi.



Justin is the lead pastor of Hickory Ridge Church in Greenwood, DE. Justin and Hickory Ridge have also been long-time supporters of Global Servants. Justin and his family sponsor one of our girls in Ghana and several members of the Hickory Ridge Church sponsor girls in Thailand and Ghana. Hickory Ridge Church has sent teams on a yearly basis to both Thailand and Ghana for many years. They have made Global Servants a mission priority and focus for their

Church. Our third new board member is Tony Vismor. Tony is the lead pastor



of Grace Fellowship Church in Bogart, GA. Tony and his church have supported Global Servants for many years. Tony has a heart for people and for mission and ministry and is excited about the work we do around the world. We thank God for these three new board members, our new staff members and for the work of our entire board of directors and staff.

We are thrilled to add these new staff members and new board members to the Global Servants family. I am very excited to see where God will lead us and how He will speak through these new voices as we continue to pursue all God has for us and our coworkers around the world. I see our work continuing to expand for the glory of God and this would not be possible without you, our faithful supporters and prayer partners. This year is sure to bring exciting new ventures to Global Servants. Thank you for helping to make this happen and may God richly bless you in all that you do.  $\P$ 

RONNY BRANNEN is the Executive Director at Global Servants. He is a retired Pastor of over 40 years, and the past Chair on the Board of Directors for Global Servants. Ronny holds an Associate of Arts degree from Reinhardt College, a Bachelor's degree from Georgia State University, and a Master's of Divinity degree from Emory University. He has been married to his wife, Darlene, since 1978 and they have two daughters and five grandchildren.



## Shea Butter: Ghana's "Women's Gold"

n Ghana, shea butter is more than just a skincare ingredient—it's a lifeline for women and a driver of economic transformation. Often called "women's gold," shea butter production sustains the livelihoods of over 470,000 women across northern Ghana, many of whom hand-process shea nuts in a tradition passed down for generations. The industry is booming, with Ghana alone exporting over 60,000 tons of shea nuts annually from approximately 94 million shea trees. Across West África, total exports range between 500,000 and 600,000 tons each year, feeding the growing global demand for shea in cosmetics, food, and pharmaceuticals.

For many women, shea butter provides financial independence, enabling them to support their families and invest in education. At House of Grace-Ghana, our girls see firsthand the strength and perseverance of women working in this industry. Every shea-based product enjoyed in America represents a direct connection to these hardworking women—supporting their empowerment, strengthening communities, and creating hope for future generations.





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