

# MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER &amp; PRAYER GUIDE

## WHY WE FOCUS ON THE LEAST-REACHED

by Dr. Marvin Lorenzana

**EMM's vision is to catalyze movements that multiply disciples of Jesus around the world, giving primary focus to people groups that are currently least-reached.**

*“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” — Luke 15:4–7*

Jesus doesn't use numbers in his teaching very often. It is really stunning how Jesus uses these numerical comparisons to make an important point. In fact, when we look at this passage in context with the rest of the chapter, we see Jesus uses three parables to emphasize how critical just one thing is:

- 1 out of 100 sheep
- 1 out of 10 coins
- 1 out of 2 sons

Finding the lost sheep, coins, or children is so critical to God that he will go out of his way to find them. We are invited into this mission to join God in his work of reconciling all of creation to himself. This is why sharing the good news of Jesus with the least-reached people of the world is so critical to EMM's work.

So what do we mean when we say, “least-reached?” Let's start with what it is not. Sometimes, you will hear people use the term “unreached,” which is not a bad word, but implies that we're trying to find “uncontacted peoples” around the world. There are only about 10,000 people in the entire world who would be identified as “uncontacted” — that is, hunter-gatherers who avoid or do not have interaction with the rest of the world. (Ironically, the continent with the lowest number of least-reached people is actually the place with the most uncontacted tribes: South America.)

When we say least-reached people, we are referring to a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance. This often means that a people group has fewer than 5% Christian adherents and is less than 2% evangelical. (Definition adapted from the Joshua Project.)

EMM has done mission work around the world for more than 100 years. First, we began with local missions in the U.S., and went on to carry out international missions in more than 100 countries, leading to the formation of more than 20 church multiplication movements.

Our first international work among the Luo people in Tanganyika was working with a least-reached people group at the time. Throughout the decades, that has continued to be our focus.

Now, we're asking the question, “Will God do this again?” Brothers and sisters, quite simply, he is doing this again! And EMM wants to continue being part of what God is doing around the world, in searching to find those who are far from him.

I am beyond thankful for every person who has sustained the work of EMM for over 100 years. You have also been driven by this vision to see all people come to know Jesus. Your generosity has continued to bless everyone who is hearing the gospel for the first time. **We encourage you to make a gift to EMM's Impact Fund by June 31. You can give online at [EMM.ORG/GIVE](https://www.emm.org/give) or by returning the envelope to us with your gift.**

Thank you for your continued generosity!



*Dr. Marvin Lorenzana serves as president of EMM.*

# LEAST-REACHED PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

EACH CIRCLE REPRESENTS 5 MILLION PEOPLE

Data from [joshuaproject.net](http://joshuaproject.net)



Oftentimes, pictures speak louder than words, so I want to draw your attention to the graphic above, highlighting a few important points regarding why EMM focuses on least-reached people:

**ASIA IS HOME TO MOST LEAST-REACHED PEOPLE.** More than 60 percent of the world’s population lives in Asia. In fact, 5 of the 10 largest countries by population are all in Asia. This is one of the reasons that EMM has created two focus regions on this continent: Central Asia and Southeast Asia. We’re eager to do this work together with Asian Christians who are passionate about reaching the least-reached people in this region.

**AFRICA IS HOME TO BOTH MANY LEAST-REACHED PEOPLE AND A LOT OF CHRISTIANS.** It would be an understatement to say that Africa is a huge continent, in terms of both geography and population. While nearly half of Africa identifies as Christian, it also has nearly 1,000 least-reached people groups. Being able to partner with African Christians in mission is critical for our work in places like West Africa.

**THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE IS VERY REACHED.** South America and Oceania (including Australia) have significant access to the gospel. There are fewer than 1 million and 2 million least-reached people in each region, respectively. North America is not least-reached, but there are people here who are. We can look to these regions to partner together in sending workers to unreached parts of the world.

**MIGRATION CHANGES EVERYTHING.** Least-reached people in North America and Europe are generally immigrants who came from communities around the world that are least-reached. This is one of the reasons why we focus on Central Europe and Lancaster, Pa.

**“CHRISTIAN” DOES NOT IMPLY THAT PEOPLE HAVE AN ACTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.** Many people around the world who identify with Christianity are nominal. This is why we’re focused on mission in Central Europe which has a strong history of secularism. It’s also worth noting, that just because someone is “evangelical,” doesn’t mean that they have an active relationship with Jesus either. However, we generally find that people tend to have more active relationships with Jesus when they identify as “evangelical.”

## JUNE DAILY PRAYER

**1 LEBANON CITY, PA.** | Pray for Michael Clancy as he continues to disciple and mentor Shawn to take over and carry on the work that he is doing with prison ministry. Pray that God will continue to transform lives and give hope.

**2 THAILAND** | Pray for God to call pioneer church planters into the harvest field of Thailand to join the team there.

**3 U.S.** | Pray for Matthew Baugher as he is transitioning back to life in the U.S. after completing Advance. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in dealing with reverse culture-shock.

**4 MIDDLE EAST** | Pray for Michael and Laura\* as they prepare for a three-month home leave in the U.S., beginning later this month. Pray that they can find rest and renewal. Pray for safety as they travel to share in supporting churches.

**5 U.S.** | Pray for Angie Earl as she continues to serve on the Christian-Muslim Relations Team. Pray for wisdom as she relates to Muslim women and that the seeds that are planted will bring about transformation and new life for these women.

**6 GLOBAL** | Pray for God to call Advance Global participants for the fall of 2024, to West Africa, Germany and Southeast Asia.

**7 GLOBAL** | Pray for William Higgins as he travels to Tanzania next week. He will be teaching at a women's conference of the Tanzania Mennonite Church.

**8 SOMALIA** | Pray that the Holy Spirit would give Somalis a desire to know and love their Creator.

**9 CZECH REPUBLIC** | Praise the Lord for the good exploratory trip that Karen Hess had at the end of April. Pray that God continues to direct her as she arranges a living situation and discerns a ministry focus. Pray for Karen as she has begun learning some Czech.

**10 U.S.** | Thank the Lord for the staff and workers joining EMM as they start orientation week.

**11 CENTRAL ASIA** | Pray for Evan and Faith\* as they continue to prepare for their assignment and work at finalizing their support team.

**12 SOUTHEAST ASIA** | Pray for Will and Nina\* as they encourage and work alongside the team at a business for transformation. Pray for the children in their schooling and relationships with those in their community.

**13 SPAIN** | Pray for Paula\* as she continues to train and resource others to minister to persons in trauma through the ministry of Petra Peace-builders. Pray for her as she also ministers to people walking through deep trauma.

**14 U.S.** | Pray for God to continue to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center, at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, Pa.

**15 GERMANY** | Pray for Janelle\* as she walks with several people who are learning to trust God in very difficult situations. Pray for protection for the children as they go to school and that they can be a witness to their friends. Pray that God continues to use Eric\* as he relates to many students.

**16 CZECH REPUBLIC** | Pray for individuals to be called to join an international church planting team in a village on the outskirts of Prague.

**17 GLOBAL** | Praise the Lord for a matching grant that All-nations Association of Bible Schools received to help them achieve their mission of making Biblical education affordable and accessible in local churches and communities around the world.

**18 U.S.** | Pray for Lena Kauffman as she is transitioning back to life in the U.S. after completing Advance. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in dealing with reverse culture-shock.

**19 CZECH REPUBLIC** | Pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit in the Czech church, giving them listening ears and willing hearts to empower them to make disciples.

**20 GLOBAL** | Pray for young men to respond to God's call to the work of short-term missions.

**21 NORTH AFRICA** | Pray for A.\* and A.\* as they are back in the U.S. for a three-month home leave. Pray for good times of rest and renewal as well as meaningful connections with family and supporters. Pray that finances will come together for their next term.

**22 WEST AFRICA** | Pray for individuals and families to be called to join the work of leadership development and church planting in West Africa.

**23 CENTRAL AFRICA** | Pray for Peter\* as he continues conversations with people he met in Iran on what it means to have a personal calling and mission—and a relationship with the One who calls. Pray for strength for Christy\* as she works in the hospital.

**24 SOUTHEAST ASIA** | Pray for the Cham in Southeast Asia. Ask God to reveal Jesus to this majority-Muslim population.

**25 U.S.** | Pray that projects will begin soon for the language groups still waiting for God's word. Pray for financial provision so Marty and Glenna Sollenberger can continue to serve with Wycliffe.

**26 U.S.** | Pray for God to bring the right person to join EMM as Development Director, for the transition into the role, and for the formation of good relationships with EMM supporters.

**27 GERMANY** | Praise the Lord for the opportunity Miriam\* has to teach Christian religion classes in three public elementary schools. Pray that these students will come to know Jesus and grow in their faith. Pray for Darrel\* as he provides pastoral oversight in the church and helps to disciple new believers.

**28 SOUTHEAST ASIA** | Please ask God to provide an executive director for a transformational business in Southeast Asia.

**29 GLOBAL** | Ask God to release resources generously through his people in response to EMM's mid-year appeal to support the Impact Fund.

**30 U.S.** | Pray for Holly Hollenbach as she is transitioning back to life in the U.S. after completing Advance. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in dealing with reverse culture-shock.

**31 GLOBAL** | Pray for Jon and Heleen Yoder as they continue relationships with friends and partners in Sierra Leone. Pray for wisdom as they support the continuing development of the ministry (Nyandengoh!), and lead short-term trips to the region.

\*Names changed for sensitivity reasons.



Eastern Mennonite Missions

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Will you support EMM's Impact Fund to help share the good news of Jesus with people who have not heard it?

# THE REMAINING IMPACT FUND FOR 2024 NEED IS \$1,299,346

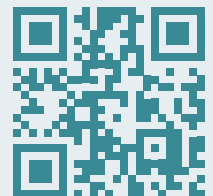
When you support EMM's Impact Fund, you enable us to recruit, equip, and send EMM workers around world.

\$ 493,109 RECEIVED AS OF MAY 13

\$1,792,455 GOAL

The Impact Fund provides all the necessary services that keep EMM functioning as a healthy, legal, and sustainable organization. Administration, financial management, facility management, technology, communications, well-being care, fund-raising, etc., all happen through the Impact Fund. We always welcome your prayers, comments, suggestions.

YOU CAN GIVE ONLINE NOW AT [EMM.ORG/GIVE](https://www.emm.org/give)



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