

# MESSENGER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER &amp; PRAYER GUIDE



## PRAYERS ANSWERED by Sarah Schoenhals

Meet Biak, a 41-year-old, single man from Det Udom, Thailand. Years ago, his aunt (Mae Banchong) became a Christian. Through her and others, he heard the gospel over the years. During one season, his family even hosted several short-term mission workers. But Biak remained a committed Buddhist. An intelligent man who likes to learn, he explored aspects of Christianity at times, but he was not convinced ... until 2024.

Like many Isaan young people, Biak had moved to Bangkok over a decade ago for work. He had a good job there and was doing well, until he developed a lung infection which landed him in the hospital in December 2023. By the time he saw the doctor, the infection was quite serious. He was admitted to an isolation room in the ICU. As his condition grew worse, his mother, Bpaa Nong, and her younger sister, Mae Banchong, traveled from Det Udom to Bangkok to see him.

Since Biak was in an isolation room, they had to visit through a heavy glass window and communicate using a telephone. The doctor told the visitors that if they returned home as planned the next day, they would miss Biak's last days. Mae Banchong encouraged Biak that Jesus was truly his only hope.

That night, Bpaa Nong and Mae Banchong spent the night in urgent prayer. Bpaa Nong was not yet a believer, but she was desperate. Back in Ubon province, many Life Enrichment Church (LEC) believers were also fervently praying.

Biak himself was not able to think very clearly at that point, but he

🕒 Bpaa Nong (left) and Biak (seated) receive Bibles and songbooks following their baptisms, in April.

👤 Bpaa Nong (right) and Biak (second from right) in the family songteow truck with the EMM Board of Directors, who visited in October.

🗣️ Biak (top center) explains a point while assisting his aunt in teaching a "Disciples Making Disciples" lesson.

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



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recalls thinking, in a general sense, of Jesus. That night, he dreamed of a large dark figure descending on him to take him from his bed. Suddenly, Biak was surrounded by bright light and the figure was driven away. The next morning, the doctor reported that Biak's condition had improved, and he was past the dangerous stage!

Biak was eventually released from the hospital and returned to Det Udom for recovery. Though his lungs were much improved, his body was thin and weak from two months in a hospital bed. He worked at his home therapy, but progress was slow. Biak's aunt continued to visit him and share about Jesus, encouraging him to believe and accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior.

At long last, Biak chose to believe in Jesus and be baptized on Easter Sunday, together with his mother. At that point, he still could not walk on his own nor do much to care for himself. In the month following his baptism, Biak quickly gained physical strength and the ability to walk. When he went for a follow-up appointment, the doctor did not believe how good his lung X-ray looked and ordered a second X-ray (which showed the same thing)!

With lots of time on his hands as he continued to recover, Biak dove into the Bible. He started asking his aunt questions that she wasn't always sure how to answer! His sharp mind and earnestly seeking heart found a rich spiritual buffet to feast on in God's word. As the months progressed, he began having opportunities to do ministry alongside others. Recently, he prepared the Scripture study at a worship gathering in which our daughters were present. They reported it was one of the clearest Bible studies they had ever heard.

Please pray for Biak as he continues to find his way as a new believer. A couple of months ago, he started joining my husband, Mark, and a church leader named Lek for weekly evangelism. He also accepted the role of assisting the LEC secretary. Pray that the Lord will continue to be glorified in Biak's life and also make the way clear regarding future employment.



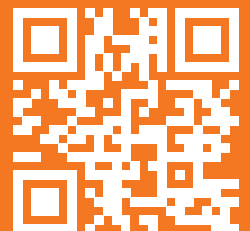
*Sarah Schoenhals, her husband, Mark, and their daughters serve with EMM and VMissions in Thailand.*

➡ In November, LEC saw the first local person baptized as a result of a radio program. Grandfather Mee (center) called the phone number on the radio broadcast (reaching an LEC leader) to express his interest – and by that point he had been listening for a long time and was already very interested. At his baptism, he needed assistance to stand and later to walk forward to receive the gift of a Bible and church song book. But by the time worship kicked into full gear, he stood to join and was soon dancing with other believers!



## YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE HEAR THE GOSPEL

Many older Isaan people spend their time watching the house and property while the rest of the family goes about their work. They often enjoy listening to the radio and especially to the Isaan music which is so deeply ingrained in the hearts of Isaan people. The "Life's Answers" radio programs, a 33 episode series produced by Brethren in Christ, uses Isaan music, Bible storying in Isaan language and testimonies of Isaan people to proclaim Good News. Jesus is the answer for your life! Will you join us in sharing this Good News over the radio? A gift of \$60 allows us to air these one hour programs every day for a month, on a radio station that reaches a geographical area of at least 200,000 people.



LEARN MORE & GIVE ONLINE AT  
[EMM.ORG/ISAANRADIO](http://EMM.ORG/ISAANRADIO)

## FEBRUARY DAILY PRAYER

**1 MIDDLE EAST** | Pray for Michael and Laura\* as they continue to navigate the challenges of an unsettled region. Pray that they and other believers can share God's love and peace. Pray that God brings peace to the region.

**2 CAMBODIA** | Pray for workers to be called to the work of young adult outreach and discipleship in Cambodia.

**3 LANCASTER, PA.** | Pray for Kingdom Teams! Ask God to bring many youth who are hungry to know God to the program this upcoming summer.

**4 ALBANIA** | Pray for wisdom for Sonya Harnish to know where to invest relationally on her team, with students, in church, and in the community. Pray for the second term of the Bible school that has begun. Pray for the returning students and new students as they adjust.

**5 COSTA RICA** | Lift Daryl and Jen Hoover in prayer as they serve with their family in Costa Rica. Pray for Daryl as he assists with organizing finances and administrative responsibilities for VidaNet and for Jen who serves as a hospitality coordinator. Pray also for Jen as she also counsels mothers through El Nido, the crisis pregnancy center.

**6 LANCASTER, PA.** | Pray for God to call volunteers for the programs at Neighbors Community Center, at Hub450, our building in Lancaster, Pa.

**7 U.S.** | Clara and Vince\* are currently in the U.S. for home leave and sabbatical. Pray for meaningful connections with family and friends. Pray also for rest and renewal.

**8 THAILAND** | Pray for a Jesus movement for the Isaan people in Thailand, of whom only 0.15% are considered evangelical.

**9 VIETNAM** | Gerry Keener will be traveling to Vietnam in March to teach. Pray for his preparation and for safe travels.

**10 U.S.** | Pray for Joe and Yvonne Garber to connect well with church leaders in Florida this week as they participate in EMM's banquet in Sarasota, a meeting with Southeast Mennonite Conference leaders, and Evana's Flourish Retreat.

**11 COSTA RICA** | Pray for Wendell and Melanie Nofziger as they wrap up their time in the US and return to Costa Rica. Pray for a good transition back to work responsibilities for Wendell and Melanie and schooling for the children.

**12 NORTH AFRICA** | Pray that God would equip and lead A\* and A\* each day for a very diverse range of opportunities for witness, service, and mentoring. Pray that their friends will understand their need for Jesus.

**13 CZECH REPUBLIC** | Stacy and Vojta Prknovi have recently started groups to equip and train people to pray. They are specifically praying for a movement of God in the Czech Republic. Pray for them and those in the groups as they meet to pray.

**14 U.S.** | Pray for God to raise up Kingdom Team staff to serve with you in the summer of 2025.

**15 CAMBODIA** | Pray for John and Jeanette Puckett as they focus on language learning. Pray that they can pick it up quickly and well. Pray for the children in school.

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

**17 THAILAND** | Pray for people to come to faith and be baptized in a village where Mark Schoenhals and other leaders have been doing weekly evangelism for over a year. Pray for perseverance through challenges, and physical, mental, and emotional health for Mark, Sarah, and their daughters.

**18 GLOBAL** | Pray for Advance! Ask God to bless, strengthen, and encourage the 6 Advance participants who are currently on mission internationally.

**19 CAMBODIA** | Pray for a Jesus movement for the Khmer people in Cambodia, of whom only 1.9% are considered evangelical.

**20 GLOBAL** | Pray for God to call Advance Global participants for the fall of 2025.

**21 U.S.** | Lift Marty and Glenna Sollenberger in prayer as they serve with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Marty recently began an assignment working with archives. He will digitize material on cassette tapes and VHS recordings so they are preserved and can be used.

**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 GERMANY** | Lift Darrel and Miriam\* in prayer as they provide support and leadership in the church. Pray for wisdom as they disciple and mentor new believers. Pray for their daughter, Emma as she transitions back to Germany after a semester in the U.S.

**24 KAZAKHSTAN** | Pray for a Jesus movement for the Kazakh people in Kazakhstan, of whom only 0.07% are considered evangelical.

**25 WALES, U.K.** | Pray for Alan and Carol Wert as they serve in Wales, U.K. Pray for wisdom for Carol as she continues to teach English. Pray for Alan as he continues to minister at Hope St Mellons.

**26 U.S.** | Thank God for the many churches and individuals who support EMM and our mission workers. Pray that contributions to the Impact Fund will continue to sustain EMM's ability to continue moving in God's mission.

**27 SIERRA LEONE** | Pray for Jon and Heleen Yoder who are currently ministering in Sierra Leone. Pray for health and strength and for God to open the doors of ministry for them.

**28 CENTRAL ASIA** | Pray for God to send workers to the field to work in business for transformation and teaching English.

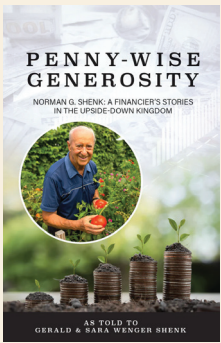
\*Names changed for sensitivity reasons.



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For over five decades, Norman G. Shenk served as a trusted financier and church executive for EMM, managing more than \$1 billion. He served as secretary, treasurer, or chair of dozens of boards. As an employee, he never took a salary of more than \$40,000 a year and never paid a penny of federal income tax. He counseled people on how to get out of debt, wrote real estate deeds of trust, and was called on by church institutions in crisis. We encourage you to read Norman's memoir narrated in his own voice.

You can order the book through Masthof Press online at [MASTHOF.com](http://MASTHOF.com) by calling 610-286-0258.

## CELEBRATING LEGACIES



James K. Stauffer, 94, of Harrisonburg, Va., went to be with the Lord on November 13. James, and his first wife, Arlene, served with EMM in Vietnam, Hong Kong, and the Philippines from 1957 to 1980. Several years after Arlene died, James remarried – he and Ruth then served with EMM in Honolulu, Hawaii, from 1989 to 1992.



Mary Jane Wehibe, 92, of Elizabethtown, Pa., went to be with the Lord on December 23. Mary Jane served with EMM in Ethiopia from 1960 to 1965.



We are so grateful for your strong and faithful support for our Impact Fund in 2024. The Impact Fund is the backbone of the organization, empowering staff, projects, and programs to function faithfully, and bringing the good news of Jesus to many. While we did not meet our total Impact Fund goal for 2024,

we thank God and our faithful financial partners for all that was contributed last year. Our audited 2024 financial data will be in the April issue of *Messenger*.



Dr. Marvin Lorenzana | President

# THE IMPACT FUND FOR 2025 NEED IS \$1,862,923



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