

Bangladesh

SIM is involved in education, medical, and development work in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a nation comprised of a lush matrix of rivers and deltas. It is the most densely populated agricultural nation on earth. Bangladesh is located on the Bay of Bengal in southern Asia and is infamous for its frequent floods and violent cyclones. This predominantly Muslim nation is ethnically almost homogenous, 98% are [Bengalis](#). Other groups include Biharis. Literary giants, such as Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nasrul Islam, have emerged from the rich cultural tapestry of Bangladesh.

Current SIM Ministry

Formerly East Pakistan, Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971 after a bitter civil war. Today, the combined problems of explosive population growth, natural catastrophes, and poor governance have kept this largely Muslim nation as one of the poorest in the world. It is the most densely populated agricultural nation on earth, and suffers frequent floods and cyclones. More than half of the people are illiterate, under-nourished, and underemployed. Although Bangladeshis have a tradition of religious tolerance, some segments of society promote a more radical Islam that deprives Christian believers of access to community wells and government relief programmes.



The Bible Society has published simple-language Bibles for people from both Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. The church in Bangladesh is tiny compared to the millions of unreached people in the country. Believers find it difficult to form into churches, and the 'cares of this world' often take precedence over spiritual growth. SIM seeks to lay a foundation for developing national leaders who are able to establish the church among their own people.

SIM has a history of nearly 50 years of involvement in Bangladesh, pioneered by ICF (International Christian Fellowship). Opportunities exist in business, TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language), theological education, vocational training, urban youth work, and community development. SIM workers are involved in Bible correspondence courses, arsenic alleviation, drama for development, leadership training, vocational training, community development, and community health awareness training. The need for personal discipleship is widespread. Bengal Christian Media attract about 400 responses monthly. The JESUS film in Bengali is widely shown.

The necessary elements seem to be in place for explosive church growth in Bangladesh: translated Scriptures, correspondence courses, winsome media materials, growing numbers of believers, maturing leaders, and official religious tolerance.

History of Christianity

While SIM has been in Bangladesh in recent years, Christian involvement in Bangladesh began over 200 years ago. Nevertheless, Christianity has been accepted by only a small segment of the population.

Protestant missions began with the work of William Carey in Calcutta in 1793. It expanded to the north of what is now Bangladesh in 1795 and then east to Dhaka in 1816. There were mass conversions in the central north around Mymensingh during the end of the 19th century. The Baptist Union of Bangladesh is the resulting organisation from this work and from service among the people of Chittagong. The Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship began later and is a combination of ministries established by Baptists from Australia and New Zealand and Southern Baptists from the United States. Anglicans and Presbyterians (English) arrived later. Their work is combined in the Church of Bangladesh. Due to the difficulties related to the 1971 civil conflict, this work is now basically independent. The Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church has backing from Norwegian, Danish and American Lutheran bodies. The Sylhet church was founded by Presbyterians (Welsh). There are many smaller groups working in the country.

The State Religion

Islam is declared the official state religion. By most estimates, Bangladesh is 88.3% Muslim, 10.5% Hindu, and 1.2% other religions. Although Bangladeshis have a tradition of religious tolerance, some segments of society promote a more radical religion that creates difficulties for Christian believers.

Please pray for

- bold sharing that results in more people coming to faith from the majority background.
- the formation of believers into viable local self-supporting churches.
- the development of godly church leaders who model spiritual leadership in their own families.
- the church to develop in a sustainable manner so that it is not dependent on outside aid.
- harmony among leaders, especially those connected to different organisations.
- the community of believers to grow in love and unity and to earn a relevant identity.
- theological students to gain scriptural knowledge and ministry skills.

Opportunities

[Social Worker/Counselor](#)

[University Ministry Vision-Caster](#)

[All Bangladesh Opportunities](#)

Projects


[Arsenic Alleviation Project](#)

[Children's Uplift Programme \(CUP\)](#)

Stories

[A Lost Boy](#)

[Sharmin's Story](#)

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