

**Monday 19th November**

**Bangladesh    Pop: 166 million    Muslim: 89%**

Tucked like a pearl in a labyrinth of rivers, Bangladesh is a Muslim majority nation that remains deeply rooted in Indian culture.



Separated from British India in 1947, the people of Bangladesh then fought and gained independence from Pakistan in 1971. In 1988 Bangladesh declared Islam its state religion.

Many of Bangladesh's people groups remain unengaged by the gospel. Millions of Bangladeshi Muslims live in the southern districts, known for their harsh tropical monsoons, extreme living conditions and challenging infrastructure. Each year monsoon rains cause waist-high flooding over one third

of Bangladesh in the south. These storm surges bring strong winds that prohibit the building of a strong permanent infrastructure. This constant struggle with nature, coupled with outbreaks of strikes and political unrest, means most people live on less than one pound a day.

This has left Bangladesh as one of the world's poorest developing countries.

As a consequence, many children work and girls are married at young ages. Lack of opportunity has forced many to migrate to cities where they work predominantly in clothing factories with few safety regulations that are seldom enforced.

As the fourth largest Muslim country in the world, Bangladesh is full of strategic opportunity to impact millions of unengaged people through business, community development and gospel witness. God has used their efforts to grow His Church, especially amongst formerly unreached people groups. There are Bangladeshi followers of Jesus who are part of a movement of thousands that have come to Christ. But there are parts of the country where there is next to no gospel witness at all and where there are literally millions of Muslims without any current chance of meeting a follower of Jesus. Let's pray for this to change.

- Pray for more field workers with the God-given grace to live simply and love Muslims amidst Bangladesh's harsh conditions.
- Let's pray for millions of unreached Muslims to hear about Jesus, by whatever means and accept Him as their personal Lord and Saviour, leading to whole communities being transformed as people become followers of Jesus.
- Pray for long-term transformation in the battle against extreme poverty and natural disasters such as flooding and hurricanes, that this would be a country with the hallmark of God's blessing and hand upon it.

Source of some material: <https://prayercast.com/bangladesh.html>

## **Tuesday 20th November**

**Sylheti**                      **Pop: 8.5 million**                      **Islam: 81%**

Most of the world's 11 million Sylheti people live in the northeast of Bangladesh, in the Sylhet district. Some can be found just across the border in India and many have moved to Arab or Western countries. Today it is estimated that 8.5 million Sylheti are in Bangladesh.

In the year 2000, there were only one or two followers of Christ among the 11 million Sylheti. By 2017, their number had grown to more than 1,000. This is a documented movement to Christ in a strong Muslim community.

More and more Sylheti are following Jesus, but it has been difficult to establish a strong church fellowship. There are a few traditional Christian churches in Sylhet, but they are mostly made up of former Hindus and their cultural background is very different from that of the believers with a Muslim background. These churches practise Western forms of worship and use religious vocabulary that has a Hindu influence, which is alienating for Muslim-background believers.

The New Testament translation into Sylhet was completed in 2016 – a real milestone! But even more important than the ongoing translation work is that the Word of God gets into the hands and the hearts of believers.

The middle class is growing among the Sylheti, but many of them are still very poor. Any contact with abroad is immediately seen as a source of finances. In general there is much envy towards one another which prevents true fellowship. But the Holy Spirit can nurture a different attitude so that people would desire to give even when they are poor.

- Pray for the discipleship of followers of Christ and the development of new forms of worship that work in Sylheti culture.
- Pray for believers among the Sylheti to develop into a giving church that supports one another and is a testimony to the community.
- Let's pray for an unprecedented movement to Christ in Bangladesh among the Sylheti and the growth of strong church fellowships.

## **Wednesday 21st November**

A worker shared three encouraging stories of her experience working with Sylheti women:

A Sylheti woman I know moved from Bangladesh to a Western country when she was a teenager. She had some contact with Christians and a church there but had no intention of leaving Islam. She simply enjoyed fellowship with these Christians. She said that she even went to the services and every time there was an altar call, she felt that strange desire to go to the front. She didn't understand what was happening. She loved her faith and she loved her Quran.

One day she was working in her kitchen when suddenly Jesus appeared to her. Waves of love were just washing over her. He said: "Come, follow me. I have work for you."

She answered: "Jesus, I have always revered you as a prophet but I am not able to call you God."

He again said, with waves of love washing over her: "Come, follow me. I have work for you." And that is what she did! She gave her life to Jesus. She told me her story when I met her in Bangladesh.

Another Sylheti woman, living in Bangladesh, learned about Jesus from reading Bible stories. Her mother, somehow at some point got a copy of the Bible. This lady and her sister read it. She started to fall in love with Jesus. She got married, has three sons who are now teenagers and are believers, and just recently she helped her husband to come to faith as well.

Another Sylheti lady who is illiterate had a dream in which Jesus appeared to her. As is the tradition in Bangladesh, she did not share her dream with anyone. People fear if they do it will harm them. Finally, twelve years after Jesus first appeared to her, she shared her dream with me. We both cried. She loves and reveres Jesus, but she still has not let go of all the other Muslims saints and prophets whom she also reveres.

Jesus said in John 6:44: *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them."*

In the Sylheti translation of the New Testament it says: *"Only if the Father will make men lovers and seekers of himself can they come to Jesus."*

Let's pray for this to happen!

- Let's pray for God to continue to draw Sylheti women to Himself, that they will be able to receive the truth and begin a life with Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour.
- We thank God for the many miraculous ways in which he reaches people, just as He has with these Sylheti women. Let's pray for more miraculous encounters among this people group and a turning to Jesus in large numbers.
- One lady received a Bible that saw a whole family saved. Let's pray for more workers and resources to bring the good news.

Source of some material: [http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Sylhetti\\_Bengali](http://en.etnopedia.org/wiki/index.php?title=Sylhetti_Bengali)

## **Thursday 22nd November**

**Oswald J. Smith, a missions mobiliser said: "We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first."**

If we are to complete the Great Commission, countries such as Bangladesh with its vast population, most of whom have never heard of Jesus, needs to be a priority for outreach and prayer.

Yesterday we read how having a copy of the Bible brought salvation to one Sylheti family. Earlier this year, World Mission wrote a story about how they are reaching people in Bangladesh with copies of solar-powered audio Bibles called Treasure. This Bible shares the truth of Jesus with people in their native language.

Although they have distributed the Treasure there for many years, they are now finding new ways to minister to people. They are doing this by working with other agencies to provide water filters to people living in impoverished villages. Although this country has an abundance of water, the vast

population has meant much of it is contaminated by water-borne bacteria and viruses that are killing people.

“We recognise that water is such a huge issue,” World Mission’s Greg Kelley says. “Every twenty seconds, a child dies of a water-borne illness. We recognise it as a tremendous opportunity to practically show the love of Jesus.”

Providing villagers with life-giving water has proved to be an effective way to share the gospel and show the love of Jesus. They have seen that as they minister to people’s needs, their hearts have become more receptive to the gospel message.

- Let’s pray for the church to be mobilised to send workers to Bangladesh to reach so many who have never heard about Jesus.
- Water can bring life and death in Bangladesh. Pray for the river of life, the Holy Spirit, to flow through this country, bringing life and revival to every part of people’s lives.
- Although millions of Muslims there do not know Jesus, He knows them by name. Let’s pray God continues to call them to Himself.

*“But now, this is what the Lord says, He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.”” Isa 43:1*

Source: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/opening-hearts-to-the-gospel-with-water/>

### Friday 23rd November

***“The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.” Rev 22:17***

Workers in Bangladesh have been praying this scripture for the Muslims they live and work amongst. In particular, they said they long to see God move in four particular areas:

1. Among men - Bangladesh is a man’s world with the hub of spiritual activity centred on their houses of prayer. It is time for the impasse in reaching the multitude to end. Jesus went to the synagogues often, as did Paul, as these were public spiritual gatherings.
2. Among women - women are the most isolated from contact with the outside. Many hardly ever leave their homes and even in their homes are isolated in a few rooms. Some neighbours gather during their little free time in the evenings or late afternoon. They gather in one of the women’s safe rooms and all sit on the large bed. They chat and share and exchange stories. Reaching these women is a key to



multiplication of groups of people to Jesus and sustainable growth of Jesus' church.

3. In villages – many Muslims still live in villages. Gospel witness is mainly in the cities. Interestingly, what the Lord did in villages brought many men to confess Jesus as Lord. The growth of groups of followers of Jesus in villages is key to the promised River of Life in Bangladesh.
  4. In dreams - for several years now, there have been many reports of Muslims who have a dream or vision where someone they describe as clothed in white with light shining from his face and hands appeared to them. They somehow understood this person was the prophet Jesus about whom they have heard only a little even if this appearance did not tell them who he is. This is such a powerful experience to people who believe dreams have spiritual truth that some or many become followers of Jesus. Others harbour this vision, not knowing what to do with it, but not forgetting it.
- Come, Lord Jesus into the men's world! May the unique titles that describe you in the Qur'an lead many to seek after you.
  - Come, Lord Jesus into the women's world! Show the women that they are loved just as they are and draw them into your love, for so much of their life has no love - only duty.
  - Come, Holy Spirit! Demonstrate your authority and power in thousands of Bangladeshi villages.
  - Lord, we ask you to give dreams of yourself to those who are like the 'good soil' and will multiply the seed of your Word 30, 60 and 100 times.

### Saturday 24th November

***"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost." Isa 55:1***

Today let's pray for the many other unreached Muslim people groups in Bangladesh, for the poor there living on a pound a day and for the Rohingya living there as refugees and outcasts.

We can pray as we watch a worship video [here](#) called All Who are Thirsty, sung by Kutless. The lyrics are below and we can personalise them for all Muslims in this country who need to find the fountain and stream of life.

All who are thirsty  
All who are weak,  
Come to the fountain  
Dip your heart in the stream of life.  
Let the pain and the sorrow  
Be washed away  
In the waves of His mercy,  
As deep cries out to deep (we sing)  
Come, Lord Jesus, come.



- We pray, Come Lord Jesus! Come to this nation and people.
- God's river of life is pure and brings a great blessing. Let's cry out to God to look down on this vast multitude and pour out His streams of living water.
- Despite a vast population of their own, Bangladesh has taken in hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar, putting further strain on its economy. Let's pray that God will mightily bless this nation for taking in the outcast and displaced.