"PUT IN THE SICKLE, FOR THE HARVEST HAS COME!" MARK 4:29

Asia Harvest

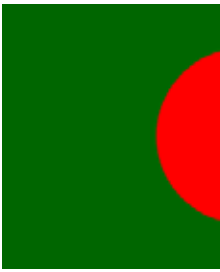
DECEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER #212



BANGLADESH

A Desperate Land in Need of Jesus

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BANGLADESH–A LAND OF GREAT SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

IN THIS, OUR FINAL NEWSLETTER of 2026, we have decided to focus on a country most Christians rarely hear about, but that is a strategically important land teeming with countless millions of people who have yet to hear the Good News of Jesus even once in their lives.

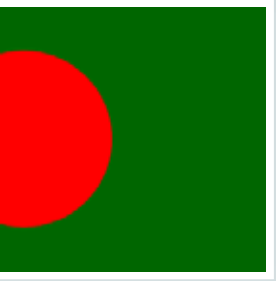
Paul Hattaway first visited this fascinating country in 1991, and in the 35 years since, Bangladesh has remained on the heart and in the vision of Asia Harvest.

Bangladesh, which means "land of the Bangla" (Bengalis), is a small country sandwiched between India and Myanmar, yet it contains a staggering 180 million people, making it the eighth most populous country on earth.

Those 180 million people are crammed into just 57,000 square miles of land, making Bangladesh the most densely populated large country in the world. By way of comparison, Bangladesh is roughly the same size as the US states of North Carolina and New York, but it is home to 16 times more people than North Carolina, and 9 times more than New York state. Elsewhere, even though New Zealand is almost twice as large as Bangladesh, it contains just 1/34th as many people as the densely populated south Asian country.

FRONT COVER: *Modern skyscrapers meet sprawling slums in Dhaka, the capital city of densely populated Bangladesh.*

BACK COVER: *A man rides his bicycle amid palm trees at Babura in northern Bangladesh.*



"It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: 'Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand.'"

—Romans 15:20-21

Bangladesh is also extremely poor, with an average per capital GDP of just US$2,800 per year. That works out to just $7 per day. However, tens of millions of people earn well below this average figure and are barely able to survive.

Because much of Bangladesh lies just above sea-level, and is smashed by powerful cyclones every year which cause tidal surges, flooding is a common occurrence, and millions of people's bamboo or tin shacks are blown away whenever a storm strikes.

The impact of these powerful cyclones is incredible. In 1970, Cyclone Bola killed between 300,000 and 500,000 people in Bangladesh, while in 1991 a further 150,000 people died during a cyclone.

Soon after, Hurricane Andrew struck Florida, resulting in 44 deaths. Western news agencies



barely mentioned the Bangladesh disaster, but Hurricane Andrew dominated the news cycle for weeks. Similarly, the Christian world tends to focus on our own needs and squabbles, and massive needs like **the eternal destination of 180 million people in Bangladesh barely gets a mention.**

Today the country is riddled with corruption, and it produces few products for the world market. Rice, fish and tea are three of their main products, but in the last decade thousands of textile factories have relocated here from China due to the extremely cheap labor costs. These days, your T-shirt of other textile is just as likely to say "Made in Bangladesh" as "Made in China" gradually becomes a thing of the past.

Recorded history of the country known today as Bangladesh dates back to the Maurya Empire of 320-185 BC. During the rule of the British Empire it was considered part of India and then became East Pakistan. Bangladesh has existed as a separate country only since they gained independence in 1971 after a bloody war that included acts of genocide by the Pakistan Army.

Although Evangelical missionary efforts commenced in Bangladesh 220 years ago, the Gospel has encountered stern resistance from the twin pillars of Islam and

A Muslim woman and a Hindu girl in Bangladesh are shown here. Almost everyone in this unreached country is a Muslim or Hindu.

Hinduism, which dominate the land. Islam first reached Bangladesh during a Muslim conquest in 1204, and today 91% of the population are Muslims, while 8% are Hindus.

Buddhists and just a tiny smattering of Christians completes the spiritual landscape, which is a disappointing result for the followers of Jesus, two millennia after His death and resurrection.

A few months ago, *Asia Harvest* sent our U.S. directors on their first visit to Bangladesh. The main objective of their trip was to establish relationships with the leaders of six key local ministries, five of which had fallen on very hard times after being abandoned by Western mission groups.



Their following eyewitness report tells how the courageous faith of the Christians they met impacted their lives.

AN UNQUENCHABLE FLAME: COURAGEOUS FAITH IN BANGLADESH

"Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?" (James 2:5).

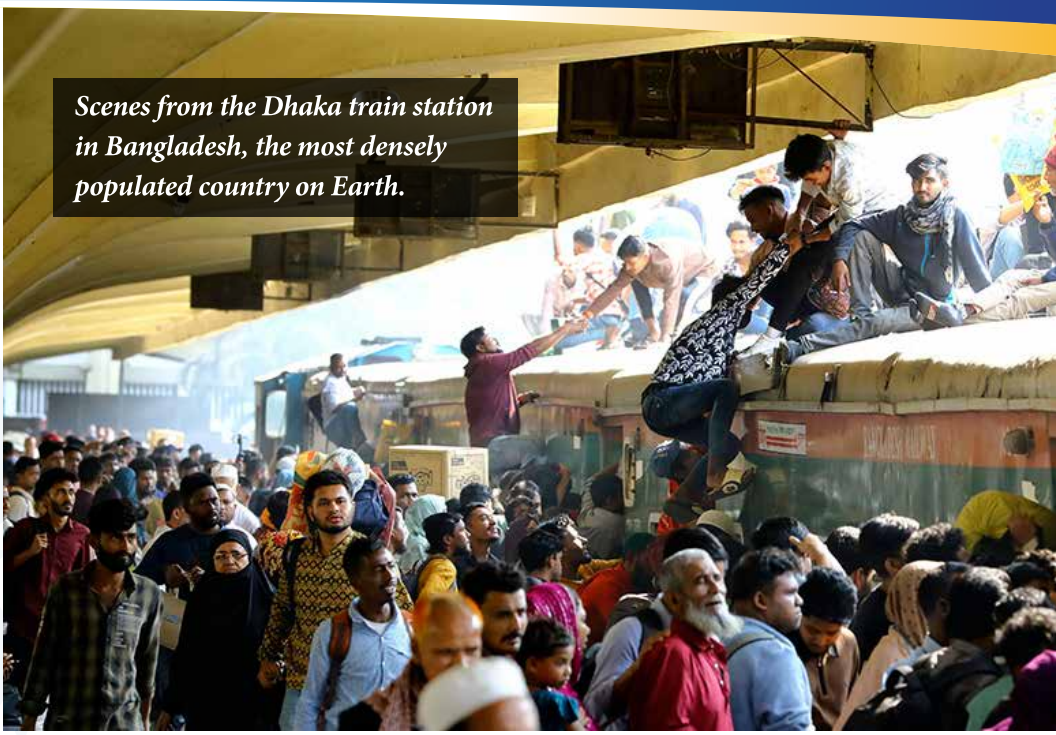
"We didn't know what to expect when we were asked to visit Bangladesh as representatives of *Asia Harvest*...

After landing in Dhaka, we found the air thick and heavy, not just from the sweltering heat, but with the palpable spiritual tension of a city perched on a razor's edge. We had stepped into a nation reeling from fierce volatility, marked by a bloody election cycle, global conflicts flaring in Iran, and Muslim fundamentalist attempts to seize power.

Soon, our sheer anomaly became glaringly apparent. Except for a solitary United Nations worker on our flight who admitted she rarely ventured beyond her fortified compound without an armed escort, we didn't see a single Western face during our entire journey.

Bangladesh was the poorest country we have ever visited, with young children, no older than seven, crouching dangerously close to high-speed traffic as they used hand tools to crush bricks. Nearby, young men dragged rickshaw carts through the exhaust-choked streets, and multitudes of people sorted through piles of garbage.





Scenes from the Dhaka train station in Bangladesh, the most densely populated country on Earth.

Looking into the weary faces of these exhausted, hardworking people, we saw the hopelessness of lives devoid of a Savior.

This stark physical desperation was mirrored by a suffocating spiritual hostility. For 45 minutes before every Muslim call to prayer several times each day, loudspeakers weaponized the airwaves, echoing hate-filled preaching directed at Bangladeshi Christians, Israel, and the West.

On the rare occasions we walked in the open, fundamentalist imams in traditional caps and henna-dyed beards spat on the ground in disgust as we passed. We were reminded of extremist attacks by ISIS in Bangladesh as we made our way to a secret location to meet local ministry leaders.

Amid this backdrop of profound poverty and intense hostility, a radiant light pierced the darkness. These believers, anchored by the mercy they find at the throne of Christ Jesus, continue to find bold ways to openly present the gospel where anti-Christian sentiments exist. In these

hidden places, we witnessed an undeniable, unbending devotion to the Living God. Facing many kinds of persecution, their simple, profound request to us remained: *"Please pray for us."*

As we listened to the leaders of six different indigenous ministries, their stories broke our hearts, but their faith left us in awe. **The Church in Bangladesh is living through a crucible of intense poverty and harrowing persecution.**

To choose Christ in Bangladesh is to surrender comfort, safety, and basic human rights. Believers spoke of the crushing persecution they face across the country:

• **Total Isolation:** Christians are routinely barred from local markets, tea shops, public toilets, and Christian children are strictly barred from attending local schools.

• **Cut Off from Resources:** Extremists commonly cut the electricity lines to Christian homes and dig up the pipes supplying their water. Believers are forced to walk miles every single day just to bring back a single bucket of river water for drinking and washing.

• **Constant Peril:** We heard a number of firsthand accounts of Christian families being threatened by mobs intending to lock them in their homes and burn them alive. Since returning home, we have helped local pastors and their families flee angry Muslim vigilantes who were intent on chopping up and burning alive entire Christian households.

A MIGHTY HARVEST IS RISING

The enemy is pressing hard in Bangladesh, but the light of the Holy Spirit will not be extinguished.

In the face of daily death threats and overpowering poverty, God's precious children are not backing down. They are diligently studying the Scriptures, standing firm in the truth, and boldly proclaiming the Gospel. Their courageous witness is dismantling opposition and effectively leading large numbers of people to Jesus Christ.

God used our perilous trip to open a massive door of opportunity for the Kingdom. Because of the strategic relationships we made during our time there, we are now supporting 173 indigenous evangelists in Bangladesh, who are targeting 189 of the country's 277 ethnic groups. The spiritual ground is fertile, and the local believers are faithfully reaping a spiritual harvest of souls."

- **Please pray for the precious Church of Bangladesh** as they serve on the bleeding edge of a dark spiritual battlefield, pressed on every side but never backing down.

- **ALL of our projects are being utilized to help advance the kingdom of God** in Bangladesh. We provide Bibles, children's materials, and we fund crucial trainings that help establish believers in the faith.

- As we reach the end of 2026, **please prayerfully consider standing with our precious brothers and sisters** in Bangladesh by regularly supporting projects like our *Asian Workers' Fund*, the *Persecution and Relief Fund*, and the *Living Martyrs' Fund*.

- **100% of everything given to these projects goes directly to the field** to help alleviate their suffering and to empower Bangladesh's Christians as they bravely carry the burning torch of Christ to this desperately needy country.





ASIA BIBLE FUND (ABF)

CURRENT TOTAL: 21,257,697 BIBLES PRINTED IN 193 LANGUAGES

The Asia Bible Fund provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in China, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and anywhere in Asia that God's people need His Word..

Each Bible costs just $3 to print and deliver. We also print millions of Gospel booklets for evangelism through this project.



ASIAN WORKERS' FUND (AWF)

WE CURRENTLY SUPPORT 1,766 ASIAN EVANGELISTS AMONG 1,334 UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

The Asian Workers' Fund supports indigenous church-planting evangelists among unreached Asian tribes and ethnic groups.

These disciples have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances. To date, the evangelists we help have reportedly led 2,184,926 people to faith in Jesus Christ. You can help support these dedicated workers for $25 per month each. A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular supporters of this project.

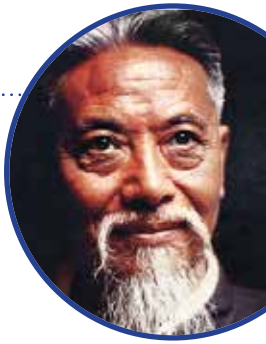


MINISTRY TRAINING FUND (MTF)

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT WE HAVE HELPED TRAIN AND EQUIP 111,215 ASIAN BELIEVERS FOR MINISTRY

The Ministry Training Fund helps the Asian Church disciple and train believers to be effective ministers of the Gospel among the unreached.

Often workers live in remote places and coming together once or twice a year is the only outside fellowship and teaching they receive. We cover travel, food and other costs associated with the meetings. To train each worker costs an average of $50.



LMF LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

BECAUSE OF YOUR PARTNERSHIP WE ARE CURRENTLY SUPPORTING 1,176 LIVING MARTYRS

The Living Martyrs' Fund supports Christian widows and church leaders and their families throughout Asia who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution.

They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through a gift of $25 per month you can help support one of these living martyrs.



TCF THE CHILDREN'S FUND

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HAS REACHED 264,666 CHILDREN THROUGHOUT ASIA SO FAR

The Children's Fund introduces children to Jesus in India, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and a host of other Asian countries.

Activities include printing and distributing Gospel literature designed for children, funding Sunday school training classes, providing free surgeries for those with special needs, and generally lifting children out of spiritual and physical poverty. It costs an average of just $10 to help reach a child for Christ.



PRF PERSECUTION & RELIEF FUND

TRANSFORMING LIVES FROM ASHES TO BEAUTY WITH GOD'S LOVE

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided assistance to the victims of natural disasters that have struck Asia. In addition to providing aid through medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc., the Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and many people have come to know Jesus Christ.

This project also provides physical and spiritual relief to Christian lepers, communities and families throughout Asia who are in desperate need.

ECFA ACCREDITED



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