



Christian Freedom[®] International



A young mother, a convert to Christianity, and her baby attend an outdoor worship service

CHRISTIANITY GROWS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3

MAY 2017



➤ CFI president Jim Jacobson attends a Sunday service at the CFI Center for the blind & disabled

DESPITE PERSECUTION, CHRISTIANITY IS EXPLODING IN BANGLADESH

By Jim Jacobson

“MANY MUSLIMS ARE CONVERTING. MOSTLY IN THE RURAL AREAS.”

DHAKA, BANGLADESH –

According to official estimates, the religious composition of Bangladesh is 89.1% Muslim and 10% Hindi, with less than 1% Christian in a nation of over 156 million people. But unofficially, Christianity is much larger and growing, especially in the rural areas.

Is the fourth largest Muslim nation in the world, and place of many terrorist activities, on the path to becoming a peaceful Christian nation? The

“Uncounted Converts” believe so.

On a recent fact finding trip to Bangladesh, Christian Freedom International President Jim Jacobson interviewed scores of indigenous Christian pastors, street evangelists, missionaries, and converts to Christianity. According to them, Christianity is on the increase, and the growth is a cause of concern for the Muslim majority. As a result, persecution is on the

increase against the fast growing, mostly underground Christian Church.

OFFICIAL REPORTS ARE WRONG

Official reports on religious composition only count “traditional Christians,” that is, people who are born into the Christian faith and attend government approved churches. But “converts,” those who change their religion from Islam to Christianity are not counted and no surveys have been made.

The consensus among converts is that Christians in Bangladesh make up of at least 10% of the population and the number grows every day.

Indigenous evangelists tell CFI they believe that Bangladesh will become a Christian nation in their lifetimes. If the 10% number is correct, there are at least 15,600,000 Christians in this Muslim majority nation. Evidence seems to support the claims.

➤ Many blind and disabled Muslims are converting to Christianity, and house churches are starting and growing in rural Bangladesh. Pastors oftentimes must now pastor 3 or 4 churches to keep up with the new converts.

The Christian demonstration of love, hope, mercy, and compassion offers hope to the hopeless.



MORE THAN 20,000 CONVERTS

Pastor Khaleque, 60, a former Muslim and now a Christian street pastor who works among the hill tribes in the northeast part of Bangladesh told CFI, "In the last 12 months, more than 20,000 Muslims have converted to Christianity. More than 20,000 have converted and this is becoming a real problem for the Muslims."

Khaleque faces many difficulties and has been beaten several times; he must pay bribes to police to continue his work.

MORE THAN 700 CONVERTS

Pastor Rafiqul Islam, who since converting to Christianity goes by the name Rafiqul, pastors a church of 25 other converts in the village of Bhadai. They meet in a house church. Rafiqul converted in 2007.

"I converted to get eternal life in Jesus Christ."

After Rafiqul converted, his rickshaw shop and tea business were taken

away from him, and he was disowned by his family. Shortly after converting to Christianity, in his village, he shared the Gospel with friends. Two imams caught him talking about Christianity in the market and attacked him. The imams beat him and tied him with ropes in front of a nearby Mosque. His sons ransomed him only after they agreed that they would force him to reconvert to Islam.

After his sons failed to bring him back to the Muslim religion, they beat their father nearly to death, took all his possessions, and left him to die. Even this did not deter him. Beyond pastoring a church for converts, he works as an evangelist--risking his life each day. Rafiqul told CFI, "Many Muslims are converting. Mostly in the rural areas." In Rafiqul's rural village of Bhadai, he has seen more than 700 Muslims have convert to Christianity in the past 24 months. He said to CFI, "More people are converting every day. Although persecuted, we are preaching the Good News."

“MORE PEOPLE ARE CONVERTING EVERY DAY. ALTHOUGH PERSECUTED, WE ARE PREACHING THE GOOD NEWS.”



➤ A sponsored child in Bangladesh. Sponsorship provides for the daily needs of Christian children & reminds them that they are not alone.

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MORE THAN 6,000 CONVERTS

Pastor Harun-Or-Rashid, 36, a Muslim convert to Christianity, said he converted when in 2001. He now pastors a church for 36 converts in his village of Bahgobannagar.

He told CFI that his church is growing. "More converts are coming to this church. In my district more than 6,000 have converted from 1991 until now," he told CFI. Pastor Rashid said he is targeted for assassination by IS. He told CFI "Of course I am afraid, but when I think about my spiritual life I am not afraid. We continue to preach no matter what."

Converted After Reading Leaflet

Lovelu-Sadik Lebio, 32, who converted to Christianity in 2004, said he became a Christian after reading a leaflet. The leaflet was titled "Hope for the Hopeless," and included many verses from the Bible, including Acts 10:43.

Following his conversion his family disowned him, his wife left him, and he lost his job. He said "I am dead to them." He met another convert who helped him; he later became a pastor

and street evangelist. Lebio has 52 converts in his main house church in the village of West Doiljur. He also pastors three other smaller house churches for converts.

Young People are Converting

Babul, 22, is a Muslim who converted to Christianity on December 25, 2013, while working as a day laborer. He met some converts to Christianity and learned about Christ. As a result, he accepted Christ as his Savior. Following his conversion, Babul's life was threatened and he was disowned by his family. He had to go into hiding in the jungle to survive. After eight months of living in the jungle, other Christian converts helped him. He is now a "street preacher" and takes many risks to share the Gospel. He has been beaten numerous times but sees it as a badge of honor.

Babul told CFI, "The young like me are converting. Many more are interested. Especially young people, they are interested in Christ. But they think about the cost of converting and it is high because they have to leave everything. But many are interested in Christ."

➤ **ABOVE // A police officer receives a Bible from a young Christian. Both are converts to Christianity. Christianity is growing, especially among the youth in Bangladesh.**

BELOW // This young woman is a recent convert to Christianity and courageously shares her new faith with Muslims.





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WHAT.”**



➤ **ABOVE //** A young Christian convert reads his new Bible. Among other things, CFI provides Bibles to new Christians in Bangladesh.

BELOW // This man is blind but says he “now sees the light.” He converted to Christianity several years ago and receives help at CFI’s Center for disabled converts.



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➤ At an outdoor worship service, all are recent converts to Christianity.

CHRISTIANITY OFFERS HOPE

Bakar, a Christian convert told CFI, “Christianity is really growing in Bangladesh. The next generation is becoming Christian. We believe that Bangladesh will become a Christian nation one day. Islam has no mercy, no compassion, no love. It has nothing to offer. Christianity offers the assurance of eternal life, it offers hope.”

Despite reports to the contrary, Christianity is growing around the world, especially in nations where Christians face persecution.

Christian Freedom International has worked in Bangladesh for many years and runs several missions in the country. Among other things, CFI supports a Center for disabled converts to Christianity, Child Sponsorship and Sunday School programs, and indigenous Christian pastors, evangelists, and missionaries throughout the Bangladesh.

Christian Freedom International is an organization dedicated to promoting religious liberty and helping persecuted Christians around the world.



➤ A convert receives a certificate of baptism from a rural house church pastor.



Remember the Persecuted

➤ This woman has found true freedom in her new Christian faith. She and other converts are active in sharing the Good News with Muslims in her area.



➤ This blind convert received a white cane and clothes from CFI's Center for the disabled.

“ AMONG OTHER THINGS, CFI SUPPORTS A CENTER FOR DISABLED CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY AND SUPPORTS INDIGENOUS CHRISTIAN PASTORS, EVANGELISTS, AND MISSIONARIES THROUGHOUT BANGLADESH.

HELP



KEEP OTHERS INFORMED ABOUT *the* PERSECUTED CHURCH

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To begin your monthly sponsorship with a Persecuted Christian child in Bangladesh, fill out the back of the enclosed response device and return it to Christian Freedom International, or visit www.christianfreedom.org or call 1.800.323.CARE.

Christian Freedom International



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