

Chittagong, Bangladesh

Also pray for ...

▶ *Hundreds of schools were destroyed by the October 2005 earthquake in Kashmir. Pray for efforts to rebuild the schools. About 850 teachers and staff died along with 18,000 pupils. Projects have been initiated to train thousands of new teachers.*



Hundreds of years ago Arab traders came to the port of Chittagong seeking silk and spices and left behind the message of Islam. Today this shipping center is the cultural hub for the Chittagonian people group, estimated to be about 14 million people. They are set apart from the majority Bengali people through their clothing, food, customs, and most importantly, their language.

The growth of the Chittagonian church has been slow because the Bible is not available in the Chatgaya Buli language, and many do not understand Bengali. Chittagonians are the largest people group in the world without the Bible in their own language.

Several years ago God gave a group of Chittagonian believers a vision to translate the Jesus film into their language. The response has been very positive. After seeing

the film for the first time, one Chittagonian man said, “Jesus must be our prophet because he speaks our language.”

Living in the poorest area of one of the poorest nations on earth, they have little opportunity for advancement or education. Conservative Muslim groups have taken advantage of this situation by building schools for the young people where they learn to read and write and to recite the Qur’an. In some cases they are also taught fundamentalist Muslim doctrine. The past decade has also seen a growth in conservative Islamic politics.

The next few years are crucial to seeing a strong Christian witness established. Since Chittagonians have a very low literacy rate (less than 10% for village women) recorded scriptures, storytelling programs, and video projects are vital to present the Gospel.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- ▶ *Pray for workers committed to reaching this group. Christians need to be committed to learning their unwritten language.*
- ▶ *Pray for the tiny group of Chittagonian believers as they bravely reach out. One Christian worker says that it has taken an average of six years for people to become believers after their first contact with the Gospel.*
- ▶ *Pray for the establishment of a Chittagonian Prayer Network among believers world-wide. There is a need for constant prayer for this large, long-neglected people group.*