



BENGALI UPDATE

October 2010

The Domino Effect



Asit



Ranjit



Kamal

In October 2007 EPIC launched a three-day event of fasting, prayer, and prayer walking in the least reached areas of West Bengal. The event was called **"Storming the Gates"** and started in Tarekeswar where an ancient temple is the focus of an annual pilgrimage for many Bengali Hindus.

Our EPIC church planter met Asit, a man who was working in the temple during the prayer walk. The Church Planter was invited to Asit's home where he shared the Gospel. Asit and his family accepted

Christ and were soon baptized. Asit began witnessing to his friends and family in the area.

Some time later Asit witnessed to Ranjit who also worked in the temple. Ranjit and his family came to Christ. Ranjit became part of a group of seven that Asit was discipling. A few months later Ranjit met Kamal, a key person in the temple area. Kamal was known as a strong pujari (*priest*). He had a shop at the entrance of the temple that sold sweets, flowers and pots used in the offerings to the temple idol. Kamal had

become wealthy and influential as a result of his business.

Ranjit shared the Good News with him but Kamal was having difficulty making sense of it. He said, "All the gods want offerings, but your God does not ask for anything. I will only understand if your God speaks to me." Two days later Ranjit returned to Kamal's house. Kamal explained that when Ranjit spoke about Jesus he experienced emptiness in his heart. He asked Ranjit to tell him what he should do to fill the void. Ranjit again shared the gospel with him and Kamal and his family accepted Christ and were baptized!

Because Kamal's business was serving the temple, the family faced a great challenge. After discussion and prayer the

family decided to sell the shop and start a grocery and tea shop in another area. This decision meant losing all they had and starting over. It also caused problems in their extended family. However, they remained firm in their decision.



Kamal's family (L to R) Kamal's mother, son, wife, brother, Kamal and daughter

The new business is going well and Kamal says he has real peace, joy and contentment for the first time in his life. The new shop is home to a new house church

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Jhumki

The Bagdi *Engaged and reaching out*

The Bagdi are an ethnolinguistic sub-group of the Bengali people. The majority live in West Bengal and number approximately three million. The practice of Hinduism is a central part of their lives, which involves all rituals associated with birth, marriage and death. There are almost no known believers among the Bagdi people.

When the first five Bagdi families came to Christ they were forced to leave their village. They lived for some time with the EPIC church planter who brought them to Christ. It had its challenges, but allowed them to live in a wonderful discipling atmosphere.

After a few months, Jhumki (one of the Bagdi women) returned to her village to check on her property. The neighbors were surprised that she was still alive and asked what had happened. She shared the gospel with them and their hearts were softened.

Encouraged, Jhumki went to the village next door and shared the gospel. They, however, were very resistant and challenged her. They said, "There is a woman here suffering with stomach cancer. Can your Jesus heal her?" The entire vil-

lage joined in the challenge and said we want to see how your God can heal.

Jhumki returned to her mentor's church (Mahindra) and shared the challenge with them. The whole church

began fasting and praying for the woman named Chandra. Jhumki and Mahindra returned to Chandra's house. The people from the village gathered. Jhumki started sharing the gospel with all the people. "I cannot heal you, but I will pray in the name of Jesus. If you believe you will be healed." They then laid hands on Chandra and prayed for her.

A week later, Chandra went for her checkup. The doctor took x-rays and found that her tumor was gone! The previous week Chandra's x-rays showed a large tumor. He repeated the x-rays. Same result. No tumor. The doctor asked how it was possible and what she had done. Chandra shared that Jhumki and Mahindra had prayed for her.

The doctor called Mahindra and asked if they could meet. During their meeting the doctor asked what he had done. Mahindra told him that he had simply prayed to Jesus on her behalf. The doctor said, "Then I can believe that your Jesus is the true God." He accepted Christ as his Savior.

As a result of the healing and saving grace of Jesus, six families and one doctor have come to Christ. There are now three house churches in their village. ❖



Jhumki baptizing Chandra (top)

One of the house churches resulting from Jhumki's influence (bottom)



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continued

that meets every Thursday. Ranjit is now discipling and mentoring Kamal in his new role as church leader. ❖



House church meeting in Kamal's tea shop