



BENGALI UPDATE

Special Edition 2009

Bengali Team Launches Church Planting on Andaman Islands

Church Planting Movement Initiated

15 House Churches Birthed in the First Month



There are 270 million Bengali in the world of which 140 million are in Bangladesh and 68 million in West Bengal, India. These two areas in the past have been the focus of EPIC's Bengali church planting efforts. Recently,

Tsunami severely damaged the main island.

Through the years there has been resistance to the Gospel by Bengali on the islands as various ministries have shared the truth

open doors have been afforded EPIC in the Andaman Nicobar Islands where two million Bengali live.



These 550 islands (Andaman Nicobar) are located in the Indian Ocean in the Bay of Bengal about

740 miles from Southern India. In reality, most people do not even know about these islands and that they are part of India. Of the group of islands only 38 are inhabited. The

attention of the world was turned to these islands in 2005 when the unprecedented

about Jesus. EPIC India Coordinators, P.M. and Crista Mathew, launched a strategy to send a team of church planters to these unique islands led by Asish Biswas and Sukhadeb Jena. Their goal was to establish a presence for the Gospel on the islands.

Months of prayer preceded the venture with the churches in the Bengali Coalition and others in the EPIC prayer network asking God to show Himself among the Bengali there. Some Bengali have been praying for this need for over five years.



EPIC Partners:
(L) Sukhadeb Jena
(R) Asish Biswas



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New House Church gatherings



The rest of this story is overwhelming. When the team arrived expecting resistance, they were overcome

began to share the Gospel. After the first four weeks their report includes:

- 15 house churches started
- 20 prayer fellowships
- 24 families accepted Christ (40 adults, 10 children). There are another 50 children in these families between 0 – 15.
- 10 strong “Men of Peace” found and disciplined – these are already putting teams together to do church planting
- 15 more families have expressed interest in knowing Christ and will be visited regularly

Additionally, the team has discovered five unengaged people groups among the Bengali on the islands: Biswas, Roy, Sarkar, Das, and Baliav. A strategy for reaching these five groups is being developed for further implementation. EPIC plans to continue their work on the islands with plans to see a church planting movement among all two million Bengalis.

Sukhadeb commented, “God, in His providence, must have been preparing the way for the Gospel to come here with the Tsunami and its aftermath. These Bengali have been thinking about life and death issues. They are honestly wanting to know the truth that is in the Gospel. Praise God for His miracles and blessings.” ❖

with what God did. Asish stated, “The harvest is not only ripe but it is literally jumping into the baskets! I have never experienced anything like this among Bengali.” Many Bengali came weeping and repentant as the team

Breaking News

I just received a call from the host pastor in Andaman who is so excited about what’s going on he just can’t contain himself. The trainers were invited to a believer’s house last night. They went and were asked to start a regular worship service in that house.

Then some neighbors (unbelievers) heard they were there and invited them to their home. They went and as they started visiting, they invited 15 of their friends (all unbelievers) to come and hear. Well, the family that invited them came to Christ and FIVE of their friends did as well. Now they’ve been invited by those new believers to come to their homes and meet with their friends and relatives!

What an absolutely thrilling event to be part of.

Praise God! — Crista Mathew



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