



Pastor Hugo Vasquez (L) and Thomas Roy (R) with BMW student at the first Gopalganj graduation.

Pastor Hugo's Report

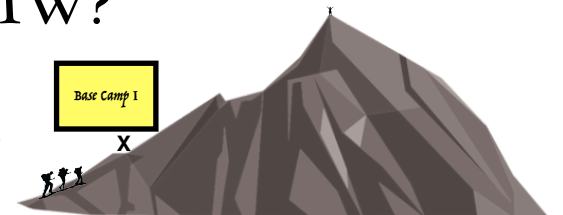
Visiting Bangladesh was a blessing from God. To be able to participate in this trip and see personally what God is doing in that part of the world through BMW's ministry was something that has profoundly impacted my heart and spirit. Bangladesh is a very rich and yet poor country at the same time; it is difficult to grasp. It's rich because of its diverse people and its vast array of vegetation including green fields and the abundance of water through the rice fields. It is poor at the same time because of the great need for the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Seeing the faces of so many people without hope and without joy was something that impacted my heart. The saddest part of it for me was that they didn't even know that they have a need to have a relationship with the One who created them.

The BMW team was incredible in the way that they served us but more so in the love that they had for God and to see their nation transformed by Christ. I hope to be able to return again and put my gifts and talents humbly in God's hands so as to bring honor and glory to His name and so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be established in the nation of Bangladesh. Blessings, Hugo Vásquez, Senior Pastor Eagle's Wings Church, Holland, MI.

What's Coming Up at BMW?

#1. Scaling Mount Everest

God is giving us the opportunity to establish a disciple-making ministry in every district of Bangladesh. See the maps on the back page. To firmly plant the BMW ministry in every district of Bangladesh will require 5 times the number of workers we currently have. THAT feels like climbing Mount Everest! But if we grow by 20% each year, we can get there in less than 10 years.



How can we do this? How can we climb Everest together? Simply put, we need to spread BMW 20% further every year. We are inviting more people to join the team in every area. We have already seen new donations for this growth. We also welcome new prayer warriors, new volunteers and even new Visiting Team members. See Pastor Alyn and Hugo's reports. They visited Bangladesh with us for the first time this January 6-20.

Open this letter to the fascinating story of Riya inside to see where this ministry takes us...

We are having phone, face to face (observing caution for Covid-19) and internet meetings to share more details about our climb and ways to help. Let's talk!

#2. A Taste Of Bangladesh

We are inviting all our old friends and new friends to celebrate the great things God is doing at BMW on **July 25, 10 AM to 2:30 PM** at Johnson Park. This fun, family-friendly event was well-received last year. We look forward to sharing Bengali food, traditional Bengali music and dance, a petting zoo and more in a time of joy and fellowship. Please mark your calendar for this celebration and plan to take A Taste Of Bangladesh! I would love to see you there and meet some of your friends. We have so much to celebrate!

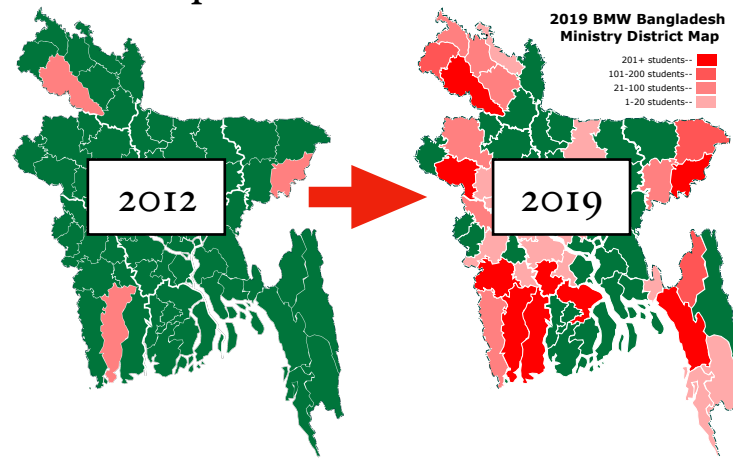
In Christ,
Dave DeCook

Pastor Alyn's Report



This past January I had the privilege of joining with a team to help facilitate the graduation services of the BMW program. I loved my time in Bangladesh and fell in love with its people. It was very inspiring and convicting to see the passion of the staff of BMW living out their faith among the largest unreached people group in the world. They are bold and fearless in the way they share their faith and instruct students in the Word of God. The Kingdom of God is moving in Bangladesh. The idea that thousands of Hindu and Muslim adolescents are weekly studying scripture, in small groups, under the direction of a BMW staff, is hard to comprehend. But when you experience it, it is the most beautiful thing. I would highly encourage you to consider supporting Bangla Ministries Worldwide through prayer and finances.
-Alyn Goossen – Senior Pastor of Immanuel Church, Holland,

The past at BMW



The future is right this way!



Bangla Ministries Worldwide
P.O. Box 2844
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2844
www.banglaministries.org (donate online)

BMW is a 501c3 charitable organization.
All gifts will receive a tax-deductible receipt.

Email us and donate by Paypal at info@banglaministries.org

Telephone Dave DeCook at
(616) 773-0290 Or email
director@banglaministries.org

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BANGLA MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE
ON TWITTER AT **BMWBANGLA**



The Girl in the Burqa

What does it mean to have Bengali staff living and serving inside the largest unreached people group in the world? It means more than that you have removed major language and cultural barriers to the sharing of the Gospel. It means that you are one step closer to having an organic and infectious form of Christianity that can infiltrate and become a movement in a culture hostile to the Gospel.

The following story, told by one of our staff members, is an example of what such a movement looks like on a local level. Names have been changed. Please do not publicly post this material or put it on the internet.

Titus, my husband Rajen's younger brother, had been doing "tuition" with Riya. This means that as someone who has passed a certain public school exam, he is qualified to tutor someone else to help them pass it as well.

I got married to Rajen in December of 2017. Earlier that same year Riya's father married a second wife.

As a friend/neighbor ,Titus invited the whole family to the "Bou Bhat." This is the part of the Bengali marriage traditions, usually 2 days after the ceremony, when the groom's family shows off the new wife's ability to serve and feed everyone. In actuality, many hands (traditionally from bride's side) make a feast for the groom's family and invited guests. At the end the bride serves each guest with a little dessert. Riya (21), her mom, younger sister (19, already married), little brother (9), and little sister (7) all came. Riya stayed all day and into the night and sat by me anytime there was an empty space. She spoke very sweetly to me and we became like sisters that day, having frequent phone calls and visits. If I am ever sick, she calls over and over to check on me. If I don't call her frequently enough just to chat, she calls me.

Fairly early in our relationship she shared her family situation with me. Her father is called "Hujur" by the community because he is the imam of a mosque. It is like calling somebody "Rabbi" or "Teacher." He is also "Haji," because he has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He had married a second wife (Islam allows up to four wives) and left the family in preference to her. They have been suffering from lack of food and finances ever since. She wept before me and it really broke my heart. I cried with her.

In the summer of 2018, I was taking the BMW third year course and decided to invite her to take a course. She said she wasn't interested in that, but was interested in



visiting my church. So about three weeks later I came by in a rickshaw and picked her up. She was in a black burqa with only her eyes showing (she has dressed in public like this since childhood). No one knew where she was going. If they noticed, they probably thought she was going to

spend time at my house or go shopping with me.

At the church she was eager to see how we we pray and how we sing. It seemed to please her. She especially liked a song called "Bangibey!" which speaks about the Second Coming of Jesus. Here are the words of the song:

***The fortress of the devil will be broken at this time!
There will be a great earthquake and the fortress will not survive!***

Hundreds of people lie locked in this fort, locked up like the dead.

***They are crying evermore to get out of this fort.
Jesus is in the blue sky, holding the redemptive wealth in His hands.***

He is coming in the golden chariot, with His flag flying high!

***Everybody shout and march forward!
Crush the fortress of the devil!***

She was also pleased to see how many people had gathered and what a lovely time of conversation followed the church service. Later she asked me to take her to another church down the road. She enjoyed that also. They have very beautiful music there and she loved it.

A couple months later she said she wanted to know more about the BMW course. So I sent Rajen over to explain the course, but she didn't want to take it from a man, because her family would say bad things about that. But Riya's mom took interest and began the first course toward the end of 2018 with Rajen.

In January of 2019 mom and daughter came to the graduation, but missed the program because of her work schedule. They got to eat with the graduation crowd and probably increased their interest in BMW course work.

She showed some interest in the BMW course early in 2019 and asked to look over the materials. She felt busy with the SSC exam and own religion and wasn't sure she could manage it. Toward the end of March 2019 I was hired by BMW as a part-time staff. She was very excited then, to start the course with me as her teacher. She thought it would be much easier with me as the teacher. She was very pleased to be introduced to other BMW staff and to see our office and to go to a couple of my groups with me.

It was also at this time that I took over teaching Riya's mom. Because of her need to work, she doesn't get much time to study the course. She still doesn't know that her daughter is taking our courses.

Riya studied the BMW materials very diligently as we met twice a month for the course (keeping our frequent sister-like phone calls going every week). She took each of the five exams and did very well. She asked what word she should use for "God:" "Allah" or "Ishor." I told her she could write "Allah" for God. She wrote "Ishor" (a Hindu-leaning word more common among Christians) to please me and put "Allah" in parentheses. We recently finished printing a version of our material in Islamic language, which is speeding up her understanding.

December 2019 Riya's mom came over to cook for our anniversary celebration. She stayed two days in our house with Riya and her little brother and little sister while she was cooking for us—the whole family! She refused payment because she said, "Holly is like my daughter." Through living together like this for two days we all became very close. Our conversations were very trusting, without fear or embarrassment.

Riya has carefully concealed her involvement (hiding the materials and only studying and meeting with me when her mom is at work) because of the uncle who supports them. He has consistently pushed Riya to advance in Islamic knowledge and to teach Islam to other women (from 7-year-olds all the way to 80-year-olds). As long



as she is doing this, he provides support to the family, which helps them tremendously since her father stopped supporting them. If her mother finds out about her BMW studies, she might tell the uncle who will then cut off the support.

We invited the family to the 2020 graduation, of course. Now, most students do not know if they have passed until they come to the graduation and hear their name read from the front. She was anxious about whether she had passed (as everyone is) and called to ask about it. When I saw her marks on the final exam, I just had to tell her the good news!

So, she knew she was graduating, which made Riya both excited and scared. She wanted to receive the certificate in the program, but she didn't want her mom to learn her secret. We made a plan that if Riya's mom showed up, my network of informants would quickly tell me and I would delete Riya from the certificate presentation. As it turned out, Riya was able to receive her certificate before her mom got off work and showed up to the program! Then she transferred her certificate and gift over to my mother-in-law's hand, so she wouldn't get caught with that evidence!

At the graduation program, Riya got to meet Bill and Jayne Wolf, both on and off the platform. Their friendliness impressed her. They got along with her so well! They were eager to talk to her and take a "selfie" with her. They seemed like very good people to her.

On March 3, Riya was informed by her father that the family had found a man that they would marry her to. She called me to share that she doesn't want to get married now. There was a meeting on March 10 with her, her mom, her dad and her uncle to discuss it. Her phone has been dead ever since. Please pray for Riya!

—BMW staff member "Holly"

