

A Multimedia Literacy Project  
Toward Biblical Literacy in  
*Bangladesh*



TERESA CHAI

***A Multimedia Literacy Project Toward Biblical  
Literacy in Bangladesh***

*by Teresa Chai*

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# Publisher's Preface



We are pleased to offer this sixth title in our APTS Press Monograph Series. This is the publication of the author's doctoral dissertation done through Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, USA. The purpose of this series is to give our readers broader access to good scholarship that would otherwise be unavailable outside of the academic community. This is part of our ongoing commitment to discipleship through publishing.

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We hope you enjoy this book. Please feel free to communicate with us through our website.

THE PUBLISHER

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# Preface



The study analyzed contextual influences on the development of a literacy program in Bangladesh that need to be considered for effective adaptation of the program in other cultural contexts.

Baseline research done in 1990 and experiments conducted during the development of the materials from 1991-1997 showed that only ten percent of the population could read the *New Reader Portions* from Bangladesh Bible Society. To address this challenge among new readers, new Scripture-focused audio products and primers were devised and implemented. The result was that thirty to forty percent could read the *New Readers' Portions* after using these new materials.

In April 2000, another extensive survey was conducted in six different districts of Bangladesh (Mymensingh, Gopalganj, Rajshahi, Bogra, Dinajpur, and Nilphamari) with 299 members of the literacy groups. This survey was conducted using a standard questionnaire. The ongoing effects of this literacy program continue to show thirty to forty percent being able to read.

## Foreword



I am exceptionally pleased to offer this brief foreword to Teresa Chai's book, *Literacy and the Bible in Bangladesh*. She has been a dear friend and colleague for nearly seven years at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Philippines, which is publishing this book as part of their APTS Press Monograph Series.

This book reflects the author's work over eight years as a missionary in Bangladesh, where she was involved with the United Bible Society and the Bangladesh Bible Society, then the Bangladesh Lutheran Church-Danish Mission and the Bangladesh Lutheran Church, despite the fact that Tess herself was a Pentecostal, in teaching literacy to the Bangladeshi people. The methods Tess advocates here were based on her actual fieldwork during her years there.

Sadly, Tess did not live to see the publication of her work. On Sunday morning, March 8, 2020, as this book was going to press, Tess went to be with the Lord she so loved, following a nine-month battle with pancreatic cancer.

From her entrance into the Bible College of Malaysia at the age of 20 until her passing at the age of 57, Tess dedicated her life to the Lord in full-time ministry. Following graduation, Teresa worked nationally and internationally with Asian Outreach Malaysia, including mission trips to Sarawak, East Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. She was ordained with the Assemblies of God and also served as an adjunct faculty member at her alma mater. She has also enjoyed ministry to children, youth, and adults.

In 1991, she completed a Masters in Arts in Cross-Cultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission. One of her writing projects, "Towards Innovations in Non-Print Scripture for

Literacy Training,” became the basis for work and research in Bangladesh from 1991 to 1999.

The eight years in Bangladesh, partially under the United Bible Societies and seconded to Bangladesh Bible Society, involved research and development of literacy such as audio and written Scriptures. Teresa also worked for Bangladesh Lutheran Mission–Danish (closely associated with the Bangladesh Lutheran Church). The literacy groups under the mission and church became the initial literacy test groups.

After completing her time in Bangladesh, she returned to Fuller to complete her PhD and this book is the published version of her dissertation. Then, she served for several years at the Alpha and Omega Bible College in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, first as the academic dean and later president, before moving to her final assignment at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS) in Baguio City, Philippines, in May 2013, where she served as a faculty member and later, academic dean.

As one of her colleagues at APTS, I can say without fear of contradiction that she was deeply loved and is dearly missed, but we thank God for a life well lived.

Dave Johnson, DMiss

Managing Editor, *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*  
Asia Pacific Theological Seminary



# *Dedication*



To my American parents,  
Carl and Donna Schneider,  
who have been there for me in countless ways

# Acknowledgments



First and foremost, I want to express my deepfelt appreciation to the late Viggo B. Sogaard, who was a consultant with the United Bible Societies Communication and Media department and the Professor of Communication in the School of World Mission in Fuller Seminary. He has been my mentor and friend through his guidance and encouragement. He invested himself in my spiritual and academic development. I count it a great privilege and honor to have been mentored by him.

I also want to thank those who have taken time to guide me in this journey. I am grateful for invaluable insights from Elizabeth Sue Brewster on literacy, language, and culture and for Charles H. Kraft on anthropology and contextualization. A word of thanks to Julian Sundersingh, a consultant with the United Bible Societies. I truly appreciate the comments and input from Helen H. Yim-Choi, who graciously took time to read and comment on the initial manuscript. I am grateful to James Jennings and the late Robert Rice for their advice and input as well.

Research and experimentation for this literacy program would not have been possible without the help and sponsorship of these organizations: United Bible Societies, Asia Pacific Regional office, Bangladesh Bible Society, Danish Mission Denmark, Bangladesh Lutheran Mission–Danish, Bangladesh Lutheran Church, and all other participating churches. My special thanks to the former Executive General Secretary of the Bangladesh Bible Society, James Halder, and Richmond Joydhor, the former Media Officer, and the literacy supervisors who helped in the field survey research. I also want to thank Stephen Baroi, the retired Country Director of Bangladesh

Lutheran Mission–Danish for making many of the arrangements when I went up north to visit the literacy groups. Likewise, my appreciation goes to the late Moses Muthusamy, the Malaysian missionary church advisor of the Bangladesh Lutheran Church, who was a kind host when I stayed in Birganj, and to the members of the church Synod for their cooperation and support.

Several people helped me with editorial work. I want to thank Bee Bee Tan, a Bible college classmate, who did the preliminary editing of my writing via the internet from Malaysia. My “American mother” Donna Schneider spent many hours reading and re-reading my work adding her editorial suggestions—thanks, Mom. Garrett Anderson took me through the last stages of editing and formatting. A special “thank you” to Laura Hollister for her excellent professional work as Research Librarian, making sure that every “jot and tittle” was in place. For recent edits I want to thank Rosemarie Kowalski, who gave very helpful suggestions for changes. Thanks also to Frank McNelis for doing the copyediting. I am also grateful to Elizabeth Glanville, the former Doctoral Program Advisor, who was always so encouraging and kind to me. Many family members and friends were my prayer supporters, including my sister Mary Ann Chai, and friends Siew Pik Lim and Katie Price-Foster.

Finally, all glory, honor and thanks to God, my Heavenly Father, for his blessings, strength, guidance, and grace. He blessed me beyond measure, gave me new strength when I felt like giving up, guided me through the maze of information, and granted me grace when I needed it.

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# *List of Abbreviations*



ABWE	Association of Baptist for World Evangelization Baptist for World Evangelization
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AL	Awami League
ALP	Adult Literacy Program
BARD	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BBS	Bangladesh Bible Society
BLC	Bangladesh Lutheran Church
BLM	Bangladesh Lutheran Mission
BLM-D	Bangladesh Lutheran Mission—Danish
BNELC	Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church
BNP	Bangladesh National Party
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSA	Bible Society of Australia
B. Th.	Bachelor of Theology
BTV	Bangladesh Television
CCDB	Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh
CCTB	College of Christian Theology Bangladesh
DMCDO	Danish Missionary Council Development Office
	Denom. Denominational
DSM	Danish Santal Mission
ETV	Ekushey Television
FC	Field Coordinator
FIVDB	Friends in Village Development Bangladesh
FS	Field Supervisor
ILI	International Literacy Institute
LEI	Literacy Evangelism International
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIV	New International Version

NRP	New Readers' Portions
RSC	Regional Service Center
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
UBS	United Bible Societies
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Educational Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

# Definition of Phrases



1. Appropriate media is preferred as opposed to just general media. In developing countries, finances and technology limit resources. This media should be accessible in rural and urban settings.
2. Bangladesh is the country of context. Its language is Bangla or Bengali. Bengali or Bangladeshi is a term used for a citizen of Bangladesh. The word “Bangladeshi” is also used to imply ownership.
3. Culture circle: a discussion group in which educators and learners engage in dialogue about the reasons for their existential situation. The peer group provides the theoretical context for reflection and for transforming interpretations of reality from mere opinion to a more critical knowledge.
4. Encoding: utilizing the mind to put the message into a coded system.
5. Decoding: reversing the encoding process and turning the code back into a message.
6. Innovation in literacy training: the adaptation of established ways of using media.
7. Media-based: communication in which media is the main form.
8. Media literacy: the process of understanding and using the mass media.
9. Multimedia: combined media, such as sound, video, text, or images.
10. A multimedia approach: a communication process taking place on different levels and with more than one medium.
11. Primers: printed materials of Scriptural passages and writing exercises used in the teaching and learning process of the program.
12. Scripture-focused: literacy materials that primarily use biblical stories and passages in the audio products and primers