



# Christian Missions in East Bengal

*S M Tanveer Ahmed , David B Csc Burrell (Foreword)*

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As the first Bengalee Archbishop of South Asia, Theotonius Amal Ganguly, CSC, made a remarkable contribution in the expansion of Christian missionary activity in Bengal through all the three political regimes that Bangladesh went through. In the four hundred years of the history of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh, his appointment as the archbishop not only highlights his role in serving the Catholic Church, but also the importance of Catholic missionary activities in Bangladesh. To explore the history of Protestant missionary activities during the last century, research was carried out and books were published. These scholarly activities left a noticeable gap in the area of the history of the Catholic Church in Bangladesh. This book is a bold attempt to fill in that gap, which led to serious research culminating in the publication of this book. What makes this book remarkable and outstanding is the use of unused sources to reconstruct the life and times of Archbishop Theotonius Amal Ganguly in the sociopolitical background of Bangladesh, especially his role in the liberation war of 1971. His heroic role in the liberation war indelibly earned him a place in the mainstream history of Bangladesh. ""In this book, we read of a great Christian patriot of Bangladesh whose life and times are lovingly written by a young Muslim scholar of that country. Tanveer Ahmed offers a wonderful example of scholarship that is at the same time a product of a respectful and fruitful interreligious dialogue."" --Stephen Bevans, Professor of Mission and Culture, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago ""Theotonius Ganguly was a remarkable twentieth-century Christian leader whose life, carefully recounted here in this important study, sheds light on the emergence of the nation of Bangladesh after a painful double colonialism. . . . Bangladeshi Catholics are comparatively few, but their experiences as a religious minority in conditions of dramatic social change have much to teach students of world Christianity."" --Paul Kollman, Department of Theology and Center for Social Concerns, University of Notre Dame ""The history of Christianity in the Muslim-majority nation of Bangladesh since its creation in 1971 is a neglected subject. This biography of Theotonious Ganguly, Catholic archbishop of Dhaka from 1967 to his death in 1977, is of interest for a number of reasons. . . . Hence Mr. Ahmed's study is to be warmly welcomed."" --Brian Stanley, Professor of World Christianity, University of Edinburgh ""Most of us have not been taught to think of Christianity as a Bengali religion, yet there were churches in East Bengal before English settlers came to North America. . . . It is an important book, making a significant contribution to our growing understanding of Christianity in diverse social, political, cultural, and religious contexts throughout the world."" --Dale T. Irvin, President and Professor of World Christianity, New York Theological Seminary S. M. Tanveer Ahmed is Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh since 2011. Prior to that, he spent a year at BRAC University, Bangladesh, as research assistant from 2009-10. He was an apprentice staff reporter for the Daily Independent (Dhaka-based English daily) and lecturer at Asia Pacific University, Dhaka. He has published articles and is the author of *Itihas Gabesona Paddhati* in Bengali (2014), a book on the methodology of writing history.

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