



India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

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My Heart is Full of Joy as I look back at the Youth Conference (Jan. 11-14). I was able to come with two of my kids, Tre and Tessa who both spoke, along with John Rebba. The theme was "God's Grace"; and we saw the Lord's grace in so many ways...

- There was supposed to be a major tropical storm which could have cancelled the event. Instead, the storm hit all around Repalle, but there was no rain at the conference.

- We witnessed the next generation give the messages. What a thrill to see John, Tre and Tessa share messages that connected with the high school and college-age students. Emmanuel and I were so proud to see our kids work hard at sharing the Bible; the Lord has given them wisdom and gifts of communication.

- Many came forward over the conference, making decisions to follow Christ. Many of the students that come to IREF are from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. It takes a lot of courage to decide to follow Christ, as many face persecution from their family. Often they are told they can no longer come home. I was overcome with emotion as I thought of the cost for these students to become Christians. I've never faced a decision nearly as difficult for my faith, and these students were 10-21 years old. I know the Lord saw it as a costly offering to Him; to choose Him above all else.

- Many IREF alumni came to the conference and gave testimonies. These believers came to Christ during their student years, and then went on with further graduate education elsewhere. Many had Masters and Doctorate degrees, now serving as pastors, teachers, policeman, government workers, nurses, etc. Many of these students came from far away to attend, and I thought about what a wide-reaching impact IREF has had. Even though IREF's ministry has been focused toward the rural areas, many of these students end up in the big cities, spreading God's love wherever the Lord has placed them.

- One former student, Vidya Sagar (pictured on the right with Dee Rebba), came to Christ as a student in 1992. When he was at IREF there were only 50 students (over 2,000 today). His parents were poor farm workers and dropped off three kids at IREF. He did well in IREF's schools and went on to get his Masters degree. He is now a college professor, and is working on his PhD. He lectures over 2,000 students each week, and begins each class with prayer and a Bible reading. He tells everyone that it was the strong foundation built at IREF that gave him both his faith and opportunities he otherwise would never have.

- Witnessed over 50 students taking baptism. We travelled to the Krishna River in a section of the river where they have built huge areas for people to do Hindu rituals in the river. What a contrast to the Christian baptisms that day, as fisherman and herdsman looked on. When a baptism is in the middle of a village like this, it is a testimony to all those passing by that these people have decided to follow Jesus.

- One of the boys taking baptism...His name is Mahendra Reddy (pictured to the right) and has been at IREF since he was in 1st grade (now in 10th grade). His parents were divorced when he was in 8th grade and they have never come back for him since. Mahendra decided to give his life to Christ at this year's Youth Conference. He was always afraid of his parents' reaction to baptism but decided this year that it was time to make that public confession of faith and trust in the Lord with all of his heart. He hopes to one day become a teacher and make a difference at IREF like so many teachers have done for him over the years.

I hope you will continue to pray and support this ministry. I wish all of you could have witnessed what I saw over the past week. Your heart would also be filled with joy seeing all that God is doing here. This ministry does so much with little resources and has been effective at ministering for so many years through God's grace and love for the people of India.

Chip Moore, IREF USA Board Chairman

