

January 2017



**Christmas in Repalle** Each year IREF aims to use the Christmas season as a tool to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many children and community members as possible. Events are constructed to draw attention to the story of Jesus Christ's birth. Emmanuel Rebba layers each event with a Christmas message to reinforce what the event is meant for. Caroling, star lighting ceremonies and gift-giving are among several events that IREF uses to draw the attention of children, young and old, and community members to hear of God's love. Gift-giving is a special time that truly reaches the hearts of the children as they come from unfortunate backgrounds and many don't even own a pair of shoes. When they hear that they are going to receive a gift, they are astonished at the love that is shown to them which causes them to ask "who" and "why". "Who would want to bless me with a gift" and "why would anyone care enough to see me have a new pair of clothes, something I can't afford on my own". This is the exact time when God is able to touch the

hearts of many as they begin to listen more intently to the Christmas messages to find out "who" and "why" and begin to understand they have a loving Father who wants to bless them and prosper their futures. IREF could not facilitate Christmas gift-giving without the help of loyal child sponsors and one-time gifts. Your faithfulness to see IREF children learn of Jesus Christ is the only reason Christmas gift-giving at IREF is so successful each year and why so many children take that step to accept Christ and become baptized. To God be the Glory!



## India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

PO Box 1332  
Park Ridge, IL  
60068-7332

IREF Info Line:  
p 847.220.IREF (4733)  
f 847.680.4270

Visit us on the web:  
[www.irefusa.org](http://www.irefusa.org)

Send us an email:  
[info@irefusa.org](mailto:info@irefusa.org)



**A Spotlight on Students** Meet Pavani, a second year Junior College student (equivalent to 12th grade in the US). She came to IREF last year for her Junior College studies. Pavani comes from a very strict Hindu background. She had never heard the name Jesus Christ until she came to IREF. After a few months of hearing the Gospel in classes and during devotions, she requested a Bible. When Pavani went home for summer vacation last year, her mother found her Bible and threatened her. So from that time onwards, Pavani hid her Bible whenever she went home and read it while her parents were sleeping. While on Christmas vacation a few weeks ago, Pavani was led to ask for permission to attend a local church service for Christmas Eve. Her parents refused and Pavani prayed that much harder. By the evening of Dec. 24th, her mother finally conceded and let Pavani go to a church in her village. "I praise God for answering my prayers and more importantly for softening my mother's heart. I am eager to get baptized soon and ask that you pray for my family that they may soon come to know the everlasting love of Jesus Christ, as I have."





## Huntington University Students Bring Blessings to IREF Students

A team of 13 students arrived safely to IREF from Huntington University, based in Huntington, Indiana on January 3rd. The team spent 3 days at IREF to focus on a part of their study in India, which was to see the comparison of how a city like Chennai is different from that of rural India.

Their days were full of activities including VBS for the elementary and high school students, teaching God's word to college students, and neighborhood community service projects. The Huntington students enjoyed the evenings engaged with the IREF students through games of basketball, volleyball, etc. and particularly sharing during devotions. The IREF campus was full of laughing, dancing children from 1st grade through post-college studies.

The team learned how local businesses operate, as well as the living conditions throughout rural Repalle. It was a good way for them to see how hard people have to work in order to survive in rural India. Many people in the villages of Southeast India are agricultural workers and make no more than \$1/day; making IREF's role in the communities it serves crucial. IREF's vision is to see the poor and marginalized of rural India finding hope in God and breaking free from cycles of poverty.

We hope to have them come again to serve with IREF and enrich both IREF and Huntington students. Thank you Huntington University for the start of great relationship!



## Prayer Requests and Praise

- We are truly grateful for the way the Huntington team blessed and served the children of IREF. We praise God for using each member's talents to serve Him faithfully.
- The 2018 UK and US missions team has arrived safely in Repalle. Please pray for the health and well-being of each team member as they teach, preach, pray and serve during the 2018 Youth Conference in Repalle, which will be held Jan.10 -14.
- Please pray for all who attend the 2018 Youth Conference. Pray that many will come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
- The medical team members will be working with the IREF nursing students and staff to facilitate checkups on all students, evangelists, Bible ladies and staff members at IREF and local villages. Please pray that the clinics will run smoothly and the team will be able to help all in need, effectively and efficiently.
- The 2018 Gospel Crusades will be held in February. Please pray for the team that will be going from the US. Also pray that IREF will be able to conduct these crusades with no opposition from the government and that many more will come to know Christ.

January 2018  
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India Rural  
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