

March 2016



## Our Church Has Been Involved with IREF for Many Years...

and many individuals from our church had gone for visits there but in January as I left for my first IREF short term mission trip, I had no idea what I would find. I had been putting off an actual visit to IREF for many years. I had come up with excuses about being too busy or too much funding was required but for me personally, I did not want to see poverty at that level since it reminded me of my own past. In a very selfish way, I was trying to protect myself. So after finally feeling God leading me to say yes, I started praying months ahead that I would go there with an open attitude where I would see God's powerful hand through the people at IREF and would represent God in the same way as I interacted with them. What God had stored for me was beyond words.



God answered my prayers. Weeks before departing, my attitude was completely different. I no longer had a weak stomach towards going and instead, I was eager to go, knowing that God had prepared the way. Even on route to India, the counsel of the seasoned IREF visitors before arriving at Repalle gave great comfort.



Upon arrival at Repalle late in the night, I was truly shocked by the amount of children and the exceptional warm greeting. Nothing can fully describe it to those that have not been there. Immediately I knew that all of my conceptions about IREF were extremely limited. The few hundred children and students were more like thousands. All of them happy, delighted and filled with joy as they greeted us. They wanted to interact with us and were already considering us their friends before we even met them. Early in the morning the next day, I saw these same students who had stayed up late greeting us, waking up early to do their chores, washing up and worshipping as led by their fellow students. I knew that something big was waiting to take place for the next 10 days.



My main purpose for visiting IREF was to preach and evangelize as part of the 2016 Youth Conference. Upon my first walk to near the front by the stage, I had never seen so many eager and dedicated students paying such great attention as they listened to the speakers and worshipped. Soon after I sat down, I felt God's presence through His Holy Spirit in a very powerful way. One in which I never felt so strongly for such a long period of time. Talks were being translated for me and not knowing how that would work, I was greatly surprised to feel the Holy Spirit connection with the other speakers and translators. God was making our words one and uniting us in the purpose of sharing His salvation message and words of encouragement. He was doing this not only on a large scale through the thousands of students attending the Youth Conference but on an individual level before and after the talks as well as during our village visits.



If I had to summarize my overall trip, I see IREF as a beacon of hope for all those attending the IREF schools, those living in Repalle, and surrounding villages. IREF goes beyond focusing on the spiritual matters but also for the well-being of the individuals associated directly with IREF or those coming in contact with it. The fruit of which can be easily seen in the individual children there. Many times during my visit, students encouraged me by stating how they were praying for me and for two young men in our church that have cancer. Their focus was not on themselves and yet upon those of whom they had never met and were thousands of miles away. This level of care and maturity I have never felt so strongly at such a young age as seen in the students and it can only come as God provides it through those impacted by IREF.

*R.A. Atanus - Executive Pastor  
South Park Church, Park Ridge, IL*

## 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)



## 2016 IREF Gospel Meetings

IREF evangelists, Bible ladies, staff and students started the month of February preparing for the annual Gospel Meetings, which were held on February 3 through 7. Many hours were spent setting up the grounds, stage, lighting and in prayer for the hearts of the lost to be open to hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thousands attended each night with the final evening count topping over 30,000!

We praise God that so many people in the rural areas of Andhra Pradesh came to hear the Good News. Many came forward and accepted Christ as their Savior during the Gospel Meetings. As these new believers go about their daily lives, we pray that they will keep their eyes on Christ.

IREF has now turned its evangelism focus and efforts to strengthening the tribal villages that surround Repalle. These small rural farming and fishing villages are crying out for any hope of prosperity for their families and what a better way to feed their soul than with the message of Christ's love.

Please be praying as IREF Evangelists and Bible ladies conduct revival meetings in their villages over the next few months.



# SAVE THE DATE!

March 2016 continued...

# SAT 2016 AUG 20 6



HIGHLAND PARK COUNTRY CLUB • 1201 Park Ave W • Highland Park, IL 60035

### India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

### Prayer Requests and Praise

- Please pray for IREF as the remaining number children supported by our European Partner will be dropped as of April. If you are interested in sponsoring a child, or know someone who is interested, please contact us at [sponsors@irefusa.org](mailto:sponsors@irefusa.org).
- Please pray for Emmanuel Rebba to have the strength and good health to continue the IREF village revival meetings for the next two months.
- **Save the Date!** The 5th Annual IREF Golf Outing will be held on Saturday, August 20. Please be praying for how you can introduce IREF to your friends and family.
- Please pray for IREF staff and students as they prepare to close the 2015-16 academic year in March and April. Many of these young people return to idol-worshipping families for the summer holiday and need your prayers as they stand firm for Christ.
- Praise God for the hundreds of individuals who accepted Christ as their Savior at the 2016 Gospel Meetings in Repalle.
- Praise God for His graciousness to this ministry and His sovereignty to provide for every need.

