



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

Send us an email:
info@irefusa.org



What a Privilege to be able to spend time with the IREF executive leadership team and staff during our February visit. During my 8 visits to India over nearly 20 years, I have had the great honor to work very closely with this team of godly people. I have seen, firsthand, the impact that this humble leadership team has had both in ministry and education over the past decades. It has been nothing less than amazing. So it was quite humbling to be asked to lead them in a series of leadership training meetings.



Our primary focus was how to lead a generation that is quickly evolving to western standards in a changing culture. Even in rural India, technology, competition and culture is rapidly changing. Therefore, to lead effectively we discussed how to merge traditional biblical principles with 21st century strategies without any compromise in standards. What has made IREF great is their adherence to the gospel of Jesus Christ and obedience to His Word and to a prayer-based ministry that waits on God for direction. We never want to lose that. But what we need to add is an understanding of the changing needs of today's generation to stay competitive in our educational offerings and relevant in our approach to both education and ministry.



To achieve this we focused on expanded thought processes for today's marketplace, improved communications, ongoing growth and education among the leaders, and the importance of teamwork and encouragement. It was a meaningful time together both with the executive team and the entire teaching staff and students in training for leadership. The teams readiness and willingness to adopt their style to the needs of today's students was so admirable.

We are blessed to have such godly leaders that are willing to work so hard and put in so much time for very little financial reward. They truly do it for the love of their students and their Savior! Their sacrifice should never go unnoticed by those who support IREF. I know it will not go unnoticed by the Lord. They are truly "laying up treasures in heaven". In all my years of traveling all over the world working with literally hundreds of businesses, dozens

of ministries and hundreds of thousands of people, I've never seen any group of people who have sacrificed so much to receive so little for so great of an impact!



I am excited to see what the future of IREF leadership will look like! I'm excited to see the next generation of leaders that will step in behind Dee and Emmanuel to carry the ministry forward. I'm excited to see how the Rebba children and children of many of the regular donors and supporters of IREF will step up in the coming years. I'm excited to see what God has in store. We need to pray that God will raise an army up that will be able to navigate the challenges IREF faces in a country that is seeing increased governmental pressures, persecution, financial challenges and competition for waging people's souls.

Please pray for the leadership. Please pray for the ministry and students. Please pray for India. Please give to this great ministry, as the needs are vast! And if you have never been to Repalle to see this ministry in action, I encourage you to pray about joining a team in the near future. I have been able to take my entire family and several others, and none of us have ever been the same!



Dale Vermillion, President and Co-Founder of Mortgage Professionals Providing Hope



Dale (center) and the team who traveled to Repalle in February with the IREF elementary girls.

IREF STAFF TESTIMONIAL

"I am so thankful to Mr. Vermillion and our IREF administration for investing in me. The two-day leadership workshop has given me the tools needed to influence my students and also my community in a positive way for Christ and His Kingdom."

Yesu Rathanam - Repalle Christian College, B.Ed. Staff



An Eternal Investment

When Craig Darling first went to visit IREF, he was not thinking he would ever return to India. It was 1994, and Craig was a pastor in Michigan. He had come to India with three other pastors and the trip was exhausting. They would teach all day, and then go out to the villages at night to do Gospel Meetings. New believers would be baptized around 1am, and they would return to Repalle at 2am, get a short rest - and do the same routine the next day. At the end of the two week visit, Craig was tired and thinking it was time to go home.



Later, at a meeting of IREF evangelists including Prakasha Rao, he heard him say that they really needed support from the U.S. to do all the things God had called them to do.

Craig returned home knowing that his ministry at his church was coming to an end. He was a candidate for a pastoral position at a church in the Minneapolis area, and was seriously considering making the move. But the Lord was not giving him peace about it, and the ministry of IREF kept coming to his mind. Soon Craig was offered the position of U.S. Development Director, and he knew that was what the Lord wanted. After accepting the position, Emmanuel Rebba let him know that all the evangelists and Bible ladies were praying that he would take the position... their prayers were answered.



Over the past 22 years, Craig came back to India 19 times; bringing pastors, supporters, and medical teams to help the ministry. He networked with churches, foundations and individuals, telling the story of IREF and building partnerships in the U.S. On one trip to India, Craig looked out from the guest house at the children gathered for devotions. The thought entered his mind that an investment in these kids would pay dividends for generations.



Craig is now leaving IREF to work with another ministry, FCA (The Fellowship of Christian Athletes). He will be Campus Director and football chaplain at Western Michigan University. Many don't know that Craig is a former NFL player, and his training with Campus Crusade makes this new ministry a perfect fit. He is already meeting with students each day, leading Bible studies and working with student-leaders to reach athletes in all of Western Michigan's sports teams.

We are so grateful for all the years Craig has served the ministry of IREF. And we know that many students' lives will be changed with his new ministry. His continued work for the Lord is truly an eternal investment.

Please pray for the IREF Board as we search for a new Development Director for the U.S.

*Chip Moore,
IREF USA Board Chairman*

Prayer Requests and Praise

- Please pray for IREF staff and students as they prepare to close the 2016-17 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 a successful academic year. We thank God for the teachers, professors, principals and administrative staff for their dedication and diligence in serving the Lord through IREF.
- Praise God for the hundreds of individuals who accepted Christ as their Savior at the 2017 Youth Conference and throughout the academic year and made the public confession of faith through baptism.
- Please pray for the US Board of Directors as they search for a new Development Director, that the Lord will lead the right person to the ministry.
- Evangelists and Bible Ladies are gearing up for summer (April and May) Gospel meetings in over 100 villages to encourage IREF congregations and also spread the Good News throughout rural Southeast India. Please pray for lives to change, and the staff as they often face much persecution during this time.
- Please pray for the strength and prosperity of our supporting churches, businesses and sponsors.

March 2017
continued...

India Rural
Evangelical
Fellowship

