

April 2015



CELEBRATING

65 Yrs.

India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

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IREF USA Celebrates 30 Years of Partnership with India

In the Pickwick Restaurant in Park Ridge, Illinois, we filled only one booth as IREF USA began. We stuttered forward 30 years ago. India Rural Evangelical Fellowship, Inc. received its Illinois “not for profit” incorporation certificate in August 1984. The US ministry got underway in 1985 as Emmanuel Rebba called American churches to pray, support and send brothers and sisters to Repalle, Guntur District in the State of Andra Pradesh, India. None of us, as the first Board of Directors, knew anything about the town of Repalle or where it was located on the map. That all changed very quickly.

Emmanuel and Dee Rebba had been sent by the Holy Spirit and Emmanuel’s father, R. Prasada Rao to America to ask Christians to help the Church in South India—spiritually rich but economically poor. Prasada Rao’s father, Bolledu John, had begun the ministry thirty five years before in 1950. God called John to be “His true son,” and an amazing ministry began.

R. Prasada Rao’s first letter asked for our help. The letterhead had two impressive statements, “Jesus Christ is Lord of all,” and “Preaching God’s Holy Word, winning souls for Christ.” He wrote, “The workers and villagers are very poor. They are suffering with communicable diseases. The believers gather for worship in congested verandas and under trees. There are no prayer sheds. We are praying to start an orphanage.” The children “are not getting to school and are put into contract labor (indentured servants) from childhood. The orphan children lost their parents in natural havocs, don’t have food and are begging in the streets. Kindly help us; please pray. Thanking you,” R. Prasada Rao.

The task ahead of IREF USA was impossible. Poverty, sickness, orphans, no facilities except a few thatched roof huts and temporary prayer coverings. Thirty evangelists were dedicated to reach the villages in Guntur District... they had no income. Emmanuel and Prasada Rao told us India had 730 million people—now over one billion souls. The State of Andhra Pradesh had 10,000 villages who had

never heard the Gospel—2.5-3% of the population are “practicing Christianity.” We were to learn that many were nominal Christians.

Over the years concerned Christians have sent hundreds of letters to me about overwhelming worldwide needs. What made Prasada’s request different? As I reflect on those days at the Pickwick Restaurant three reasons emerged:

1. A God-sent request Prasada and Emmanuel came and asked us to help. Their request was powerful.
2. Evangelical Faith: They showed their historic evangelical faith by word and deed with integrity and compassion.
3. God’s Call: God called the few men around the table that morning to cast our futures with brothers and sisters who had risked everything to serve Jesus Christ.

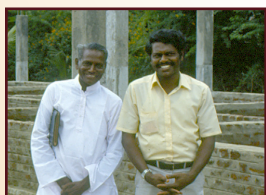
A short story from 1986 sums up so much. Chip Moore, our current Chair of the IREF Board of Directors and I went to the village of Rajukulava where 20,000 died in the recent cyclone. Chip took pictures of the musician as they sang the song we understood to mean “Know Jesus, Know Jesus.” The message was “One thing I know” about Jesus the Christ of God. We invited the hearers to come to receive Christ as Lord and Savior. We were told sixty-seven came to pray prayers of faith, repentance and surrender to know Jesus. During the “after service,” I laid hands on a woman for healing and deliverance. She immediately became unconscious. Dr. Phil Frystack told me later he could not get a pulse. Praise God, Prasada Rao and other seasoned Christian leaders circled around this woman to exorcize demons who were trying to destroy her new commitment to Jesus Christ. By God’s power and grace the attractive woman went away whole. Chip and I saw the power of the song, “Know Jesus,” in ways we had never experienced before.

Now on the 30th anniversary of India Rural Evangelical Fellowship, we stand, still amazed by God’s power and grace. In many ways the village of Rajukulava changed us and continues to energize our commitment to Repalle, Gospel Fields and the IREF Mission to South India.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Art Gay, IREF Prayer Chairman



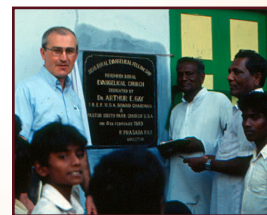
Early leaders of IREF India and IREF USA collaborate in Repalle.



Prasada Rao and Emmanuel Rebba in 1984.



Art Gay baptizes a new believer with Prasada Rao in 1986.



First IREF concrete church dedication. Elders and first team members marched around the church and prayed before its opening.



CELEBRATING

65^{Yrs.}

April 2015
continued...

India Rural
Evangelical
Fellowship

30 Years and Counting In Act 8:26, an angel of the Lord directs Philip to go south to a desert road heading to a remote place called Gaza. On this road Philip encounters an important Ethiopian official reading the book of Isaiah in his chariot. Philip is further instructed by the Spirit to go near this man's chariot. Philip leads this official to Christ! Do you know that Scripture teaches that there are no accidents? No coincidences! Philip and the Ethiopian was a divine encounter.

God does an amazing work on behalf of his people; in his fatherly care he is orchestrating the circumstances we find ourselves in. Some have said, "The hand of God in the glove of circumstances." Nearly 30 years ago God sovereignly arranged the path of a young Indian couple, to leave a small rural area of India (which still amazes me) and come to confusing, complex, cold new city . . . Chicago. In His divine wisdom and providential care, God brought special people to receive and love these sojourners.

The initial contacts with Rev. Art Gay, the Kueck family, South Park Church and many others, were not random acts of chance! This was God demonstrating His love for Dee and Emmanuel. The adjustments they faced assimilating into American culture were immense and their path of faith was filled with unplanned detours and unpredictable turns. Yet, God was orchestrating far more than they could see or understand. God has been faithful at every turn!

As I write this today, hundreds of IREF friends have journeyed to the town of Repalle (not a tourist destination!). Partners from the US, the UK, and the Netherlands. These connections are the demonstration of God's faithfulness as he carries out his purposes. We are filled with great hope as we look back on God's providence believing that in the days ahead God will provide new partnerships, new connections and new relationships as we honor him by faith.

Craig Darling, IREF US Director

SAVE THE DATE 4TH ANNUAL IREF GOLF OUTING

SAT 2015
AUG 15



DEERFIELD GOLF CLUB • 1201 Saunders Road • Riverwoods, IL 60015

Prayer Requests and Praise

- Please pray for our U.S. Director & Chief Fundraiser, Craig Darling as he presents IREF CDC needs to small groups, businesses and institutions for support.
- Please pray for Emmanuel Rebba and evangelists/ Bible ladies to have the strength and good health to continue the IREF village revival meetings over the summer months.
- Please pray for IREF as 325 children will be dropped from our European Partner in 2015. Many of these children attend IREF CDC and have hopes of attending IREF schools in Repalle.
- Please pray for IREF students as many return home for summer break. Pray that they will be able to witness to their family members and will return refreshed for the new school year.
- Please pray for the strength and prosperity of our supporting churches, businesses and sponsors.
- Praise God for His graciousness to this ministry and His sovereignty to provide for every need.