



India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

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The Hope in a Child *"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12 NIV*

Could God have done it any other way? Here we are a couple of thousand years down the road and we will see the wisdom, if we have eyes to see; ears to hear, and a heart to discern. Jesus would not emerge from a castle or descend from the sky. He did not emerge from a palace or a holy temple but from the meekest of beginnings. Could you hear the critics today? Oh, Jesus was some rich kid, or the manifestation of a secret sect. God chose to bring His Son into the world through a simple carpenter and his wife. But even in those humble conditions, the Glory of God was shining with a host of Heavenly angels. It is the perfect imagery of our Savior. God incarnate walking amongst us. He would live among us not as royalty, but rather as a worker, rabbi, and teacher. He would be the Way and the Truth rubbing shoulders, transforming the hearts of the unrighteous. He ultimately would sacrifice Himself to free us from the bondage of our sins, by taking it upon himself.

There are so many parallels at IREF. The pastors in the IREF churches are men of humble means, but their smiles and passion for Christ exudes the light of Jesus. And in our schools, our teachers sow into the hearts of children the knowledge to free them from poverty and the wisdom to bring about eternal change for the children themselves, their community and the generations to follow. We don't seek to sow seeds between the stones where plants pop up quickly but

get choked out. We plant in rich soil and nurture growth for a life time and into future generations. A child with hope for a life free of poverty, and the eternal hope of Jesus within his/her soul.

I would be remiss if I did not remember you all too. I have met many of you in my months at IREF and you too have been long sustaining lights for your family, church, community, country and world. More than ever, the world today is a confusing place, with moral and political banter splintering families, friends, churches and countries.

But let us take a bit of solace...a moment to dwell in peace with chaos all around. Think back on that manger under a quiet starry night. It was an eternal gift that is as precious now as it was back then.

From the IREF team here in the U.S. and in India, we thank God for you and wish you and your families a joyous and blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dan Wagner, IREF US Director

Make IREF a Part of Your Christmas Gift Giving

If it is within your means, would you please consider extending your Christmas gift giving to an IREF child, pastor or evangelist in India? The suggested donation for a child is \$25, which will be used for new clothing or \$45 for a pastor or evangelist, which is used to buy clothing and food. We still have a need for over 2,000 children and 100 pastors. Sharing with those less fortunate will surely deepen your connection to the true meaning of Christmas. We hope you will make this gift giving a part of your Christmas tradition.



IREF Star Lighting Ceremonies

have begun for 2017. These ceremonies are held at the main campus in Repalle, the IREF Church also in Repalle and in villages where IREF Churches and CDCs are located. The purpose of the events are to give IREF leaders the opportunity to gather people together for a time of reflection on the story of Christ's birth. This year the IREF students celebrated their star lighting ceremony on December 8th.

Please pray for the star lighting ceremonies that will continue throughout the month of December at IREF and surrounding villages. This is a great opportunity for many children and community members to come to know Christ and reflect back on the message heard each time they look at the star in their village. The purpose of the star was to show the way to Jesus. What amazing ways our God works to bring His people closer to Him!

Prayer Requests and Praise

- Please pray for the upcoming Christmas season and that IREF would be able to promote Christianity to children and locals with the message of the Christmas story. Preparations are underway for all child and evangelist gifts. IREF is counting on God to provide the funding for this impactful time of the year for the people of Southeast India.
- Please pray as IREF staff and students prepare for the 2018 Youth Conference January 10-14 and Gospel Meetings January 31- February 5.
- IREF is preparing for the 2018 missions trip. Please pray for those signed up from the US and UK as they leave for Repalle on January 5th. And also for the team traveling to Repalle in late January for the Gospel Meetings. Please also pray that travels will be smooth and God will use them according to His will.
- As IREF evangelists and Bible ladies share the message of Christ's birth in the village of Southeast India, please pray that the people will open their hearts to the Good News.

Christmas for India

We are now collecting Christmas gifts for children, evangelists and their families. A considerable amount of planning by the IREF board and staff is required to arrange gifts and we thank you in advance for your stewardship.

Any support received now will ensure that Christmas will arrive on time.
Please consider:

- \$25 for Children's Christmas Gift (new clothes)
- \$45 for Evangelists and Bible Ladies Christmas Gift (new clothing and food for their family)

To deliver your Christmas gift to India sooner, donate online at irefusa.org and simply click "How to Help" and "Make a Donation".

We extend our warmest thanks to you, the faithful supporters of IREF who make Christmas in Repalle possible each year!

