



India Rural Evangelical Fellowship

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I came to IREF with a question in my heart:

“God, what are you doing here?”

I was aware that our small team from The Chapel wasn't coming to start something; we were stepping into something that God had been doing for decades before we arrived. I wanted the Lord to give me eyes to see what he was already doing in and through this ministry. I wanted him to show me what he was doing here *(in rural Southeast India).*

On the first morning we were there, with this question in my heart, I sat down to listen and pray at one of the picnic tables that sits between the large, colorful playground and the walkway that students take from the main gates back to the school buildings. And as I sat at that picnic table with kids walking by – usually in groups of two or three, holding hands and saying, “Hello, Brotha (Brother)” – I heard this phrase run through my head: “These kids are ‘what I’m doing here.’” The phrase struck me as all at once simple yet profound. Their lives being transformed by the kindness and grace of Jesus, their stories being dramatically shifted towards redemption, their little hearts opening up to receive real love – some, undoubtedly for the first time – this was what God was doing here.

The next six days that we spent at IREF I saw this work of God living and breathing before me. In every morning and evening devotion; every classroom we visited; every night seeing and hearing the girls' choir worship Jesus at the Gospel Meetings; and every passing wave, hello, or moment of goofing off with them, I saw children who were being radically transformed, redeemed, and healed by the presence, love, and grace of God that abides there. Truly, God is doing a mighty and beautiful thing in and through IREF.

*David Flemming,
Associate Pastor -The Chapel, Mundelein Campus*



Rick Callahan, David Flemming and Dave Brickey receive a hearty welcome from IREF.



David sharing a word of greetings at the 2020 Gospel Meetings with Emmanuel Rebba translating.



David Flemming and Dave Brickey enjoy time with the IREF students.



2020 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 5th - 9th. 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 20,000!

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 will now turn its evangelism focus and efforts to strengthening the tribal villages that surround Repalle, during the summer months of April and May. 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.



Village Gospel Meetings Kick Off

IREF held a 2-day Gospel Meeting in a village 1.5 hours away from Repalle on Feb. 13 & 14. With the help of the local pastor's fellowship in that area, IREF was given the opportunity to conduct these meetings. It was a quick turn around from the main Gospel Meeting to another. However, our staff worked together to present the Gospel in this region.

A Hindu woman willingly offered her land for the meetings to be held – we are thankful for her generosity. As equipment was being gathered and separated for set-up, a cobra was spotted and killed by IREF college students. And despite a couple of days of heavy rain in the surrounding villages – there was no rain for the meetings. Praise God for His Providence in allowing the Gospel to go forth in this new region!

We are grateful for the local pastor's fellowship for their hard work, cooperation, and participation. While they paved the way for the Gospel to be presented, it was a collective effort. It was a small village and a narrow meeting ground but nearly 3,000 people crowded the grounds between the two nights of meetings. The IREF choir drew in the crowd through its singing while Emmanuel Rebba and John Rebba delivered the main messages.

We pray that the seeds that were planted find good soil in the hearts of the villagers and we look forward to hearing testimonies in the weeks to come!



The Power of Baptism

Conversion and baptism are all too commonly seen as part of a movement of 'denationalization.' In some Indian states, anti-conversion laws criminalize converting someone from one faith to another. Failure to send notices or seek permission from local governments before converting or participating in a church service where conversions happen, can result in fines or imprisonment. We praise God that law has not yet come into effect in Andhra Pradesh but many government officials are working hard to push this law into effect.

Persecution is on the rise in Andhra Pradesh, leading to incredible fear. Pastors have been dragged into city centers near Repalle and beaten, shamed for declaring Christ as Savior. Yet the Holy Spirit is moving in and through IREF. Many people are coming forward each week and giving their lives to Christ. God is good! Please pray for these new believers and for them to continue to be bold for the Kingdom.



March 2020
continued...

India Rural
Evangelical
Fellowship

Prayer & Praise

- Praise God for the hundreds of individuals who accepted Christ as their Savior at the 2020 Youth Conference and Gospel Meetings in Repalle.
- Please pray for IREF staff and students as they prepare to close the 2019-2020 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.
- Evangelists and Bible Ladies will be 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.