

August 2020



“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

In the rural regions of Andhra Pradesh, children are susceptible to many threats including child labor, human trafficking, street begging, and home abuse. In the past three years, child labor has tripled in Andhra Pradesh. The state accounts for ten percent of all human trafficking cases in India and of the twenty-nine states in India, Andhra Pradesh is second in number of girls trafficked. If a child is fortunate enough to receive an education at a government school, they are met with a 32:1 teacher to student ratio.

India Rural Evangelical Fellowship (IREF) exists to provide safe housing, education, and hope found in Jesus Christ to children in rural India. With a teacher to student ration of 15:1, every student is seen, known, and loved. Since 1971, IREF has housed and educated over 12,000 students. The organization has also led tens of thousands to Jesus through gospel meetings and village churches. None of this would be possible without God's grace and our supporter's generosity!

**The ministry of India Rural Evangelical Fellowship is an example
of what is possible when people come together to help those in need.**

This month, you are invited to an online, global celebration called “IREF Together”! On August 22, individuals and churches from the United States, Europe, and India will come together online to celebrate all that God has done at IREF. At the event, Emmanuel and Dee Rebba will share testimonies of IREF's impact during COVID-19. You will be inspired as you hear the history of IREF-UK and you will be encouraged as you hear a testimony and song from the IREF-India staff and students.

This year, IREF's goal is to raise \$150,000 of the organization's \$1.2-million-dollar need. Together we can make a transformational, multi-generational impact in India. You have the opportunity to provide hope and make a difference on August 22!

**You will not want to miss this uplifting gathering!
Join us virtually on August 22 at 10AM CDT at www.irefusa.org**

**India Rural
Evangelical
Fellowship**

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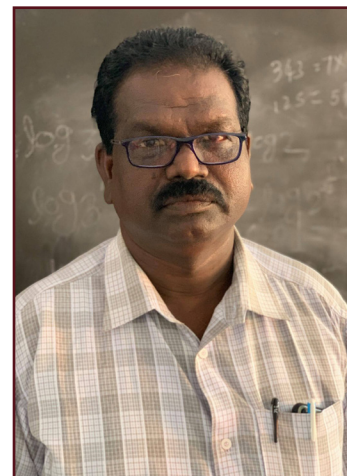
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It is with a heavy heart that we share this news.

IREF's Elementary and High School Principal Mr. Zachariah, passed away on July 24th due to Covid-19. He was 53 years old. His symptoms unfortunately were not diagnosed until it was too late. Zachariah has been with IREF for 3 years and made a lasting impact on many students.

Zachariah was known and remembered by IREF staff and students as a humble and mild-mannered man, who shared the Gospel of Christ through his actions and deeds. He will be greatly missed by IREF.

Please remember his wife and 21-year old son in your prayers as they grieve this sudden and tragic loss. Many staff members have been exposed to Coronavirus in the past week and are now safely quarantined in their homes. As the IREF Community navigates this loss of a dear friend, and integral part of the staff, please keep them in your thoughts.



Testimonial Spotlights

Vivek comes from a village about eight hours away from the IREF campus, torn between vibrant, natural beauty and a severe lack of discipline and family values among the inhabitants. There, they wake and sleep with the respective rising and setting of the sun, essentially drifting along through the day.



Much of the pain and suffering in Vivek's life grows from this village, sprouting from the root of his sadly fragmented family. About seven years ago, Vivek lost his mother when she committed suicide and he has lived with just his father ever since. Vivek's father, an auto driver by occupation, has developed an alcohol dependence which in turn culminated in abusive behavior directed toward Vivek and his brother. Inevitably, this behavior has caused a rift between the father and his sons.

Vivek does not seem to want to speak or communicate with his father when he visits Vivek at IREF. Last summer Vivek's brother, whom Vivek had first come to IREF with four years ago, fled from home after enduring one beating too many. Vivek, only fifteen years old, has already lived through an incredible amount of pain and suffering and brokenness in his family and in his home.

Like many at IREF, Vivek's story is still being written. We invite all who read this to pray a prayer of intercession for Vivek, lifting his life and circumstances to the One who never leaves the one behind. It might seem impossible to understand God's place in a life like this, but in fact it is in these very impossible, broken places that God most makes Himself known.

As the Psalmist says, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18). Never give up praying for the impossible, "For nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Prayer & Praise

- Pray for a positive outcome for IREF's first virtual event on August 22nd, that many will come together as a body of believers internationally and better understand what IREF is doing in rural India.
- IREF Evangelists and Bible Ladies serve congregations in over 100 villages. Please pray as they work to encourage and also spread the Good News during such dark times.
- Covid-19 continues to spread in India. Limits on daily income have made for access to food, dire. Proper treatment of coronavirus will be hard to come by with access to healthcare being just as desperate. Please continue to pray as IREF moves to address urgent needs in surrounding villages.