

February 2021



2021 Youth Conference Four hundred students gathered together for the IREF Youth Conference this past month. The Youth Conference looked different than year's past. Normally, thousands of young adults would attend the conference from villages all over Andhra Pradesh, but due to Covid-19 IREF restricted attendance for only the students living on campus.

God did a mighty work throughout the conference. John Rebba said, "Going into the conference, my prayer was that the hearts and minds of the students and staff would be repositioned towards Christ. In the past ten months, the students have been in their villages surrounded by Hinduism and some students experienced de. The Youth Conference is important because it creates an intentional time for everyone to renew their strength in the Lord."

John's prayer for "repositioned hearts and minds" was answered as repentance and prayer consumed the church sanctuary last Thursday and Friday. While Thursday and Friday were filled with prayer and repentance, Saturday and Sunday were filled with celebration and restoration!

On Saturday, 10 young adults were saved and baptized. The next day, we celebrated their courageous step and gifted them each a new Telugu Bible (donated by Galena Bible Church). As they begin their discipleship path and their lifelong pursuit of knowing Christ, we trust God's Word will strengthen them in difficulties and draw them to Him. communities in such harsh, rural conditions and culture.



IREF students gather in the Repalle Church to kick off the Youth Conference.



Many students who have joined IREF for this academic year, are hearing the Gospel for the first time. Praise God for the commitments made to follow Christ!



Baptisms were held in the Krishna River. 10 new believers were baptized!

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING

When we asked, "What would you like to communicate to IREF partners across the globe?" the IREF-India staff replied, "Thank them for praying." Thank you for partnering with us in prayer. IREF was founded on prayer and we believe that prayer changes things.

"Whenever God determines to do a great work, He first sets His people to pray." - Spurgeon

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India Celebrates its 71st Republic Day On, January 26th India celebrated Republic Day. It the day India honors its constitution and when India became recognized as a newly formed republic back in 1950. Gaining its independence from British rule on August 15, 1947, it took a near 3 years for India's leaders to draft national amendments for India to live by. This year, IREF celebrated Republic Day by assembling together outside of the Degree college early in the morning to celebrate with song, anthem, short speeches, flag hoisting and paying tribute to the freedom the constitution of India is meant to provide.





Ministering Through Covid



Meet Marthamma - she has been with IREF for several years and was specially trained to care for the younger children at IREF. Her responsibilities include teaching the children proper hygiene, age-based life skills, and also providing the nurture and care that younger children need. But when the government mandate came for all the students to return to their homes, Marthamma worried tremendously for the young IREF children she had cared for. IREF didn't hesitate to keep her employed as her background and family situation is rather desperate.

"IREF has been my home and family. I learned so much about the love of Christ here. How important is this time than any other in my lifetime to pray and trust the Lord?! I am so thankful that God has blessed me! I live alone in my village but am often treated as an outsider because of my faith. This past spring when Coronavirus was so new, my neighbor - a young pregnant woman, went into labor earlier than expected. The rest of our neighbors hesitated to help her but God gave me an overwhelming amount of peace. He told me that His grace is sufficient and only He could protect me from Covid. I took that young woman to the hospital with the little money I had in my pocket, knowing my exposure to Covid was inevitable, and she gave birth to a healthy baby girl. What a blessing to be a part of that joyous moment with her - all fear set aside with all hope in Jesus! God is so good!! He continues to teach me everyday how important it is for me to be a witness any way I can."

IREF's Campus Is Filling Up Slowly but surely, as government restrictions begin to ease and permission to resume in-person classes by grade-level continues, students are joyfully returning to IREF.

As IREF's staff welcomes students with open arms, we ask that you continue to lift the ministry up in your prayers. Safety precautions and quarantine rules are being strictly adhered to. Students are being tested for Covid-19 within a week of arriving to IREF, and we are happy to report every test result so far as come back negative!

Please continue to pray for the health and safety of the staff and students during this pandemic.



Prayer & Praise

- Please continue to pray for IREF evangelists and Bible ladies as they minister in rural villages. Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ is so vital during such uncertain times.
- Covid-19 continues to spread at a rapid rate in India, with over 10.8 million confirmed cases. Christians in India are often last in line for essential Covid-19 food and aid because of their faith. Proper treatment has remained a consistent concern for many due to minimal access to healthcare. Please continue to pray as IREF moves to address urgent needs in surrounding villages.
- We praise God for His grace upon IREF. Roughly 600 students have returned to school and everyone has remained healthy since schools opened back up in November.
- Please continue praying for a movement that results in great unity among the global Christian community. Pray as IREF evangelists and Bible ladies concentrate their efforts on spreading the Good News in the new year.
- Please pray that believers in Repalle would have opportunities to show the light and hope of Christ to their neighbors.

February 2021
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