

August 2023



Honoring the Legacy of IREF USA Founding Chairman, Rev. Dr. Arthur Evans Gay Jr.

Our faith in Jesus gives us hope that we will meet again, which reminds us of a different meeting, 40 years ago.

In the Pickwick Restaurant in Park Ridge, Illinois, we packed a booth full as IREF USA began. 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. Pastor Gay was one of those men. The task ahead of IREF USA was impossible. Poverty, sickness, orphans, no facilities except a few thatched roof huts and temporary prayer coverings. Yet our faith was stronger than our fear, and Pastor Gay was one of the biggest reasons.

In 1986, Pastor Gay visited IREF. After we returned to the US, Pastor Gay started promoting the ministry and we asked him to be the Chairman of the IREF USA board. Because of Art's involvement, his commitment and love for the people of India, the trajectory and ministry of IREF completely changed. The ministry of IREF has grown, and it was with Art's love and leadership that made it possible.

We were continuously inspired by Pastor Gay's deep commitment to the Gospel and passion for global missions. He visited some of India's most remote villages, telling countless people the Good News, sometimes against amazing odds. When a village lacked electricity – as most of them did – Pastor Gay didn't hesitate as we hooked lights and a speaker to a car battery at night, literally and figuratively breaking the Light of Jesus through the darkness of Hinduism.

Words will certainly fall short of explaining what Pastor Gay meant to IREF. His deep compassion for others was inspiring. His love for Jesus was evident in every way. When we needed faithful guidance, Pastor Gay was always there with a listening ear and outstretched hand.

Thank you, Art, for your dedication to this ministry IREF and the people of Andhra Pradesh. **We will meet again.**

IREF USA Board of Directors



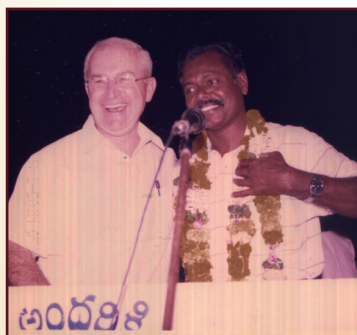
Art and IREF India founder, Prasada Rao Rebba dedicate the first concrete IREF Church in 1986.



Art and Prasada Rao Rebba discuss the future of Gospel Fields over a ThumbsUp Cola.



During a village Gospel Meeting in 1988, Art preached while Emmanuel translated with only two lanterns for light.



Art and Emmanuel in 1989.



IREF Board Chairman, Chip Moore (left), Jim Kueck, Jeremy Thompson, Emmanuel and other board members pray over Art in 2017.



1999 Baptisms in the Krishna River, with Evangelist Devasahayam (left), Pastor Kevin McBride and Art.

*"Until we meet again,
and we shall
by grace alone
at Jesus' feet."*

- Rev. Dr. Arthur Evans Gay, Jr.

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India Rural
Evangelical
Fellowship

Student Spotlight Like many students at IREF, Yogesh comes from a single-parent home. His father was an abusive alcoholic, and he left the family to pursue a career as a truck driver. The mother wanted Yogesh to receive a good education, so she enrolled him in the local government school. A few years ago, as a sixth-grade student, Yogesh was fed up with school. He walked out and quit.

In discussing his experience with the government school, Yogesh said, "I was bored and the teachers were cruel. They would yell at us if our eyes were not on the pages of our books and many of them would hit the students. During the day, we didn't get food and at that time, most of my friends were already working in the factories and the fields." Because his mother couldn't provide food or proper attention for him, she sent him to IREF.

At first, adjusting to IREF was difficult. But a teacher at the English Medium school named Sasilaka connected with Yogesh. When remembering their first interactions, Yogesh said, "Sasilaka found a way to motivate me. She encouraged me and helped me believe that I was talented and smart." After finishing at tenth class, Yogesh plans to stay at IREF for Junior College and then join the Indian Army.

Yogesh has been on a spiritual journey during his two years at IREF. He comes from a Hindu family that primarily worships lord Shiva, the snake god. But during his time at IREF, both Yogesh and his mother started praying to Jesus. When we asked Yogesh about this, he shared that right now Jesus is one of his favorite gods that he prays to. While neither Yogesh or his mother confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior, it is evident that God is drawing both of them close to that decision.



Global Sisterhood Event We thank God for a sweet time of fellowship as women of all different ages gathered in Destin, Florida on July 22nd to hear about what God is doing in rural India in and through the nursing students at IREF. It was an inspiring time as those in attendance heard from special speaker Natalie Rebba. The women were moved to tears to hear her story of the Lord calling her to be in India full time with her family serving the ministry of IREF.

\$25,500 was raised!! All of the proceeds will be going towards empowering the young women going through the IREF Nursing college. Thank you to all who came out to be a part of the afternoon and for the generous donations which will impact many young students!



Prayer & Praise

- Please pray for the Christian believers in Manipur (east of Bangladesh) as they face violence. Pray for peace to prevail and for our brothers and sisters in Christ to stand firm during these devastating attacks on against their churches.
- Praise God for the new students who have come to IREF and hear the Gospel for the first time this year! May they come to know our Savior throughout the academic year and allow the Holy Spirit to move within their hearts.
- Please pray for the strength and prosperity of our supporting churches, businesses and sponsors.
- Please pray that believers in Repalle would have opportunities to show the light and hope of Christ to their neighbors.