

The College was launched as a venture of faith, with a minimum budget and no funding other than a little government scholarship money available to some students. The College began in a converted chicken farm. But in January 2003, a brand-new purpose-built College building was opened, thanks to the generosity of IREF's supporters in the Netherlands, the USA and the UK.

Most of the students are members of disadvantaged scheduled castes or tribal groups. Hostel facilities are provided for the poorest students and those who attend the College from distant towns and villages.

The College's team of over 50 lecturers and administrative staff are appointed not only for their academic merit, but also for their Christian commitment.

Many young people in India have never heard of Jesus Christ. **IREF's** goal is to share the Gospel with the College students, so that after graduating they can reach out to their new circle of highly influential contacts. The lives of many students are changed through the personal witnessing of their fellow classmates, teaching sessions outside normal classroom schedules, and active involvement in the daily ministry of **IREF**. Each year, many of the students become Christians through the annual three-day Youth Conference, held in Repalle each January.

#### **HEALTH CARE**

Since 1996, IREF has been able to provide basic health care and nursing training for up to 20 female students a year through its **St. Peter's Multi-purpose Health Workers (female) Training Institute**. Courses normally last 18 months; some of the Institute's students continue with further nursing training at various government facilities. IREF(UK) currently supports two full-time nurses for work amongst the 5,000 children and young people in IREF's care.

#### **DISASTER RELIEF**

In 2007, IREF(UK) established a special **Relief Fund** to provide quick-response emergency aid in the wake of natural disasters, such as floods, cyclones and fires, which frequently strike the coastal region of Andhra Pradesh. IREF(India) has a long and distinguished history of providing aid in the form of food, cooking utensils and blankets at such times. More recently, it has been involved in ambitious housing projects to provide permanent homes for those who suffered as a result of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. IREF(India) also runs **Income Generation Projects** to help villagers become financially self-supporting. These are supported from the UK through our **Unusual Present** scheme (see ask for further details).

#### **ARE YOU ABLE TO HELP?**

**IREF (UK)** is a recognised Scottish Charity (number SC033100). It is always seeking additional prayer partners, sponsors and donors. If you are able to help in any way, please send for details. Thank you.

July 2009

# The INDIA RURAL EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP

The **India Rural Evangelical Fellowship** is an indigenous Indian mission dedicated to:

- *Reaching the rural population of Andhra Pradesh, South India, with the Gospel of Jesus Christ;*
- *Mobilising and equipping national workers to carry out evangelism and so fulfil the Great Commission;*
- *Planting local churches and enabling them to develop;*
- *Caring for orphans, providing them with a good academic and spiritual Christian education;*
- *Providing good Christian education at Further and Higher(Degree) levels, especially to young people from deprived backgrounds;*
- *Providing free medical check-ups and medication for those in its care;*
- *Establishing Income Generation Projects to enable the poorest Christians to provide for their families;*
- *Providing emergency relief to cyclone, flood, and disaster victims.*

**IREF's** headquarters are located at their Gospel Fields compound in Repalle, a population centre for about 50,000 people. Over 76 million people live in the state of Andhra Pradesh, more than 70% of whom earn their living from agriculture work. About 10,000 of the state's 30,000 villages have no known Christian witness. Many villagers have never even heard of the name of Jesus.

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#### **Further details are available from:**

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[repallechristiancollege.org](http://repallechristiancollege.org); [www.rccollegeofedu.com](http://www.rccollegeofedu.com)**

### **INTER-CONTINENTAL SUPPORT**

**IREF (India)** was founded in 1950 by a young teacher, Prasada Rao, and his wife, Lydia. The work of the mission in India is now run through a Board of Elders, all of them Indian nationals, under the chairmanship of Prasada Rao.

**IREF (USA)** was formed in 1986 to encourage prayer and financial support for the work in India. It is led by Dr Emmanuel Rebba, one of Prasada Rao's sons, and a Board of Directors based in the USA.

**IREF (UK)** was formed in 1996 to support and promote the work throughout the United Kingdom. It is overseen by six UK-based Trustees.

### **SPREADING THE GOSPEL**

To know Christ, and make him known, is **IREF's** two-fold aim. Since foreign missionaries can no longer live in India, **IREF** is committed to equipping ordinary Christians in local churches, and Indian men and women as full-time evangelists, to fulfil the work of the great Commission. **IREF (India)** currently supports over 200 national missionaries (Pastor/Evangelists and Bible Ladies) working in more than 400 towns and villages within a 200-mile radius of Repalle. Financial support through the **Evangelist Sponsorship Scheme** provides basic living expenses for the evangelists and their families. **IREF** sees clearly its responsibility to prepare Indian Christians as leaders, and to equip its messengers of the Gospel as well as possible. To this end, all the evangelists receive regular, in-service training.

### **THE SCHOOL OF EVANGELISM**

In autumn 1999, **IREF** opened its brand-new, purpose-built, two-storey **School of Evangelism**. The first intake of students comprised 28 males and 18 females, aged 18-25 years. The School's two full-time lecturers give students overviews of the Old and New Testaments, and courses in ethics and evangelism, during their one-year course. Practical assignments form a major component of the students' work. It is hoped that many of the students trained in this way will become the next generation of **IREF** evangelists. Both the opportunities and needs are great. During the special evangelistic meetings held to mark **IREF's Golden Jubilee** in Jan/Feb 2000, 500 young people and 1500 adults responded to the Gospel message. It is vital to train up more evangelists, to reap and then cultivate the harvest opportunities.

### **CHURCH BUILDINGS**

Thanks to the generosity of its supporters, **IREF** has been able to build many village churches. These not only provide a focal point for proclaiming the Gospel and a place for believers to meet in. They also serve as places of safety and shelter during the severe storms and floods that so often hit this part of India. In September 1997, a purpose-built worship-centre for **IREF's Repalle Evangelical Church** was opened. The building seats 3,000 and is the second largest church building in Andhra Pradesh. It is used for weekly worship, teaching and evangelistic services, and Crusades throughout the year.

### **CARING FOR CHILDREN**

**IREF's** ministry includes a large orphanage in their Gospel Fields compound in Repalle. The **Lydia Children's Home** provides happy and secure accommodation for over 1,000 children from the poorest of backgrounds. **Sponsorship schemes** enable them to be provided with good clothing, three meals a day, full-time education (see below) and accommodation in pleasant modern dormitory blocks. Two other orphanages, in the **tribal colony villages** of Arumbaka and Nizamapatnam, provide education and accommodation for a further 350 children. All **IREF's** many children benefit from the warm spirit of Christian love in which their care is provided.

### **PROVIDING GOOD EDUCATION**

Around 1,300 children attend **IREF's John's Primary and High Schools**. A modern purpose-built school building was completed in 1997. All the children from the **Lydia Children's Home** attend the school, together with some day children from Repalle and its surrounding villages. Priority is given to children from Christian homes and those from the poorest backgrounds, regardless of religion. Classes are held six days a week. Courses are accredited by the Andhra Pradesh State Government. **IREF's** first **Child Development Centre** was opened in the village of Akkivaripalem in 2003, and there are now several others. These supplement the education that children receive through their government day schools. Various **Child Sponsorship Schemes** help cover the costs of schooling and caring for these children. All **IREF's** education is provided in an atmosphere of warm Christian love and Biblical values.

### **FURTHER EDUCATION**

The **Repalle Christian Junior College** was founded in 1997. It offers a two-year course in a wide range of subjects, providing a link between **IREF's High School** and **Degree College** (see below). The Junior College currently has over 200 students.

### **HIGHER EDUCATION**

**IREF** operates the only evangelical degree-giving college in Andhra Pradesh, home to 75 million people. **IREF's Repalle Christian College** was established in 1993 and now has around 1,000 students. The College offers a wide range of first-degree courses, and also some Masters courses, all of which receive accreditation through **Acharya Nagarjuna University**, near Guntur. The **Repalle Christian College** was established to:

- Provide good Christian higher education for poor students who would not otherwise receive any;
- Prepare young men and women for the ministry of rural evangelism;
- Teach Biblical truths and basic evangelical doctrines;
- Present a holistic ministry and the message of the Gospel to the rural poor.