

Arumbaka Church dedicated

Ian Leitch was privileged to be present for the opening of a new church building in the village of Arumbaka during his visit to India last November. Funds for the building had been raised through *The Heralds Trust*, the organisation that supports Ian's ministry as a Bible teacher and evangelist.



“An evangelist is someone who is a clean communicator, a reliable defender of the faith, and an accurate reflector of the truth and teachings about Jesus Christ.” This was the message Ian gave to the pastors and evangelists who gathered in Repalle for his *New Life Seminars* last November. The photograph below shows a young man being presented with a certificate for successfully completing the five-day course.



Present Aid

Thank you for helping our 'Present Aid' scheme get off to such a good start just before Christmas. Almost £450 was raised in this way through the purchase of 25 Bibles at £1.50 each; seven sets of school uniforms at £7.50 each; one set of ratchet's baskets at £35; three sewing machines at £45; one evangelist's bicycle at £50; and one handloom at £140. It almost sounds like the song, *the 12 days of Christmas!* But remember, the Present

Aid scheme isn't just for Christmas. It can be used for birthday presents and for special anniversary gifts too. Let us know if you would like further details.

Airdrie IREF Christmas Tree

Friends of IREF at Airdrie Baptist Church, Scotland, raised money before Christmas in a new and innovative way. The Bible Class sold Christmas ornaments to the Church for a donation. In return, a bauble was hung on the tree with a sponsored child's name on it (see photo). The donor was also given a prayer card containing the child's name and was encouraged to pray for the child over the Christmas period. On one particular Sunday, the teenagers running the project set up a table outside the front door of the Church to 'catch' everyone as they left. It was more successful than the Bible Class ever imagined - they raised over £600 for IREF! Our sincere thanks go to them for their great imagination and all their hard work.



Christmas in Repalle

Christmas is always a special time in Repalle, with a large number of pupils, students, staff members and believers gathering together to celebrate the birth of our Saviour. One of the highlights of the celebrations each year is the presentation of an elaborate nativity play, pictured below.



The IREF children are also given "Bundles of Love", boxes of presents containing clothing and toys.

So, on their behalf, we want to say a big 'Thank you' to everyone who contributed towards the cost of these gifts.



Sponsorship encouragement

One of our long-term sponsors recently received very encouraging news from the 'child' she and her husband had been sponsoring for the past several years. *"Greetings, in the precious name of our Lord Jesus. I am Chandra Rao Dasari writing from Lydia Children's Home, Repalle. I trust and pray you are all doing fine. I passed the Degree Course at IREF and joined an MBA course at another College. Thank you for all your kind help throughout my studies at IREF. Now I have moved away from IREF, please do remember me in your daily prayers for my further studies."* What an encouragement to hear that Chandra has gone on to fulfil his potential, thanks to his sponsorship through IREF over so many years. I am sure that his story could be repeated many times over. So, on behalf of all those who benefit from their UK sponsorship, let me say a huge 'Thank you' and encourage you to keep up the good work!

Orissa Refugee Update

IREF continues to minister to and support about 70 Christian refugees who were forced to flee the state of Orissa last autumn. It has been estimated that 70,000 Christians were left homeless as a result of the persecution, in which 4,000 homes and 450 churches were destroyed. 3,000 people are still missing and 77 are known to have died in the troubles. A few Christians have returned home; but most of the 100 who initially found their way to Repalle have remained, as it is still not safe for them to return to rebuild their destroyed homes and churches. Many Christians have been required to renounce their faith as a condition of being allowed to return to their villages.

Communication with the refugees remains difficult, as they do not speak Telugu and only a few are fluent in English. The language barrier hinders their ability to find any work outside their home state. It is encouraging that some of the refugee children have begun attending school in Repalle and a few of the believers have found work with IREF.



The *Association of Rural Ministers* was recently formed under the auspices of IREF to meet some of

the challenges specific to ministers in rural settings, such as the persecution of Christians in Orissa.

Repalle 2009 meetings

We have just received these photos through of the 2009 Repalle evangelistic meetings held last month. Please pray for the follow up work, which will be carried out by local village pastors/evangelists in the coming months. We hope to provide further news of the meetings in our next newsletter.



Thank you for your continuing support for the Lord's work in India being carried out by IREF.

David Hunt [Chairman, IREF(UK)]