

## **MORE INDIA 2006 REPORTS**

*From Stuart and Aileen Bell*

Stuart and I were really blessed during our recent trip to India. The team worked well together and it was a joy to serve with everyone involved. This was Stuart's second trip and my third but we find the scale of the IREF operation just as impressive each time we go. We were encouraged to see how well the people visiting for the first time fitted in. The pastoral team did an excellent job and we all enjoyed their ministry. The medical team worked exceptionally hard. Including the outlying areas, we managed to see almost 1500 kids (as well as some adults) and we extracted 705 teeth! We were also able to concentrate a bit more on prevention advice and carried out some tooth scaling on the children. The optician was a big hit and it was great to see how well he adapted to his environment.



The images of the children's happy smiles are still with us and it was especially encouraging to see the Tsunami rebuilding projects. We left India feeling challenged by the abundance of material goods and lack of faith in the West compared with the lack of material goods and the total dependence on faith amongst the Christians we met in Repalle.

*From Suzanne Perry and Janet MacArthur*

It was a whole new experience being on an IREF trip to India as neither of us had taken part in a mission of such scale before. The visit didn't get off to that great a start with Janet's luggage being lost in the depths of Heathrow airport and hence lacking arrival in Chennai. Nevertheless it faithfully appeared (after much praying) on the back of an auto-rickshaw only a couple of days later.



We were soon heavily involved in the depths of dental care. The kids were great. Their smiling eyes and beautiful smiles (mostly!) are not easily forgotten. We were able to carry out treatment with their trust and co-operation on a scale

that's almost unheard of in Scotland. The children in the outside clinics were no exception and the welcome we experienced was overwhelming.

The size of the evening meetings took us by surprise, even though we had been made aware of the number of people who would be attending. It was hugely encouraging to be involved in the work and know that in some small way we were part of God's bigger plan in Repalle. Entertainment one night occurred with the presence of a cobra in one of the nearby trees, which the locals were determined to smoke out. Needless to say, we left them to it...!

Being involved in the mission has re-emphasised to us what is important in life. It was thought provoking to see those with very little material goods so happy and contented because they trusted in Jesus. It's something that we will always remember.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped us both financially and with encouraging words and advice (and instruction!) throughout the trip.

## **IREF Youth Conference**

Every January, IREF hosts the Youth Conference at the Gospel Fields Campus. This well attended event is such an effective opportunity, not only to impart the message of the Gospel, but also to teach young people practical application in the new life they now have in Christ. U.S. visitors Rev. Dan Weyerhaeuser, Mr. Dale Vermillion, Rev. Blake McKenzie, as well as Dr. Emmanuel Rebba delivered messages before over 2,000 registered delegates from surrounding villages and 3,000 college students in attendance. Those committing their lives to Christ ran into the hundreds.



God's work through IREF's evangelical and educational ministries was evident in the resulting public baptism of 126 young men and women. The conference also allowed time for student testimonies. Students spoke of their changed lives, receiving God's help to turn from old ways, and actual healing of ailments and chronic diseases. Many sited IREF's Youth Conference as the vehicle by which they first received the Gospel message.

A written Bible test and Bible quiz programmes were conducted during the week. Youth participation was good for both of the programmes, and winners were awarded prizes. The Conference week concluded in a bold outreach to the community of Repalle. Rev. Francis Rebba led street preaching and a procession of 4,000 youth, proclaiming Jesus as Lord, as they distributed tracts and Bible literature.

## **Nurse's testimony**

*The following is the testimony of, Anjali, an IREF nursing student. Like most new Indian Christians, she will face rejection by her own family and community.*

"My name is Anjali. I was born into a Hindu family. We are devoted to idol worship. There are four of us in my family. My brother has had polio since he was a baby. He is severely handicapped. Our family used all the financial resources to get treatment for him. For his healing, there was no place we did not go, and there is no god we did not worship. But there was no cure for him. We lost everything for his treatment. My parents could not send me back to school to continue my education. I wanted to die.

But God helped me in my time of need. When I did not receive any help from my own relatives, IREF has helped me. When I heard about IREF through my friends, I went to Repalle for help. I was so fortunate to get admission in the nursing school for the year 2005-06. I was happy to come here, but not happy to see what was going on here. There was prayer, prayer, all the time prayer. I hated it. I got angry to obey all the rules. As I saw what the others were doing and how they were praying, I too began to change. I was beginning to get interested in prayer.

At the 2006 Youth Conference, I gave my life to Christ. I took baptism. Now the time is coming close to finish nursing. I have to go back home. I didn't

tell my parents about the baptism. If I tell them, they won't let me come in the house. Please pray for me that I will be bold to tell my parents no



matter what the outcome may be. I have to live for Christ. I have to bring glory to His name. I cannot turn back now because of the fear of my family or community. We are 18 in our dorm room and 14 of us took baptism. Please pray for the rest of the four for their salvation. I don't know if there is a church in my village. Even if there is, my parents won't let me go. But nothing is impossible to God. I am trusting in Him that He will lead me to a place of worship and fellowship."

## **Another Devastating Village Fire**

A devastating fire swept through the village of Akkivaripalem on the afternoon of Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> May. 35 thatched houses were completely destroyed. The 50 families affected are all members of the local IREF church. They lost everything, including their clothes and cooking utensils. Seven water buffalo and many chickens were burnt to death, depriving these families of a much-needed source of income. Amongst those affected were the pastor of the local IREF church and one of the teachers at the Child Development Centre, IREF's first.



IREF is providing emergency relief for these families in the form of food, clothing, cooking utensils and temporary housing.

From undesignated gifts received and anticipated, we have been able to allocate £700 towards the relief appeal. We are immensely grateful to those who send us such gifts from time to time, so that we are able to respond to these kinds of emergencies swiftly.

## **Financial Update**

We are delighted to be able to let you know that we have received a gift of £7,000 to be used for a **new IREF church building**. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the donors, who wish to remain anonymous. We will let you know in due course which village has been chosen for the building, and keep you in touch with its construction progress.

Our recently audited accounts show that **our income for 2005 set a new record at almost £29,000**.

Normally, the interest we receive from our bank account covers the production costs of our newsletters, plus any bank charges. But as we have recently changed our payment methods to India, so that they don't incur any bank charges on our remittances, a tiny fraction of our donations (approximately 0.2%!) had to be used to cover our **incidental expenditure**. We pride ourselves on the fact that every penny given to IREF(UK) is sent to India, so we are hoping that in the future *all* our incidental expenditure will be covered by the bank interest payments we receive, plus any donations specifically earmarked for our incidental expenditure.

Thank you for your continuing support for the work..

**David Hunt** [Chairman, IREF(UK)]