



IREF (UK) News Letter – June 2011

The Greatest Exchange

The New Year kicked off in Repalle with IREF’s 16th annual Youth Conference. For many years, IREF has embraced as one of its mission goals the education of young people in the ways of Christ. One of the most effective ways of doing this is to invite thousands of young people from the surrounding areas to IREF’s Repalle headquarters to hear the Word of God firsthand. This year’s Youth Conference was held from 12-16th January and was attended by over 5,000 young people.



The conference began each day with praise and worship, led by the IREF choir, pastors and evangelists. A time of sharing followed, during which many of the young people came forward to describe how God had touched their lives. They often spoke of the hardships they had endured at a young age due to the death of their parents, or poverty or desperation. But the climax of each testimony was the hope and joy found in our Lord and Saviour, as a result of IREF’s positive influence in their lives. Despite all the daily distractions and pressures that these young people face, it was encouraging to see the Holy Spirit move among the future generation of the Church.



At the conclusion of the conference, the young people walked through the streets of Repalle witnessing to local people throughout town. Sixty-two young people were baptized following the Youth Conference.

Please pray with us for each of these new believers in Christ, that their faith will stay strong and that

they will continue to grow in Him.

Sporting Success

The seven-strong Repalle Christian College’s Girls ball-badminton team recently won first place in the universities regional competition. Ball-badminton, a racket game invented in India, enjoys almost as much popularity as cricket in southern India. It is played over a net on a 12x24m court with a yellow ball made of wool. There are records of the game being played as early as 1856 by one of the royal families of Tamil Nadu. One of IREF’s current players was selected to play in the national finals in Madras during the first week of January. Congratulations!



Science Exhibition attracts crowds

IREF was recently given an opportunity to host the Guntur District Science Exhibition. Over 750 schools participated in challenging their young people to display creative and academic science projects. 50,000 students from numerous schools in the district attended the science fair during the four-day event. Several IREF students received awards and recognition for their innovative thinking at High School and pre-college levels.



India 2012

Plans are taking shape to send out a medical team from the UK to India next January-February, and possibly some personnel for the Youth Conference in mid-January. Further details will be given in our next

newsletter. Meanwhile, if you would like to contribute to the team's expenses, you can do so using our dedicated *Just Giving* account (www.justgiving.com/iref2012) or directly via our Hon Treasurer, Mr Jimmy Fraser, 22 Savoy Park, Ayr KA7 2XA Scotland. We are delighted that £6,500 has been raised already towards our target of £30,000!

Two Moving Testimonies

New life for a young orphan

Greetings! My name is Vara Lakshmi Konka. I am 14 years old and was an only child. My father was my mother's second husband. He was harassed daily by my mother's children from her previous marriage. My dad could not take the abuse any longer and killed himself by drinking poison when I was 11. My mother and I went to live with her first husband. He took care of me for a short time, then resentment grew and he became angry with my mother for bringing another man's child into his home. For three years, I watched him beat and abuse her, and eventually he beat and strangled my mother to death.



My grandparents brought me to IREF last year in the hope of giving me a good life. I have learned about Jesus, my Saviour. The other children in my 9th Grade class are so kind. IREF has taught me discipline, how to study, and more importantly that our joy and hope in the Lord is all I truly need. Please keep me in your prayers as I continue my studies here at IREF. Thank you for your support for me and my classmates!

An evangelist's story - "God Never Gave Up On Me"

My name is Shaik Miravali. I was born into a Muslim family. I used to go to the local mosque every day for my daily namaaz (prayers). As a young man, I danced in clubs and bars for money, but I drank all of my income away. In my drunkenness, I went home after working in the bars and beat my parents for more money. My parents thought that arranging my marriage would change me for the better. So I got married to a girl whom I believed was a Muslim as well. She had hidden her conversion to Christianity through her burqa (black covering worn by Muslim women).



On the fourth day of my marriage, I took my wife to the movies. I was thinking about my life of dancing in clubs, while she was sitting beside me praying to Jesus Christ. I beat her every time she prayed or mentioned Jesus' name. I burned and ripped up her Bible three times. I believed strongly in my Muslim roots and that Jesus was just a prophet. My friends used to harass me for going to the mosque while my wife went to church. So, I began to beat her for that reason, too. I forbade her to go church under any condition. I used to throw stones at her and at the other churchgoers as they came out of church.

I couldn't take the ridicule from my friends anymore. So, one day I decided to end my life. I lay down on railway tracks waiting for the next train to take my life. An old man saw me lying there and saved me. I tried to end my life another time, but then I heard a voice saying, "My son - I am the God who created the heavens and earth." I was sure it was Allah. So, I went home. On Good Friday 1992, my wife went to church and again I beat her for disobeying me. She never stopped praying.

Fifteen days later, I became very sick with jaundice. I spent 20 days in hospital. My friends and relatives came to give me their final good-bye as they all thought I was dying. I said to my wife, "If your God is real, tell Him to save me!" She brought her Bible to my side and read Psalm 20v1: "*May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.*" God showed me a vision of Christ on the cross. I saw how much blood He had shed for me. I cried tears for His saving grace. The Lord held my hand and I got up. After 20 days, with no medication and the belief that I was going to die, I got up and was able to eat. God gave me good health. I went to the church where I had persecuted so many people (including my own wife) and gave my testimony. On 1st December 1993, I was baptised. My family and friends ostracised me for my conversion to Christianity and threw me out of our home and village.

The Lord led me to full-time ministry when I attended a Believer's Retreat at IREF in 2001. I have been working with IREF ever since and currently lead two congregations. My burden is to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Muslims in my community and surrounding areas. So many Muslims persecute us on a daily basis. Please pray for my wife, my two sons, and our two churches as we serve the Lord and follow His command to spread the Gospel.

Once again, thank you for your invaluable ongoing support for the Lord's work in India.

David Hunt [Chairman, IREF (UK)]