



IREF (UK) News Letter – July 2016

Praise God for Answered Prayer!

On behalf of our brother and sister believers in India, let me say a huge 'Thank you' to all of you who joined IREF's recent Call to Prayer.

The situation in Repalle was critical. Local officials had placed a closure order on IREF's hostels. But our colleagues in India appealed to the High Court to have the closure notices removed, and their appeal was upheld! The Court recognised IREF's authority to provide residential accommodation for its elementary, high school, and college students and to operate these facilities as they have done successfully for so many years. This means that there is no longer any case or threats that local officials or politicians can make against IREF's schools and hostels. Praise the Lord!

*Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his. ...
He deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.
He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.
I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
you have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you.*
[Daniel 2.20-23]

Whilst the crisis in India was unfolding, I was reading through the book of Daniel. As I did so, I found plenty of verses to encourage my praying, and also ones that I was able to use in my praise and thanksgiving to God!

*The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will
never be destroyed ... it will endure forever.*
[Daniel 2.44]

Some of IREF's pupils were questioned about the mission by local officials, with a view to them making damaging statements against IREF; but they all courageously stood their ground in the face of great provocation and intimidation, confirming the good impact that IREF had made on their lives. We praise God for the faithfulness of these young people! Pray that their steadfastness may be rewarded.

"It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation."
[Daniel 4.2-3]

"He is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth."
[Daniel 6.26-27]

Perhaps the most remarkable verses I came across in Daniel were some rather obscure ones in the more difficult second part of the book; but they spoke very directly to the situation IREF had been facing.

The court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'
[Daniel 7.26-27]

Although the past few months have been very traumatic for Dr Emmanuel Rebba and all those associated with IREF, the outcome is a very positive one. IREF(India) is now in possession of a very clear legal ruling confirming its right in law to operate all its schools, colleges, and accommodation hostels. This should stand the mission in good stead in the future in the face of any further attacks on its activities.

*We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as **you help us by your prayers**. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many.*
[2 Cor 1.8-11]

Please join with us in praying for the start of the new academic year in India. Pray for the many

students who have returned to continue their studies and for others who are joining IREF for the first time.

Pray for Future Finances

Sometimes crises in Christian work are like London buses: you wait a long time for one to come along, and then several come all at once!

Alongside the local threats to its ministry mentioned above, IREF has been facing a serious financial challenge in recent years. The Dutch organisation, *Word and Deed*, generously supported IREF for many years, both in terms of providing capital resources for its many fine buildings and on-going sponsorship for many of its pupils and students. Historically, about three-quarters of IREF's annual income has come from *Word and Deed*, around \$750k per annum.

But just over four years ago, *Word and Deed* made a policy decision to re-direct their efforts from India to Africa. So there has been a phased reduction of their support for IREF by 25% for the last four years to the point where it has now stopped altogether. This has left a shortfall of about \$50k per month in IREF's revenue. Humanly speaking, this is a huge hole to fill!

But, as Paul assured the Philippians believers ...

My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus! [Phil 4.19]

We need to pray that the same will be true for our IREF brothers and sisters in India. Emmanuel Rebba doesn't want to close any of IREF's current programmes, as they are a source of such great blessing. But some of the village Child Development Centres have already been suspended due to a lack of funding for them.

At our recent IREF(UK) Trustees meeting, we noted that our sponsorship rates haven't changed since we started 20 years ago! This means that they are currently lagging behind the equivalent USA rates, both for the children we support and the evangelists. However, we agreed that we wouldn't increase our rates at this time, as we realise that many of you, our supporters, are on fixed, limited, or reducing incomes – and we don't want to lose any sponsors by putting up our rates.

However, if any of you are able to increase your giving by adjusting your standing orders and/or cheque payments, this would be greatly appreciated. We can assure you that every penny you give is remitted to India and is well spent there.

One of IREF's newer projects, which is in urgent need of support to get it off the ground, is their **Care Home for retired evangelists**. The Care Home building was completed in June 2014, thanks in part to a generous legacy from a UK supporter. But the building hasn't been occupied since then, due to a lack of finances for its running costs, estimated to be around £10k per annum. We are seeking to raise this amount from our Undesignated Gifts fund. So, if you would like to donate to this new venture, your contributions will be warmly received!

A good news story

48 students recently celebrated their graduation from the Prasada Rao Memorial Bible Institute. They had completed a year-long intensive Bible course which included in its curriculum an Introduction to Theology, the Gospel of John, and the Life of the Disciple. The goal of the course is to equip and train the young men and women of IREF in God's Word so that their foundation in Scripture is strong as they go out and spread the Gospel in rural India.



Graduates eagerly awaiting their certificates

The course was offered for the first time in July 2015; many students signed up for the course. And now, a year on, they are better prepared to share the Gospel wherever the opportunity arises. Please pray for this next generation of faithful ambassadors as they go out and share the Good News of Jesus!

Points for Praise and Prayer

- Thank God for the positive decision of the High Court in India.
- Prayer for Emmanuel Rebba and other staff members that they will know the Lord's protection, physically and spiritually, day by day.
- Pray for all the students and staff returning for the new academic year, and for new enrolments.
- Pray for the village evangelists as they faithfully preach the Gospel and disciple believers.
- Pray for IREF's income stream to increase, from new sponsors and charitable foundations.

David Hunt [Chairman, IREF(UK)]