

Training Up Good Bible Teachers

IREF pastors and staff members were recently invited to **The Langham Preaching Conference** held in Hyderabad, along with representatives of churches and organisations from throughout Andhra Pradesh. The object of the Conference was to learn how to train rural pastors to preach Biblical, expository, relevant sermons. The five-day seminar was led by Dr. Paul Windsor, Director of Langham Preaching.



IREF staff with Dr. Paul Windsor (centre) during the conference in Hyderabad.

Langham Preaching Conferences were started by Rev Dr John Stott, the well-known British preacher and author, who was a significant leader within the worldwide Evangelical movement. One of his key goals was to see the church grow globally through mature preaching.



Dr. Paul Windsor teaching during The Langham Preaching Conference, with the help of a Telugu translator.

Langham's Preaching Conferences focus on training in a way that builds and sustains an indigenous movement of biblical preachers, to change the culture of preaching, starting at a local, grass-roots

level. The hope is that, as a transformation in the quality of preaching takes place, it will lead to the transformation of the church worldwide.



Break-out sessions during the Conference gave participants an opportunity to learn from each other.

IREF recognises its responsibility to pray for the spread of the Gospel, and to go and tell everyone who will listen about Jesus Christ. Over 500 full-time evangelists and Bible Ladies travel miles (often on foot or by bicycle), to visit the many rural villages within Andhra Pradesh, boldly proclaiming the Gospel. Their mission is to reach anyone and everyone who will hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Their immediate target is to cover more than 1,000 towns and villages within a 200-mile radius of Repalle.

"Open your eyes and see the fields. They are ripe for harvest!" [John 4:35]

With this as the central and most vital ministry of IREF, seminars and conferences like the Langham Preaching Conference are critical in equipping IREF personnel with the skills and tools needed to teach and preach God's Word.

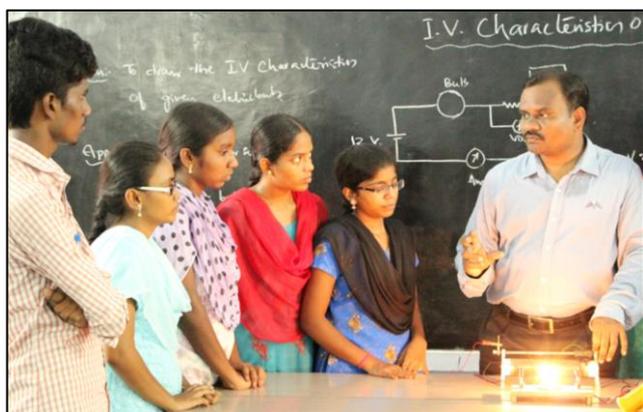
IREF's Repalle pastor, Lawrence Kodali, testified, *"It was a privilege to attend the Langham Preaching Conference and be part of a movement that will help strengthen the church in Southeast India. I pray that God will use me through what I learned at the conference to bear fruit for His Kingdom. Thank you IREF(UK) for giving me the opportunity to attend this conference!"* We were pleased to support the four IREF delegates from funds given specifically for this purpose.

A New School Year is Underway

Many staff members, administrators, lecturers, and

teachers work around the clock at IREF to ensure that all the students who come to be educated through IREF's various schools and colleges receive a Biblically-based education with real-world skills, designed to help them learn, grow, and find a lifelong career and vocation. The goal is to provide, for children from destitute and broken homes, an education that has the power to break their cycle of poverty and so, in turn, allow these students to serve as agents of change as they root their families in Christ's love.

One particular individual has been working at IREF for over 20 years and has seen thousands of students progress and move their families out of desperate poverty. **Ratna Prasad** started working at IREF in 1994 as a Chemistry lecturer when IREF first started the Repalle Christian College. He has seen IREF grow over the decades from conducting classes in a renovated chicken shed to their current three-story building generously funded and provided by a European donor.

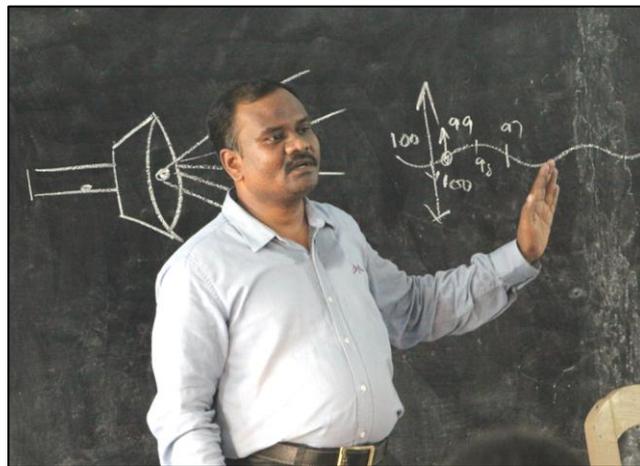


Ratna Prasad, teaching during a chemistry lab session at Repalle Christian College.

Ratna Prasad is now the Principal of the Repalle Christian College. He has made it his personal mission to *"give the children who come to IREF a chance to succeed in life. The reality is that each child who comes here is coming from a desperately poor situation. Our mission at IREF is not only to provide care and refuge to the poor, but also to provide compassion, dignity and equality."*

The Repalle Christian College recently ranked 4th best out of a total of 395 colleges/universities in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. Ratna Prasad attributes this success to some key factors. *"Our complete dependence upon God has helped us overcome every challenge and empower thousands of children over the years. We make the well-being of these young people our priority. We care about their education and also about each student's well-being spiritually, physically and emotionally. This is a safe place for them, especially when often these*

students have nowhere else to turn. And a very crucial key to our success is the dedicated staff members of IREF". Every staff member is assigned a group of students to mentor and guide during their college journey. Approximate 90% of Repalle Christian College students graduate with what is equivalent to a 3.0 grade point average (a 2:1 class of degree in UK terms).



Degree College Principal, Mr K Ratna Prasad

As a new school year has started at IREF, there are many young people who have come to IREF for the first time in search of hope for a better future. Many do not realize that God has placed them at IREF for His purpose.

Students wake at 5:30am for devotions and a study hour; each class also starts with prayer. The day ends with an hour of Evening Devotions and a study hour monitored by the lecturers.

"I want my students to earn a college education so that they will in turn become worthy citizens of India, and of the Kingdom of God. God has really blessed me through my work here at IREF. I get to see many students lifted out of their lives of poverty. It is only by the grace of God!"

We praise God for the great things He has done through the Repalle Christian College and ask for your continued prayers for staff members like Ratna Prasad as they plant the seeds of possibilities in so many young people on a daily basis at IREF.

"There are so many people who have prayed for our students and staff from all around the world for many years and I would like to personally thank you all for supporting us in the way that you do," shares Ratna Prasad.

Thank you for continuing support for IREF, which is greatly appreciated!

David Hunt [Chairman, IREF(UK)]