



IREF (UK) News Letter – February 2017

Thank you Jimmy!

We are very grateful for all the sterling work our Honorary Treasurer has undertaken for us over the past 20 years. I first came to know **Jimmy Fraser** when I was the pastor of the Hamilton Baptist Church, where he was a member. I had the joy of baptising him following his public declaration of faith at one of the Billy Graham Celtic Park meetings in 1991.

When IREF(UK) was formed in 1996, Jimmy's background as an accountant made him an ideal choice to take on the role of our Honorary Treasurer, a task he has performed with quiet efficiency, tireless dedication, and - very importantly for any Christian charity – with absolute integrity.

Towards the end of last year Jimmy indicated to us as trustees that, due to a number of on-going health problems, he felt it right to hand over responsibilities for IREF(UK)'s finances to a suitable successor when one could be found.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jimmy for the work he has undertaken for us since IREF(UK)'s inception. He has had the joy, on your behalf, of sending well over £½m to support the work of our brother and sister believers in India. Needless to say, we wish Jimmy well in his years of retirement from this work and will continue to uphold him in our prayers.

Welcome the new!

We are delighted to be able to let you know that one of our trustees, **Stewart Shaw**, has kindly agreed to take over the role of Honorary Treasurer from Jimmy Fraser. Stewart has a background in commerce, running his own optician's business, and has visited IREF's work in India on many occasions where his skills have been greatly appreciated.

I know you will want to uphold Stewart in your prayers as he seeks to get his head around all the figures and procedures as quickly as possible. As from this point in time, all future correspondence should be directed to him.

His contact details are:

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e-mail: stewartjshaw@me.com
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For your prayers

Thanks in no small part to Jimmy Fraser's role as our Honorary Treasurer for these past 20 years, we are pleased to be able to assure you that IREF(UK) has a sound history of financial probity. We never like to hold onto our donor's contributions for any longer than necessary, preferring instead to ensure that the money you so generously give is transferred to IREF(India) quickly so that it can be used where it is most needed.

We have been in the habit of sending quarterly remittances to IREF(India) via electronic bank transfers. However, the Indian government introduced legislation last year requiring any Indian organisation that receives funds from overseas to go through a registration process.

IREF(India) has applied for registration and is hoping it will be granted soon. But it means we are currently faced with an abnormal situation, which we hope will be quickly resolved.

We would like to encourage all our donors to continue with their regular contributions in the knowledge that we will remit the funds we are currently holding to IREF(India) as soon as we can. Our partners in India are exploring every possible means to facilitate this.

Meanwhile, we would ask all our supporters to pray earnestly for a speedy resolution to this problem, which is causing considerable financial difficulties and hardship for our colleagues in India.



Youth Conference

Although there was no main Bible Conference in Repalle this year, the Youth Conference went ahead and was a great success.

Chip Moore, the IREF(USA) Board Chairman, attended it and sent this report.

My heart is full of joy as I look back at the Youth Conference, which was held from 11th-14th January. The theme was "God's Grace - and we saw the Lord's grace in so many ways!

There was supposed to be a major tropical storm, which could have cancelled the event. Instead, the storm hit all around Repalle, but there was no rain at the conference.

We witnessed the next generation of Christians give the messages. What a thrill to see John Rebba, and my own two children, Tre and Tessa, share messages which connected with the high school and college-age



students. Emmanuel and I were so proud to see our offspring work hard at sharing the Bible. The Lord has given them wisdom and gifts of communication.

Many came forward over the conference, making decisions to follow Christ. Many of the students who come to IREF are from Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. It

takes them a lot of courage to decide to follow Christ, as many face persecution from their family. Often they are told they can no



longer come home. I was overcome with emotion as I thought of the cost for these students to become Christians. I have never faced a decision nearly as difficult for my faith, and these students were only 10-21 years old. I know the Lord saw it as a costly offering to Him - to choose Him above all else.

Many IREF alumni came to the conference and gave testimonies. These believers came to Christ during their student years, and then went on to further graduate education elsewhere. Many now have Master and Doctorate degrees and are serving as pastors, teachers, police officers, government workers, and nurses, etc. Many of these students came from far away to attend, and I thought about what a wide-reaching impact IREF has had. Even though IREF's ministry has been focused toward the rural area around Repalle, many of its students end up in big cities, spreading God's love wherever the Lord has placed them.

One former student, Vidya Sagar (pictured here with Dee Rebba), came to Christ as a student in 1992. When he was at IREF there were only 50 students; today there are over 1,500. His parents were poor farm workers and dropped off their three children at IREF.



Vidya did well in IREF's schools and went on to get his Master's degree. He is now a college professor, and is working on his PhD. He lectures to over 2,000 students each week. He shared how he begins each class with prayer and a Bible reading! He tells everyone that it was the strong foundation built at IREF which gave him both his faith and opportunities that he otherwise would never have received.

We witnessed over 50 students taking baptism. We travelled to a section of the River Krishna where a huge area has been built for people to perform Hindu rituals in the river. What a contrast to the Christian baptisms that day, as fishermen and herdsman looked on! When a baptism takes place in the middle of a village like this, it is a testimony to all those passing by that these people have decided to follow the Lord, Jesus Christ!

One of the boys taking baptism, Mahendra Reddy (pictured here), has been at IREF since he was in 1st grade; he is now in 10th grade. His parents divorced when he was in 8th grade and they have never come back for him since. Mahendra decided to give his life to Christ at



this year's Youth Conference. He was always afraid of his parents' reaction to baptism; but this year, he decided it was time to make that public confession of faith and trust in the Lord with all of his heart. He hopes one day to become a teacher and make a difference at IREF like so many teachers have done for him over the years.

I wish all of you could have witnessed what I saw over the past week! Your heart would also have been filled with joy seeing all that God is doing here. This ministry does so much with its small resources and has been effective at ministering for so many years through God's grace and love for the people of India.

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

David Hunt [Chairman, IREF(UK)]