

## **Further Reflections on the 2018 Medical Team visit to India**

16 Health Care Team members, along with 21 IREF nursing students, treated over 1,000 patients, extracted 350 teeth, distributed 900 toothbrushes and provided 400 pairs of spectacles for those with vision needs - all in the space of two weeks!

IREF(India) thanks every member of this year's Medical Team and the sacrifices they made to treat so many children, elderly, and staff. With the help of the Medical Teams each year, it is apparent to everyone that the IREF children look and feel healthy. The Teams are truly a blessing from God and we thank them for their faithfulness to support God's ministry!

### **Stewart Shaw writes:**

I thought the Team got on really well and were well motivated and energised for the hard work involved in both the clinical and evangelistic efforts. There is such an immense need, physically and spiritually, in India; yet it is encouraging to see God working in different ways to bless many lives. There is a hunger for God's Word that was apparent at the conference and evidenced by the baptisms in the Krishna River. The adults and children, both at IREF's headquarters in Repalle and in the surrounding villages we visited, were so welcoming and appreciative of all that was done. The clinics achieved their goals but only with a lot of help from the student nurses who were invaluable to us. You always wish you could do more! Each visit you get so touched by the lovely smiles, cheerful greetings, and clamour for balloons that it almost overwhelms you. But as soon as we get home, there is talk of the next visit!



### **Thank you!**

We give all the glory to God for the remarkable total raised by the 2018 Medical Team for their visit to India. So far, the money given amounts to a staggering **£42,895.48!** After deducting the

cost of airfares, we have been able to send a gift of £30,648.71 to India to help support the work of IREF there. Thank you so much for your overwhelming generosity!

## **2018 Youth Conference**

While the Medical Team was busy running their clinic, the annual IREF Youth Conference was taking place. Young people travelled from far and near to join IREF students in five days of worship, singing, and hearing God's Word. The messages preached and the authority of God's Word fanned the flames of faith for many students. The power of the Holy Spirit was undoubtedly working among the hearts of these young people. 25 were baptized in the Krishna River on the last day of the Youth Conference.



Praise the Lord for the messages he gave to each speaker this year, and to all the team members who gave their testimonies to inspire the students to believe that God has love for them as well.

Please keep these new believers in your prayers as they continue to practice their new-found faith in Christ and share it with family and friends.

## **25 Years providing Education, Opportunities, and Hope!**

25 years ago, IREF(India) had the vision for providing College-level education at minimal cost to the poor. The goal was to provide children from destitute and broken homes with an education that could break the cycle of poverty and in turn allow students to serve as

agents of change, to root their families and communities in Christ. In 1993, the vision came to life! Repalle Christian College was formed with the objective of providing high academic standards and career-based education in the most cost-effective manner possible. Classes were initially conducted in a renovated chicken farm! Application fees were 10 rupees and the tuition cost 30 rupees per year (the equivalent of 32p!). Today, classes are held in a three-story building generously funded and provided by a Dutch relief organisation; but the costs still remain the same with government provided-subsidies and scholarships to help students earn their degrees.

Today, Repalle Christian College is ranked the 4<sup>th</sup> best college/university in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh - out of a total of 395!



January marked the College's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Over 2,000 alumni gathered to celebrate the milestone. Many of the former students have gone on to hold distinguished positions through which they are making a real difference to Indian society. They testified that without their time at IREF, they would not be where they are today - not only in their work but in their personal, family, and spiritual lives in particular.

Mr. Z. Ratna Prasad, who started as a Zoology lecturer in the mid-1990s, is now the College's Principal. He has made it his personal mission to *"give the young people who come to IREF a chance to succeed in life. The reality is that each student 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."*

We pray God will continue to bless the College and its students for many generations to come!

## Summer Gospel meetings

IREF's Evangelists and Bible Ladies hold Gospel meetings in April and May each year, reaching out to over 100 villages to encourage IREF's congregations and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.



This year, the Gospel Meetings began on 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> April in the village of Bantumalli, which is located on the Bay of Bengal about a 2½-hour drive from Repalle. IREF had previously hosted a one-day Pastors' Retreat in this village, two years ago; since that time, the local pastors had been asking IREF to conduct Gospel Meetings in their village. After much prayer and consideration, IREF's leaders felt God's leading to take the Gospel to this village. Leading up to the Gospel Meetings in Bantumalli, there was unseasonable weather with heavy rain in the area. But the Lord miraculously kept the venue of the Gospel Meetings dry! IREF staff, pastors, and evangelists were able to pack and transport the stage, sound, and video equipment to Bantumalli, praying that the rain wouldn't prevent them from setting it up or the people from coming to hear the Gospel messages. All the villages surrounding Bantumalli were flooded; but Bantumalli didn't see a drop of rain, praise God!

The summer village Gospel Meetings continue to spread God's message of hope to these poverty-stricken rural areas of India.

Thank you for your continuing support for IREF, which makes all this possible.

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