

## Life in India's Lockdown

Necessary social distancing has restricted much of the work that IREF's village pastors and Bible Ladies would normally do – leading church services, visiting church members, and spreading the Gospel. But the lockdown has provided some special opportunities to demonstrate God's love in action.



Local economies have been hit hard by the enforced lockdown, especially in the rural areas that IREF serves. So, to ensure that all of IREF's pastors and Bible Ladies are well cared for, food parcels have been delivered to them, consisting of 50 lbs of rice, vegetables, and cooking supplies.



*Pastors praying before distributing the food parcels*



After 12 weeks of closure, the main Repalle church building opened its doors once again for church services, with appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures in place. For some of the 100 people who gathered for IREF's first service since the lockdown began, it was the first time they had ventured out of their homes. Many expressed their gratitude to God for his protection during the pandemic.



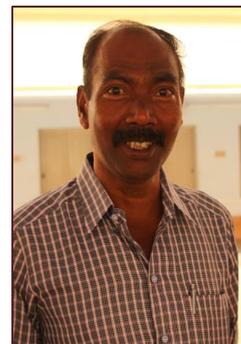
## Staying up-to-date

Did you know that IREF had a Facebook page? Tre Moore, the National Director for IREF(USA), posts regular updates on it. For security reasons, it is a closed group page, but if you would like to be admitted to it, please let me know and I will gladly grant you access to it.



## Discovering Jesus

It was 17 years ago that R Koteswara Rao joined IREF's Repalle Christian College, where he was soon appointed its Assistant Principal. As a dedicated educator, in the fullest sense of that word, he now heads up IREF's NSS programme. The National Service Scheme was launched in 1969 (the centenary year of Mahatma Gandhi's birth) and now has 3.5 million student volunteers drawn from 300 universities throughout India.



200 IREF students regularly distribute food and basic necessities to people in hospitals and prisons,

thereby demonstrating the love of Christ to them. They also assist in providing relief packages to homes afflicted by natural disasters, such as floods and fires, and help municipal workers clean and sanitise local streets.



*IREF's NSS team ready to sweep Repalle's streets.*

Since joining the staff of IREF's Degree College, R Koteswara Rao has attended IREF's Repalle church regularly, despite being from a Hindu background. He recently experienced some health issues and suffered an aneurism prior to the Covid-19 lockdown. At a recent Sunday service, he stood in front of the congregation and gave all the praise and glory to God for his complete recovery! He thanked everyone who had prayed for him diligently during his health crisis, and attributed his healing to the very real power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Join with him in praising God for his new found faith and experience of Christ's healing powers!

## **IREF Together**

IREF(USA) are arranging a special interactive on-line event next month, on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, to enable IREF's supporters in the UK, as well as in the USA, to hear testimonies of the Lord's amazing work in India. Details of the event will be posted on our website, [www.iref.co.uk](http://www.iref.co.uk), nearer the date and will be e-mailed out to our supporters. If you receive this letter by post but have an e-mail address, please let us know so that we can add you to our e-mail circulation list.

## **Silver Jubilee celebrations, 2021**

Next year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IREF(UK)'s formation; it was established as a registered charity after my first visit to India in 1996. I was so impressed with the work IREF was doing that I felt it right to start up a UK support-arm to assist the Lord's work in India, both prayerfully and financially.

Since IREF(UK)'s formation, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we have had the joy of remitting well over three-quarters of a million pounds to India. But we would like to do even more!

So next year, as a Silver Jubilee project, we plan to launch an **'each one add one'** campaign to try and double the number of personnel being sponsored from the UK. We hope that many of you will be able to recruit one or more additional sponsors, and some of you may be in a position to increase your personal financial support for IREF.

Here is a breakdown of the personnel we are currently sponsoring from the UK:

16 Repalle-based boys
30 Repalle-based girls
43 Ullipalem CDC children
4 teachers, plus the English Medium School Head
6 pastors and 5 Bible Ladies

It's never too soon to be looking out for potential new supporters, so please make it a matter of earnest prayer. Here's an easy-to-remember guide to our sponsorship rates.

co-sponsorship of a CDC child:	<b>£1 per week</b>
full sponsorship of a CDC child:	<b>£2 per week</b>
sponsorship of an IREF teacher:	<b>£3 per week</b>
sponsorship of a Repalle child/student:	<b>£4 per week</b>
sponsorship of an IREF pastor:	<b>£8 per week</b>
sponsorship of an IREF Bible Lady:	<b>£8 per week</b>

We are also hoping to hold a special celebration event, probably in the autumn of next year, to give thanks to God for his faithfulness to us over these past 25 years, and to hear up-to-date news of the Lord's work in India.

## **For your prayers**

Praise God for:

- the continuing good health of Emmanuel, Dee and other IREF staff members.
- the food parcels that have been delivered to IREF's pastors and Bible Ladies;
- the resumption of Repalle church services;
- many people coming to faith!

Please pray for:

- the harsh economic repercussions in rural areas, due to the prolonged lockdown, to be overcome;
- the continuing protection of all the children, students, staff, and evangelists in IREF's care;
- the Gospel to be heard and accepted;
- many to discover a living hope in Jesus!
- for increased support for IREF from the UK.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!*  
[1 Peter 1.3]

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