

Back to School – already!

Whilst many children in the UK are currently looking forward to their summer holiday, those in India are beginning to go back to school for their new academic year.

Already over 300 pupils, drawn from School Years 1-10, have arrived at the IREF campus in Repalle; some are returning students, others are new recruits. India doesn't have a strict date for the start of each academic year, so further students are expected in the coming weeks.



For many of the first-time students, the IREF campus is a completely new environment. A lot come to IREF from extreme poverty; they live in thatched-roof homes without running water, or indoor plumbing, or any idea of where their next meal will come from. We can scarcely imagine how overwhelming it must be for those coming from a tiny village home to IREF's large campus with its big three-storey buildings.

Many adjustments are needed too to embrace the new values, principles and discipline that are part and parcel of IREF's education programme. And yet, after adjusting to life at IREF, many students truly thrive!

So please join us in praying for IREF's new academic year. Pray especially for any new students who may feel overwhelmed; pray that they will experience the peace of Christ and encounter Jesus in an unmistakable way – as well as understanding the importance of a good education.

A good and faithful servant

It was with mixed feelings that we learned that one of IREF's core pastors, Devasahayam, was called home to be with his Lord a few weeks ago.

In the 1980s, as a young man from one of the lowest Hindu castes, Devasahayam attended an IREF gospel meeting. He was desperate; his wife was suffering under the oppression of an evil spirit, and nothing could be done to help her. But that day, he came to a gathering unlike anything he had experienced previously; and wonderfully, he encountered the True and Living God! His wife was completely healed, and their family was introduced to the Rebbas.

Devasayaham enrolled his children at the IREF school and was personally discipled by Prasada Rao, IREF's founder.



Once Devasayaham had accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, there was no stopping him. He could hardly read and write; but he took the gospel to his village and through him many people came to faith in Jesus, both within his village and beyond it. He has been one of IREF's greatest pastors, a strong encourager and partner in ministry to Emmanuel over many years.



Last August, Devasayaham suffered a stroke; and after a difficult year, has now been called home to be with the Lord and Saviour whom he first encountered over 40 years ago and whom he came to love and serve so faithfully for so many years.

IREF's team is heartbroken; but we don't grieve as those without hope. We celebrate all that God accomplished through this one man and the legacy he has left through his son, who continues to pastor the church that his father started all those years ago.

To those who knew Devasayaham, they will miss his infectious smile and joyful spirit; and so we pray that God will send IREF more ministry partners like him, who will carry the same passion for the gospel as he had, for those who are far from Christ in rural India.

Devasayaham was being sponsored as a pastor from the UK; so please pray that others will come forward to support IREF's pastors financially.

2025 Medical Team

We are delighted to inform you that a 9-strong Medical Team from the UK will be travelling to India next January for a 12-day visit. Please pray for them as they make preparations and seek to raise £2,000 each to cover their expenses and provide a gift to IREF(India) to help support its work.

If you would like to contribute to their fundraising, you can do so in several ways:

- by electronic transfer into our IREF(UK) bank account: Bank of Scotland a/c 00451308; sort code, 80-08-25;
- by cheque, to our Honorary Treasurer, Stewart Shaw: 62 Holmhead Road, Cumnock, KA18 1UA Scotland;
- via Stewardship, who will reclaim Gift Aid for us if you are a taxpayer; go to: <https://account.stewardship.org.uk/gift/start/20027356>

Pastors Conferences

Every summer, IREF's ministry team hosts Pastors Conferences throughout Andhra Pradesh. At these gatherings, hundreds of weary and sometimes discouraged pastors come for encouragement, teaching, and personal ministry. They are not deterred by high temperatures well over 35°C, nor by travelling long distances. They are hungry and eager, and it has been wonderful to see the Lord renew the strength of these tired and discouraged men.



Recently, IREF's team hosted a Pastors Conference at a town nearly three hours from IREF. While they were there, they met a pastor with a unique story. In the 1990s, he was a student at IREF during which time he heard about Jesus and yielded his life to Him. Today, he is passionate about reaching people for the gospel.

Meet Jala Narasimha and Rajesh

When Jala Narasimha and Rajesh were respectively

only 3- and 5-years old, their parents died in a car accident while traveling to Chennai. Since then, they have lived about five hours away from IREF with their grandmother and uncle. It was their aunt, who works at the Muslim college next to IREF, who told them about IREF's school.



The brothers have attended the school for a year and have experienced a completely different kind of education from the government school they formerly attended. At IREF, they love the education, dormitories, games, and working in the campus gardens. They come alive as they water the plants, pull weeds, and pick the vegetables!

We are so grateful the Lord brought Jala Narasimha and Rajesh to IREF, and we pray that they will come to know Jesus personally during their time at IREF.

Some Prayer Points:

- Give thanks for the life and witness of Devasahayam; pray God's comfort for his family and all who knew him.
- Give thanks for the many returning students and those who are new to IREF at the start of this new academic year.
- Pray that they will all encounter the living Lord Jesus Christ and embrace him as their Lord and saviour.
- Pray for IREF's ministry of encouragement to pastors throughout Andhra Pradesh.
- Pray for IREF's teachers and those who lead the work of IREF in Repalle: Emmanuel and Dee Rebba, and their sons, Josh and John.
- Pray for the recently elected Indian government, that it will preserve and promote religious freedom throughout India.

Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support, which are much appreciated. We are keen to increase our UK support for IREF; so please share this newsletter with as many as possible!

David Hunt [Chairman of IREF(UK)]