



## Indian Revival Ministries

By Abraham Wesley as told to Kim Pettit

I did not have formal Bible education before founding India Revival Ministries [<http://www.indiarevivalministries.org/>] in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India. When the Lord called me into ministry, I had studied electronics at the university, was 29, had my Master's degree in physics, and was preparing to obtain a doctorate.

I started bargaining. "An education is hard to obtain," I told Him. "If you were going to call me into ministry, why did you let me waste me waste my time on electronics?" The Lord knows me better than I know myself. I could give lectures on physics, but I was afraid to preach--despite growing up in a Christian home and accepting Jesus when I was 16 years old. My pastor had told me, "Son, the Lord will call you into full-time work one day; be prepared to go." But when the time came, I was reluctant.

While praying early in the morning, in Bangalore, I started sweating. I could not move at all , , , could not open my eyes. Someone great was in the room. I heard a still small voice and the words of Isaiah 42:6 came alive for me. That verse says, "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles." From that moment on, I felt favor to let go of educational success and continue in God's work.

### *Equipped by God*

At that time, Arnold Remtema, director of World by Radio

[<http://wbradio.gospelcom.net/>] (then known as World by 2000) heard about me. Trans World Radio [<http://www.twr.org/>] was building transmitters in Sri Lanka, and I was hired to work for that ministry.

I served TWR for 12 years, five days a week. My radio program was called "The Power of the Word." Through it, I developed my preaching skills. I had to have something ready every day, because I knew it would be on the air.

I had loved writing even in college and had served as the editor of the university magazine. I soon began experimenting with the power of radio and the power of literature. Some friends helped me publish my talks into booklets. I started taking teams of youth workers to do field evangelism. I found that radio and literature working together are very effective.

### *A New Vision for Literature*

The Lord gave me another Scripture in 1994, Habakkuk 2:2: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that whoever reads it may run with it." I began to ask what should I write.

That is when *Nippu Ravvalu* (The Sparks) began. Its purpose is to promote missions. The magazine that promoted Communism and popularized Karl Marx's ideas was called "The Spark." If unbelievers can use this tool, why can't we use it to help bring about a great spiritual awakening among Christians, who in turn can impact society? *The Sparks* is a bimonthly magazine published in the Telugu language. It has a

print run of 5,000 copies every other month. Approximately 4,000 are bought by subscribers, and 1,000 are distributed free to full-time church workers. Every issue includes an article on the latest evangelism efforts and prayer points concerning one state or territory in the country. India has 28 states (each of which has its own government), and seven union territories (ruled by the central government). We are based in Andhra Pradesh, so every issue also includes an article on revival and the work in one of Andhra Pradesh's 153 districts. Each district is divided into pin codes. (In the United States, they are called zip codes.)

We publish articles on the Church's responsibility in light of the Second Coming. The Second Coming of the Lord is as real as His first coming. I feel that He might return even by the end of our own generation. Not much time is left, and yet there is so much work left unfinished. *The Sparks* also includes biographies of missionaries, reports on evangelism training, and information on current local and national concerns. It is a full-color magazine, 60 pages long. Currently, the effort employs three editors, a designer and two typesetters.

*The Sparks* gave us a platform for growth and helped us to motivate people for missions. It allowed us to develop a donor base among our spiritual children, the people who had already benefitted from our ministry. We are mobilizing all our resources to do everything possible to save as many as possible from going into the eternal fire; because hell is as real as heaven. A subscription costs 70 rupees per year [US\$1.75]. It is less expensive than other magazines of the same size.

### *Magazine Births Training and Publishing Ministry*

In 1995, India Revival Ministries (IRM), the organization I lead, came into existence through this magazine. We organized training for pastors and church workers. Each leadership institute lasts about four days, trains 80-100 rural pastors and evangelists, and costs 20,000-30,000 rupees [US\$500-750]. God knows our needs; we had enough money at the right time. We have trained almost 2,000 pastors and evangelists since 1995 and hope to train 2,000 more by 2010. We now have 10 people on the faculty of our missions training institute.

We equip pastors with Bible study materials and literature for free distribution. We obtain Bibles from the Bible League and other ministries at a subsidized cost. We work with Cook International and OM India to distribute pastoral resource libraries. Besides this, we publish our own books and tracts. We started printing tracts in 1998 and booklets in 1999 to distribute to the evangelists in our training institute as tools for evangelism and discipleship.

We distributed 500,000 tracts last year. We have 10 tracts in our catalogue, with such titles as "Heaven and Hell," "Who is Jesus?" "Is there a God?" "Are You Feeling Lonely?" "Have You Ever Felt Bored?" and "Why Is There Suffering?" One of our most recent tracts is "Steps to Heaven," titled "Moksha Mktu" in Telugu. "Moksha" is a term for a state of being in unity with God. It is not often used in Christian circles, but helps us better communicate with non-Christians.

### *Book Publishing Team*

A team of five or six people work on IRM book publishing. Our books include straightforward explanations of the gospel for adults and children, biographies of missionaries, titles for spiritual edification, and contemporary literature to interest non-Christians.

We have a current catalog of 22 titles and want to print at least 40 books by 2010. We publish some reprints, but we want at least half of those titles to be developed by IRM. Our books are approximately 150 to 200 pages, sold at 30 to 40 rupees each (less than US\$1.00). A book typically costs one day's earnings for a family of four.

We usually print a minimum of 5,000 of each book. One thousand are reserved for use in thanking our donors. IRM has two evangelistic crusades every month. About half books are distributed through this channel. A big crusade might have 10,000 to 15,000 people; a village meeting, 500 to 1,000. About 80 percent of India's population lives in villages. We bless churches because we are not urban-based. We work with many denominations to build credibility.

Our titles are also distributed through 20 to 30 independent vendors; they account for perhaps 20 to 25 percent of our sales. IRM has its own bookstore in the office, and we work with a few others. The traditional channel for Christian publishers, bookstores represent only a small percentage of our total book sales.

### *Challenges*

We would like to flood the country with literature proclaiming the life-saving message of Jesus Christ. Our aim is not just

to make believers, but disciples. Many people say they believe in one God and worship Him, but they need to know Him and follow him too.

Money is not the challenge, for if we do what God wants us to do, He will provide resources. Our challenge is to reach more people, plant more churches, establish more Christian home libraries, and print a good number of books to impact millions of Indians.

Literature is an effective tool in leading people to the Lord. It appeals to their imagination and creativity. It lives on long after an evangelistic campaign is over. There are many missionaries and Christian publishing houses in India, but not all have a similar vision for evangelism. There are many in the world who have a vision but they don't have a mission, a goal, a strategy, and clarity of thinking. Others have a mission, organization, structure, and money, but they lack vision. Vision matters.

There is a lot to be done. We are only one link in a long chain of the work of the Holy Spirit. Please remember us in your prayers. Let us be of encouragement to each other as we seek to do the Lord's will and endeavor to expand His kingdom through the work He has entrusted to us.

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