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Most often, we see students publicly declare Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through baptism, but **recently, the IREF family celebrated the baptism of a couple, Praveen and Joyce.** Years ago, Joyce—a nominal Christian—attended junior college at the school directly beside IREF. Each day, she heard the evening devotions and listened as the songs and message lingered in the evening air. Her curiosity grew about Jesus, and she thought, “Just once, I have to go attend the IREF church.” She wouldn’t attend as a student, but years later, God would use this church in a powerful way.



After graduating and getting married to her husband, Praveen, Joyce attended a few churches, but she did not receive the warm welcome a church should give. Instead, each displayed the disparity between castes, which left her feeling unsafe or unable to worship a God who loves all people. **So, searching online, she came across IREF's Sunday program, and her family began watching IREF's services from their home.**

One day, Joyce was confronted with a thought—*if I die today, where would I go? Would I go to Hell? Heaven?* **She sought the Lord, praying and pleading with Him, finally answering the call to faith.** Her husband, though, still hadn't made the decision to follow Christ, so Joyce began to pray for him. For one year Joyce prayed, and **God answered.** In 2024, they began to make the 1-hour journey to attend the IREF Church on campus on Sundays, and **they were ready for the next step—baptism.**

So, a few weeks ago, Praveen and Joyce boarded the bus with IREF students, listening to the beat of the drum, the clapping hands, and the voices raised in song. As the bus hit pothole after pothole, their hearts stirred with both anxiety and excitement. Even as they approached the water, Joyce and Praveen still felt a lingering sadness over their lives. **Were they making the right choice?**



Yet, as Emmanuel Rebba gently guided them in baptism, one by one they felt the wave of water rush over them. **An old life was laid down and a new life was born.** Now they don't feel sad. Instead, they feel the confidence to follow the Lord and enter into Heaven with certainty.

Only God can bring this type of transformation. Praveen and Joyce's baptism was years in the making—years of fasting, praying, and seeking God. And God in His timing made all things work for His good, welcoming two more into His Family.



Isn't it amazing to see what God is doing in the hearts off hose all over the world? If you want to hear more stories like this, we invite you to join us for Shine—our annual banquet. **This year, Shine Illinois will be September 11 at 6:30 PM in Gurnee, and Shine Michigan will be September 15 at 5PM in Kalamazoo.** No matter which banquet you choose to attend, you will leave encouraged, inspired, and challenged by what God is doing in rural India.

You can learn more and reserve your seats below.

Reserve Your Seats





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