



## “Praise Be to God” - A Second Generation Bible Lady’s Testimony



My name is Vimala Sonthi, the daughter of Prakasa Rao- one of IREF’s first generation leaders. My father was a faithful servant of God, who came to know Christ through IREF’s founder Prasada Rao Rebba.

When my father became a Christian, he was not allowed back into his village or his parents’ home so he was

taken in by IREF and the Rebbas. My grandparents had over 150 idols in their home. So the fact that my father had abandoned his devout Hindu roots was an embarrassment to his parents. Prasada Rao arranged my father and mother’s marriage. Slowly my grandparents let my parents come back home. They reluctantly opened the door but they gave my father a very hard time. He was constantly belittled for joining a religion of “untouchables”, as so many Christians in India are referred to even today. My father never let the negativity bring him down. Instead for 60 years, he walked faithfully and completed his task of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to villages and people who had never heard the Truth, including his own family.

My parents had four daughters and one son. I am the oldest in our family. In those days, marriages were arranged early. I was 15 years old when my father arranged my marriage to a man who came from the same Hindu caste as my family, but had become a Christian and also dedicated his life fulltime to Christ.

We began our married life serving in the ministry with IREF. We were called to a village near my husband’s home town. Not a single person opened their door to us. We used to walk the streets praying that someone would allow us into their home to share the Gospel. As a few years went by, two high-caste Hindu women opened their door and asked us to pray for them. Slowly a few more people began to join us and ask for prayer. Eventually, a widow in the village gave us permission to use her veranda for Sunday service and evening prayer gatherings. We were eventually banned out of the village but God continued to open the doors to other villages and homes. He never left our side. As time went on, more and more people came to know the Lord through our ministry.

God blessed us with the construction of a church building in a village called Seethanapali about 10 years ago. During monsoon season, the thatched wall of the church fell on me. I spent 6 months in the hospital with multiple broken bones and severely injured organs. I was not expected to survive this incident but through the power of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of IREF evangelists and Bible ladies, I am here today continuing to proclaim the Good News of Christ.

Thank you for your support of my ministry as well as my fellow Christian brothers and sisters here in India.

**We ask that you join us in supporting and praying for so many evangelists and Bible ladies who have dedicated their lives to reach the lost and further His Kingdom in rural India. With your help of \$50 a month they can serve the Lord full time.**



*Emmanuel Rebba distributed text books to all the students at IREF to kick off the new year. For \$34 a month, you can help provide shelter, healthcare, education, 3 meals a day, clothing and all hygienic necessities for a child. Please prayerfully consider supporting a classroom or providing a donation towards school supplies for these children.*

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