# My Desire



AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
by Ruth Selvaraj

# **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this book to my late dear husband, Mr. Albert Selvaraj, a source of strength for me in my life.

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## **ACKOWLEDGMENT**

I thank my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who loved me and gave His life for me. I am who I am, because of Him. It is He who has enabled me to write my testimony.

I was also encouraged to write this by the following people:

Dr. Solomon, Bro. John Abraham and his wife, Deborah (Australia), my nephew, William J. Chinnappa (Vice President at Accenture), and my sister Mrs. Leena Selvaraj.

I am grateful to Jane Samuel, my grand-daughter, who sat with me hours, typing from my handwritten manuscript.

My thanks goes out also to my brother, Jacob, who sent precious photographs and my brother, Martin for constructive suggestions.

### A DESIRE TO BECOME A GOOD GIRL

I was born on September 8, 1947, in the Secunderabad Railway Hospital. My full name is Mary Ruth Nesamani. I was given this name in an interesting manner. The nurses who were nuns at the hospital where I was born, named me Mary, because the 8<sup>th</sup> of September is celebrated as St. Marys' feast. My father named me Ruth, after his eldest sister. She was beautiful and took care of him from his infancy as he had lost his mother six months after his birth. My maternal grandmother named me Nesamani.

My father, George Chinnappa was a great athlete. He represented the Nizam Government as a basketball player and was sent to Agra to play basketball. He also excelled in other track and field events such as the 100m dash and long jump. He was unbeatable in the 100m race. In long jump, he once jumped beyond the pit. Although he had a full-time job in APSRTC as a superintendent, his passion for sports inspired him to start village sports. About 500 participants from eight districts used to gather in a particular place for this event. He was very honest and never stretched out his hand for foreign funds. These events used to happen for a duration of about two days. Accommodation and food were provided. My father trusted God for his needs. On the final day he read out the report on Village Sports. Many great men encouraged him to carry on with this selfless service. Village sports is held to this day.

My mother, on the other hand was born to my godly grandparents after four sons. Thus, she had been brought up with a silver spoon.



My Grandparents with two sons



My mother with her younger sister, Esther who took care of us. We used to call her Chinchi.



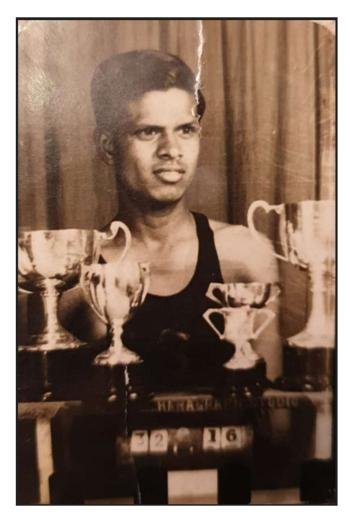
My grandparents' house, where we grew up .



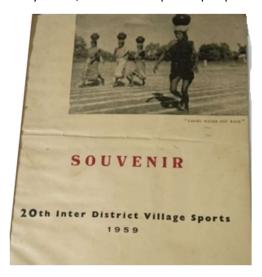
My parents' wedding photograph.



My father when he represented the Nizam government at Agra.



My father, with his championship cups.



Souvenir with a picture of the ladies' water pot race.

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A page from the souvenir with the names of the eight participating districts..



Dr. O. Shanthappa of Thandoor, President of village sports, stands by my father as he reads out the sports report.



Mr. David Chinnappa, my father's elder brother (his guardian)

I have seven siblings. Most of my childhood was spent in my grandparents' house. Circumstances forced us to move into the RTC quarters which was allotted to my father. Thus, we had to move from Secunderabad to Hyderabad. My grandparents were not happy with my fathers' decision, but to fulfil His eternal purpose, the Lord made us move.

A deep desire to become a good girl burned within me, but my efforts to be one were all for naught. Cottage meetings were held in our quarters and were s conducted by members of the Brethren Assembly. I used to attend these meetings along with my mother to listen to Gods' Word. The fact that a little girl attended meetings that only adults would be interested in, puzzled my father a great deal. He once asked me why being a small girl, I was interested in attending these meetings that would normally bore other children. I did not answer him, but I answered within myself, "to become a good girl."



Me, with my brother, Stephen.



Me with my favourite uncle, Christie Theophilus.



Me with my mother and siblings.



My husband with his family. (Sis. Chandra, my sister-in-law is seated to the extreme left)

### My Experiences at Hebron

My father attended the Methodist Church and my mother, SPG. Both the churches were far away from my home. While we were here, he came to know of a church called Hebron headed by Bro Bakht Singh, which was only a ten minute walk from my house. Here they taught Bible stories for children and called it Sunday School. My father wanted us to go to church every Sunday. Thus, he had no choice but to send me and my siblings to Hebron for Sunday School.

Unlike other churches, people of different backgrounds attended the Hebron meetings. Rich and poor, educated and uneducated, etc. they all came. Everyone carried Bibles. I believe that none came there to while away their time or boast of their greatness but, everyone came with a longing to listen to Gods' Word. We were sent regularly to Sunday School. We got accustomed to Hebron. To me, it was a unique place. As we grew, my father opposed us about going to Hebron, but I used to run to there, hiding my Bible in my frock, against my fathers' wishes.

In 1964, the first youth camp was conducted. Bro. Jacob (a mathematics lecturer in an engineering college), and Sis. Lockett (a missionary from England) had a great burden for young people. So, Bro. Bakht Singh helped them to conduct a youth camp for the first time in May 1964. Hundreds of young people attended these meetings. Bro. Zac Poonen was the main speaker and Dr. Sheela Gupta was one of the main counsellors for young girls.

These days were glorious. The Holy Spirit of God moved among the young people. We eagerly worked in the house of God. Tasks such as washing vessels and cleaning and filling mud pots with drinking water gave us great joy. During these days, young voices were raised in melodious song for the glory of God.

Many godly servants of God were present during this youth camp such as Bro C.E Dasan, a great Bible teacher, Bro Abbis, a missionary from England, Bro. Yesurathnam, a Collector who came out from his secular job to serve the Lord. Bro. Augustine, a Telegu translator at Hebron, translated for Bro. Bakht Singh without a flaw. Bro. Dorairaj of Hyderabad, a humble, honest and dedicated man of God, held a very important place as the treasurer in Hebron. When Bro. Dorairaj passed away, Bro. Bakht Singh wept bitterly as there was no one of his caliber to replace him. Bro. Yesupadham was a blind musician who played the harmonium. Many godly sisters were also present. Bro. Masih Prakash worked as a gatekeeper honestly for his heavenly master. All these people of God radiated so much love that it felt like Heaven. They moved about the premises as representatives of the Lamb of God.

It was during this youth camp that I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. My encounter with my Lord was true, my inward eyes were opened. I was an unworthy, unprofitable sinner who searched for the redeemer and a friend. At last, I found a remedy for my soul.. I was saved and I found a joy unspeakable. As a child, a simple desire to become a good girl was rewarded by my loving Saviour, much more than I could think or imagine. A renewed desire to read the Word of God, for prayer, and to witness and fear God was kindled.

There were many highs and lows in my life. Fear was my greatest enemy. Instead of depending on the Lord, fear ruled my life. Satan's tricks worked against me. This part of my life may be a warning to young people. Trust the Lord at all times, do not become a victim of Satan's tricks, for we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. His purposes for our life cannot be destroyed by the evil one.



Entrance of Hebron



Sis. Ethel Lockett, from England.



Bro. Jacob (second from left) and Bro. Suvarna Rao from Guntur (extreme right)



Bro. Yesurathnam (extreme left), Bro. Augustine (centre), Bro. C.E. Dasan (extreme right)



Bro. Masih Prakash



Angel aunty with her four children, Sam, Jochi, Benji and Gachie



Bro. Lazer Sen and Bro. Philip at the Holy Convocation in Elim

### Desire To Do The Will Of God

At the age of twenty-two, a marriage proposal was brought to me by Sis. Chandra of Hebron. She was my husband's eldest sister. She desired that I should marry her brother. She and Sis. Angel (wife of Bro. William, a great servant of God who passed away when his children were still young) prayed for me.

This matter was brought to my notice and I started praying for the same. His name was Albert Selvaraj, a BSc. graduate who worked in CQAL, a defense establishment. The Lord spoke to me very clearly from my daily Bible portion with this verse:

"Get thee out of thy country and thy kindred and come into the land which I shall show thee" Acts 7:3.

Tears rolled down my eyes. God does speak to mere humans who are as dust. The great and mighty, loving and compassionate God has a purpose for our lives. However, I had many questions regarding this matter. Once, as I walked toward Hebron, I couldn't stop weeping as I prayed "O Lord, have mercy on me. Speak to me once more and I will not question you again. I will bow my head in all the situations you take me through. O Lord, If I marry Albert Selvaraj, will our children fear You, be a blessing to others, love You and obey You?" I also said "Lord, I don't want riches or great things, only children who fear You."

I kept repeating these words as tears continued to roll down my eyes and I reached Hebron. After the worship service, Bro C.E Dasan gave the final message. He said "Let us turn our Bibles to Isaiah

44: 1-10. We will read it alternatively." The congregation did so and verse 3 said "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thine offspring." I trembled and wept. How can such a great and holy God speak to us so clearly? Every question in my mind was answered. I said to the Lord "Come what may, I will go forward regarding this matter." I accepted the offer without fear.

On the other hand, my would-be husband was also praying regarding this matter. He was a man of visions and dreams. He dreamt that he entered Hebron on a cycle. A few people surrounded him and asked him if he had come to Hyderabad to see the girl. Embarrassed, he exited the gate of Hebron. As he came out, he felt he was going astray, so he came back to Hebron and joined the congregation who were kneeling and praying. He knelt down and as soon as he did, a hand brought a piece of paper before him which read 'your marriage date is 7-70.'

He only shared this dream with me. One Wednesday, my mother and I attended the prayer meeting. Bro Bakht Singh told my mother that he would be in Hyderabad for two days: 31.7.70 and 1.8.70 and my marriage will be held on 31.07.70. My husband's dream had come true. On the day of the wedding, he shared the dream with Bro. Bakht Singh. Brother asked him to share his testimony with the guests, but he said he was not comfortable speaking in front of a big gathering. So, on 31.7.70, we were united in matrimony.

As we promised in the presence of the Lord and in the presence His people, we never missed starting the day on our knees with the Word of God and ending the day on our knees with the Word of God. We tried to attend all the church meetings and never missed Sunday service. This was the secret of our peaceful family life in spite of Satan's attacks. I had asked the Lord for four children, two boys and two girls, and the Lord has given me Samuel, Rebekah, Rachel and Paul. It was not very difficult to bring them up, because my desire was to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. I made them memorize many Bible verses and taught them many songs.



Bro. Bakht Singh at our marriage vows.



Bro. Bakht Sigh just after our wedding.



Mr. Chimnee (my husband's favourite boss) at our wedding reception in Bangalore.





Gifts given by my loving Saviour to me and my husband.

I had just passed second PUC, and completed Montessori training when I got married. Later I completed my degree and B.Ed. Whenever I went to Hyderabad to write my exams, my mother-in-law and my husband took care of my children. My family in Hyderabad encouraged me to complete my education.

### Passion to Work Among Children

In 1981, I started a school with the help of my husband in a village called Nagavara in Bangalore and named it Immanuel. The Lord gave me a promise "Delight thyself in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart" Psalm 37: 4. The school started with only forty-five students. They came shabbily dressed, with unkept hair and carried their books in vegetable bags. Most of the parents were illiterate.

Buses were infrequent and thus a few times I had to walk very long distances to reach the school. I was enthusiastic and very interested to teach these village children. They began reading and writing and spoke a few words of English. Everything was a new experience for them, from colouring in their drawing books or writing beautifully in their notebooks. My husband used to poke fun at me saying "Children with leaking nose are attractive to you."

As the days passed, the number of students grew and seeing their performance, the government gave us permission to run the English Medium School. We had the privilege of taking the permission letter to our dear man of God, Bro. Amirthraj. He prayed for the school. He had a very big heart and he loved all and in return, God's people loved him immensely. I cannot repay him for all the good he has done for me. Only the eternal God can reward him. Whenever he came home to pray, I poured out my heart in tears. He never asked questions and neither did I tell him anything. He left behind his beloved wife to carry on the work. My mother-in-law supported me in my work in the school, and my mother prayed for the school as long as she lived.

When the school started growing, problems started to develop. Certain rich and influential people of the village had an eye on the school. Immanuel School was the only English medium school in that area. Children came from fifteen villages to the school. They came in groups, some walking and some in bullock carts. Some young heads of the village started creating trouble. They would come and shout for no reason, hoping we would run away, leaving the school behind. The Lord gave us the strength to withstand and move forward. Problems continued to increase along with the number of students and because of this, we wanted to move away from that place.

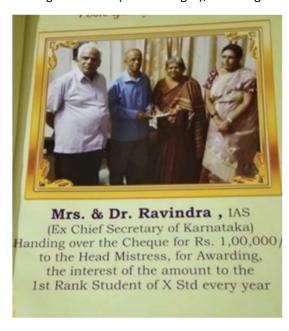
One day, a strong wind blew away the asbestos roof of the classroom. Immediately my husband clicked photographs and showed it to the education department as proof that the rooms were not fit to run classes. Thus, after much prayer, we moved away that place. The people of the village asked us to come back, but I refused. I was able to refuse so boldly because the Lord had spoken to us with the verse from Genesis 26: 17 – 22 "...He moved on from there and dug another well..." When the school reopened in another place, a few important people in the village asked to meet me at the previous school's playground. I refused at first, and then obliged. There, I saw a big gathering, but I did not fear. I kept praying, asking the Lord to come down and help me.

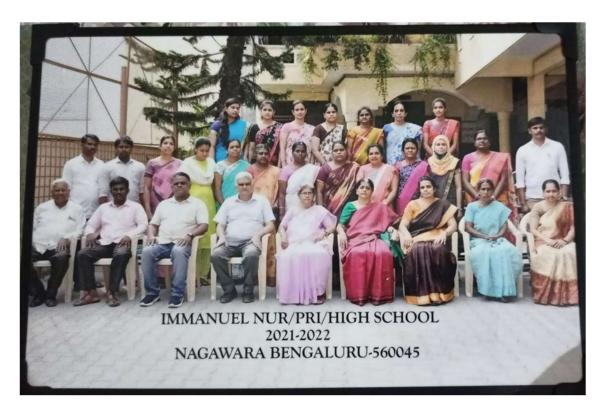
One at a time, they came to me, ordering me to come back. Some even threatened me. At that time, my husband was not with me, as he was transferred to Hyderabad. They had bribed everyone and no one came to help us. I stood in the crowd for more than an hour. Suddenly, I saw my husband with his luggage. He had come back in response to a voice he had heard the previous day, asking him to return to Bangalore. They left me and began arguing with him. He told them not to create a scene there, but to go to the education department with their demands. After many hours, they left us. They did not allow their children to come to the new school. They went from village to village, taking parents' signatures. With those, they went to the education department in two lorries. There, they requested the department to move us back into the village.

A few days later, officials from the Education Department came to check the new building and our records and allowed us to carry on our work in the new place. Being inexperienced, ignorant, confused and filled with fear, we didn't know how the living God would help us. God's unseen hand worked through Dr. A. Ravindra, the then Chief Secretary of Karnataka, a man who is right with God. The number of children continued to increase. Two landowners, Mr.Subhan and Mr. Chandrashekar offered to sell their lands to us. They said "We heard about you. You are doing a good job for the children. Buy our lands. It is better to sell it to you for a good cause than to sell it to others." They were willing to sell their lands at the government rate and also on instalment basis. We are grateful to God for the desire given to them to sell it to us at the government rate and letting us pay on installment basis. Then, phase by phase, we were able to construct the school building. Mr. and Mrs. Adimoolom and Mr. Vasudevan were of a great help at the time of trouble.

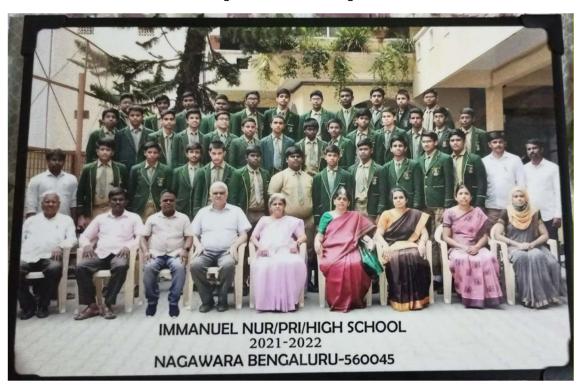


Mr. Vasudevan cutting the ribbon on the occasion of the inauguration of the school by late bro. Amritraj (3<sup>rd</sup> from left). Bro. A. David Adimoolom (1st from left), Hennur Patel (4th from left) and Nagavara Patel (1st from right), watching.





Teaching staff of Immanuel High School



X - B (2021-22)



X - A(2021 - 22)

We lived in Nagavara village (where the school currently is) for seven years. During the first half of our life there, my husband was transferred to Hyderabad. The residents troubled us in the beginning of our stay there, but later became friendly. So much so that it became a safe haven for us. There were times when my children, all four, came home very late from music class. It did not bother me in the least because I knew they would be safe. A lady from the village once said to me in the Kannada language that I am bringing up my children in a well-disciplined way. I know my children had a good name because they were born again at a young age, and I know that the Lord's blessing is on them, as He had promised me before my wedding.

One of my school parents, noted that the steps taken by me were right, and so when he had to sell his land in Nagenahalli, he gave me the first preference as he felt it would be good to sell to me. So, he sent a former student, asking me to buy that piece of land. Even this parent agreed to sell it to me at the government rate and in instalments. We decided to give this land for the work of the Lord, just to show our love towards the Lover of our soul, who loved us, forgave us and desired to fulfil His purpose in our lives. We named this place 'New Jerusalem'. Every time I go to this house of worship, gratitude fills my heart, for we were able to offer this place for the service of the Lord. Oh for the 'fairest of ten thousand.' I have no words to thank Him for this great honour He gave to me, to give to him all that I have. Bro. Kuruvilla from Coimbatore had come for the dedication of the church, and after a few days a special meeting was conducted and late Bro. Philip shared the Word.

# New Jerusalem





### The Lord's Mysterious Hand over Oppressive Circumstances

Satan attacked our family once again, and I was not aware of it. I was confused when people used to look at me in a strange way and pass comments about us. As the Psalmist said in Psalm 35:15 "But they are glad now that I am in trouble; they gleefully join together against me. I am attacked by people I don't even know; they slander me constantly." I used to go home and cry to my husband. He was my rock. "Don't break your heart," he used to say. The more some people thought of breaking my home, the more the Lord built it up and worked on our behalf. The Lord prospered us in ways I did not ask or even imagine.

There were years of humiliation and confusion in our home. Those who did wrong have forgotten that one day they will have to stand before the judgement seat of God. I call them 'Satan's agents.' They may be great in this world, but they are answerable for every little thing they have done. My husband, in his last days, with great heartache said to us again and again: "Some people tried to destroy my home." I am writing this because people considered me a hypocrite. A hypocrite who helped in the youth camp, a hypocrite who gave a big piece of land for the Lord's work and so on, but God knows my heart, and I have a clear conscience before Him. I love the Lord Jesus Christ from the bottom of my heart and love to serve Him and His people. I am expressing what is in my heart so that my life should not be a hindrance for God's people to love Him and serve Him. One day I will stand before my Saviour, with the clean heart and clean hands that He has given me. A clean heart, because I have not sinned against Him even in my thoughts and clean hands because I have not done wrong to anyone, and I will fall down at His feet and worship Him.

My children grew and completed their post-graduation. My son, Sam, returned from the U.S.A and wanted to buy a house. Many refused to sell it to him as we are Christians. Over the course of time, he came across a beautiful flat called 'Dodda Mane.' When he spoke to the owner and the subject of the school came up, the owner recognised it. He spoke to my son for a long time and said that his father, a Gandhian, the then Patel of Hennur village, who had come as a chief guest to the school, spoke much of me and told him that "truth was with her, that is why she won." He then explained that though they are 'crorepatis' now, they did not have money to study in Immanuel school when they were little, though they wanted to. He willingly sold one of the beautiful flats to Sam.

We are, as God's children, in a constant fight with the enemy. Some neighbouring schools instigated our parents to cause trouble in our school. Very severe false charges were brought against us. A big crowd gathered outside the school gate. Shouting and trying to force themselves inside. They intended to break in and do harm to me. That day, Sam said to me "Amma, don't fear, the Lord gave this promise in today's Bible portion "Psalm 37:6 – and He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noonday." We have the facility of CCTV with recording in our school, which was installed at the suggestion given by my son, Paul. This helped the police find the evidence. The police gave a sigh of relief at the end of the recording, The police and the politicians came to our rescue, knowing that we are innocent. We are grateful to them. Later, we knew that those people were angry because I charge less fees, conduct functions very grandly and the school has a good name.

By His grace, we are able to carry on the work successfully. On September I, 2022, we will have completed forty-two years of our work. From the day I started the school, up until now, I work with the same enthusiasm and interest, because I believe every child is important in the sight of God. I always want the children to be happy in school. Thus, I insist on all-round development, which is

facilitated through different kinds of competitions such as games and various sports like Kho Kho, badminton, throwball, etc. Sports Day is held annually, where the children compete for prizes with sweat and skill. On the Annual Day, which is held once a year, children compete with each other in dance and drama. They light up the stage with colourful dresses and ornaments, dancing to the beat on skilled feet. Competitions like drawing, essay writing, Jana Padha Geethe, Bhava Geethe, Rangoli and so on are also held. We have sent twenty-five batches of standard ten for the public exam. We worked very hard to get good results, and the results were very good.

# **INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION 2022**





Aerobics



Cottage Industry



Indian Army



Indian Airforce



Indian Navy



Dance



Singing the National Anthem

Recently, a door opened for us in another village. We were offered a piece of land to run another branch. The chairman who sold it to us said "Madam, we want people like you." Thus, after much prayer, we decided to buy it only after the Lord gave us a definite promise.

Sam married Grace, Rachel married Vijay and Paul married Julia, after finding God's will with much prayer. Rebekah fully dedicated herself to her parents. Words and ink cannot express the love she has for her parents. Now my great joy and expectations lie with my grandchildren. Jane, Esther, Enoch Theophilus, David, Isaac, Eathen, and Joy.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2020, I suffered a great loss. My husband was called home to glory. He was a man who supported, encouraged, and gave me freedom. My children have taken up the work he left behind, learning the work step by step and moving forward by His grace.

In July 2021, I was seriously ill and in the HICU, in answer to many prayers, my life was spared. I recovered and steadily regained my health. My children are a great support to me. Especially my daughter Rebekah, who takes great care of me.

I will be seventy-five years of age on 8 September 2022. I am able to go to school and take classes. Though, the amount of work I am able to do has reduced, I am satisfied and happy to be with the children and work for them. All my loved ones are praying for me, and this is the secret of my strength.

Let me finish with an incident that portrays my desire:

When I was about fourteen years of age, I told my mother I wanted to stitch a frock for the child of one of God's servants. I sat with my mother and stitched the frock for the little girl myself. It did not turn out well as it was my first experience. However, I wrapped the frock in a piece of paper, gathered up courage and went near the house (which was inside the Hebron compound). I also

decided to give them a few coins I had in my hand at that time (pocket money given by my grandfather,) about seventy paise. The lady of the house came out and asked why I was standing there. With much hesitation, I gave her the gift. She did not know me, but received it with much gratitude. Later, I came to know that she had been praying for that money and used it to buy two days' worth of soup bones for her husband, who was very ill. Her husband was a great servant of God. God's people nicknamed Bro. Bakht Singh a lion and this man of God was considered a second lion. He was none other than Bro. Sam Williams' father, Bro. Williams. He was called home to glory during the first V.B.S. in May 1964.

A very small deed, done without expecting anything in return. A desire to just give. Even now, I go shopping only for others, never for myself. God is not a debtor to man, and thus, the great God gave me much more that I could ask or think. Now, I say as Paul the apostle did in Philippians 1: 21 – 24: "I desire to be with the Lord, but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body." I have more work given by the Lord to complete, and I will finish it.

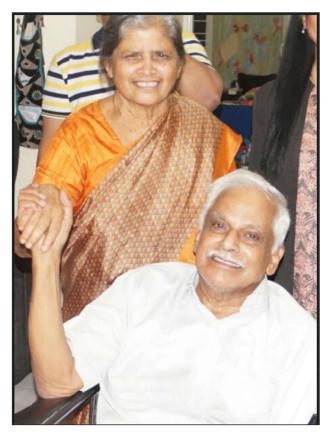
My husband stood firm in his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ till his last breath. I also desire to be true to the calling the Lord Jesus Christ has called me for, till my last breath.

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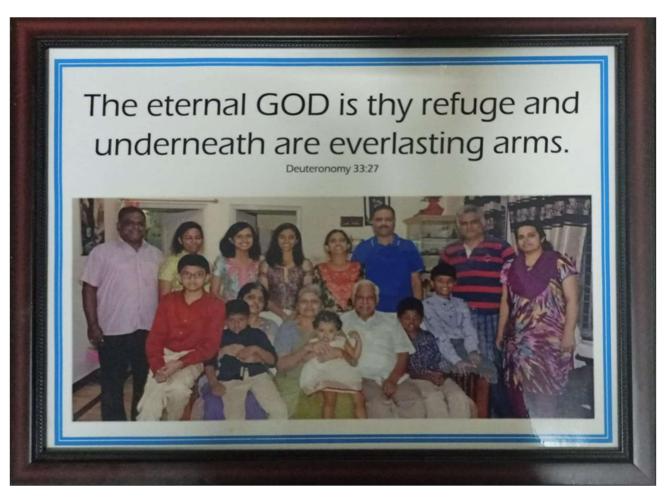
A Telegu song: Thara thara mulaku nee visvasyathan theliyaje sedanu.

(I desired to declare His faithfulness, generation to generation)

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On My Husband's last Birthday (Jan 2020)



My Family