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“Not to be Ministered Unto, But to Minister”

Fall 2009

Vellore Faculty Care for the People of Troubled Orissa



CMC staff care for the displaced Christians in refugee camp.

The Indian state of Orissa has experienced tension and violence along lines of religious identity for many years. In 2008, thousands of Christians were forced out of their homes and into the forest or government-sponsored camps in an Indian version of “ethnic cleansing.” The government prohibited entry to the area for outsiders, thus greatly limiting the possibility of assistance to the homeless from relief organizations.

Dr. Sam Chittaranjan, a Vellore CMC orthopedic surgeon, was among the many people around the world who were disturbed about the situation in Orissa. After conversations with a group of Christians from Bangalore who had visited the area, he and other medical personnel were able to form a team to provide emergency services to the victims. CMC allowed committed members of its faculty to be involved and provided emergency supplies for the team to carry. The non-governmental organization, Action Aid, provided a channel through which the team could gain access to the affected area. After

national security personnel arrived and stopped the worst forms of violence, the medical team was able to enter the area in December of 2008, some weeks after the riots. Since they were the only medical resource available at the time, they treated a wide variety of conditions.

Anticipating May elections, government officials decided to close the refugee camps in March, triggering a second crisis as thousands of people were stranded with no place to live. Return to their communities was not possible for most of them. Dr. Chittaranjan and his team conducted a second round of camps during this period followed by two more visits in May and July. As the urgent health needs diminished somewhat, the team turned its attention to long-range peacemaking goals. They noted that the Christians in the area were fragmented and not working across denominational lines. Dr. Chittaranjan and his colleagues were able to catalyze a successful assembly of church leaders and to establish a liaison with Roman Catholic constituencies.

With the assistance of the Christian Institute of Management, founding documents have been drawn up for an ecumenical society for peace and reconstruction. Dr. Chittaranjan anticipates further involvement in the situation, including more medical teams, since health care continues to be non-existent for many people in the area. Other organizations contributing to the medical intervention teams include Christian Fellowship Hospital, Oddanchatram; the Missionary Upholders’ Trust; Mooreshead Memorial Hospital, Udyagiri; and, as noted above, Action Aid.

New Name, New Strategy

The Vellore CMC Board is in the process of changing its name to Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation. Deciding that this name better reflects the supportive character of their activity, Board members began this process of re-naming last spring. With the new name comes a new strategy :

- Drive Effort to Maintain Excellence at CMC
- Promote Research at CMC in all areas
- Honor Ida Scudder and her work
- Ida Scudder Memorial Lectures

To better facilitate the innovations, the Foundation will be experimenting with a new working relationship with CMC over the next year. The Board of Directors of the Foundation has commissioned its President, Lou Knowles, to live and work on the Vellore campus of CMC from September through June of next year. Dr. Knowles' presence in Vellore is made possible through the generous and far-sighted leadership of the CMC Director, Dr. Suranjan Bhattacharji, and the other members of the Directorate and Executive Committee. During his stay, Dr. Knowles will be working closely with the Director and the staff of the Development and Public Relations offices. He will be initiating a conversation with CMC leaders on the important role that can be played by a foundation, located in Vellore, tapping the growing wealth of India and coordinating support efforts around the world. He will also be exploring ways that the activity of the Foundation in India can be sustained beyond his time in residence.

The Foundation board hopes that this re-orientation of our staffing will help in achieving

important goals at CMC, particularly the endowing of research chairs throughout the institution. CMC is poised to become one of the great centers of medical research in the developing world if faculty time can be freed up for scientific activity. Leaders of Indian and international institutions and corporations can see the important role CMC can play in addressing the great health challenges of the developing world. But they can see it only if they are asked to see it. The first rule of institutional development is that if you want people to help, you must ask them; and you must ask them with clarity and conviction. This we intend to do.

Interest and support for this strategy from our friends in the US is essential to our success. The members of the Foundation board are struggling to make the most efficient use of your contributions. Moving a significant part of our activity to India is generating major savings in operating expense, allowing us to downsize in New York. You can be sure that your gifts will be used to maximize their effect in terms of building the future of CMC.

You can stay in touch with Lou and receive regular reports in a number of ways. His diary will be posted regularly on www.vellorecmc.org. Look for him on Facebook (search with e-mail address louknowles47@hotmail.com) and twitter ([louknowles](https://twitter.com/louknowles)). You can expect regular e-mail communication as well. Send your e-mail to louknowles@vellorecmc.org. Dial 011-91-979-173-1602 for phone contact or text. The New York office will be staying open under the day-to-day management of Melanie Squillante. You can continue to reach her at 800-875-6370 or mgs@vellorecmc.org.

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation, Inc., in response to the healing ministry of Christ and inspired by the legacy of Dr. Ida S. Scudder, is to provide a focus for excellence and integrity through the support of the wide range of programs of the Christian Medical College, Vellore, India.

CMC and University of California, Irvine faculty work together to fight Dengue Fever



Dengue Fever is a mosquito-born scourge found throughout the tropics. According to the WHO (The World Health Organization), there may be as many as 50 million cases a year, worldwide. It is a miserable illness that causes severe pain in head, eyes and bones as well as joints, which explains its common name of “break-bone fever.” In cases where the condition is not diagnosed and treated promptly, Dengue can be fatal. Cases occur in Vellore as well as in many other areas of India. There is no vaccine for Dengue and research funds are not as readily available as with other better-known diseases.

Dr. Asha Mary Abraham (above right) of CMC is hot on the trail of a good diagnostic test for Dengue Fever. Taking advantage of a Vellore CMC Foundation-funded Senior Training Fellowship, Dr. Abraham spent three months earlier this year pursuing her quest in the laboratories of the University of California at Irvine. Dr. Philip Felgner (above left), a UCI faculty member, is developing diagnostic technology based on “proteomics.” In this technique, proteins are spotted on slides (or “chips”) and reacted with patients’ sera. Depending on what antibodies are present in the sera, there is binding to the proteins on the chips which is visualised using computer software.

Dr. Abraham has focused her work on adapting this technology to address the diagnosis of early Dengue Fever. She sees three important benefits that will grow out of this research:

1. A “robust” and inexpensive diagnostic test for Dengue that can be made available throughout India and elsewhere to identify the disease quickly and accurately, leading to better treatment and fewer deaths.
2. Widespread use of proteomic-based tests can help identify the specific strains of Dengue virus manifesting themselves in different areas. This in

turn can help with designing a vaccine that would help prevent infection.

3. Proteomics can help in the development of “monoclonal antibodies,” to be used in treatment to reduce the severity of the illness.

Dr. Abraham is working on standardization of the testing process for dengue. To do this, she needs to gather blood samples from a large number of people affected by the disease. She will be seeking support for her continued research from both Indian and US sources.

Dr. Abraham’s work at UCI grew out of conversations facilitated by Dr. George K. Chandy, a faculty member at UCI and a CMC alumnus, and encouraged during a 2008 visit to the UCI campus by Dr. Suranjan Bhattacharji and Dr. Louis Knowles.

CMC Faculty Advance their Skills at the University of Kansas

Through the generosity of Dr. Mani Mani and Mrs. Rebekah Mani, CMC Vellore and the University of Kansas have a thriving exchange program involving both students and faculty. CMC faculty who train at KU are known as Modale Fellows. For the current fall term, Ms. Deepa Ramesh, CMC faculty for Occupational Therapy and Dr. Thomas Ram, faculty in Radiation Oncology, have settled in for a semester of advanced training at KU. Both are taking courses in Clinical Research and Evidence-Based Practice.

Ms. Ramesh is paired with Dr. Winnie Dunn, Chair of the KU Occupational Therapy Department, who is an internationally recognized expert on translating basic research findings on sensory integration into usable information for both therapists and patients with neurological impairments.

Dr. Ram is receiving advance training on a sophisticated piece of research equipment that will soon be available at CMC. His goal is to determine which genes change in expression patterns with different radiation oncology procedures.

In October, Mr. Andrew Babu, from the Department of Physical Therapy, will arrive in Kansas City. He will be focusing on teaching skills and will observe in many courses in PT and related fields.

Memorial and Honorarium July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009

We thank our friends who gave gifts in memory or in honor of family and friends in recognition of their lives and works. The contributions for support of CMC Vellore are living memorials enabling student education and quality health care to those in need.

In Memoriam

Frances E. Scherer
James A. Scherer
Dr. Paul I. Ahmed
Dr. Nancy E. Ahmed
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Dr. Anita Amaranath
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My Grandmothers

Below, Avery Atkinson at her third grade's wax museum fund-raiser last spring. Avery, dressed as Dr. Ida Scudder, stood in a booth she set up. When visitors walked by and placed a coin in her cup, she gave a 2 minute presentation on the life of Dr. Scudder. Virtually no one knew of this amazing woman and all were fascinated by Dr. Ida's accomplishments.

