

The CMC Alumni Association Award of Distinction to

Rev. A.C. OOMMEN

at the Annual Alumni Reunion, August 14, 1999

CITATION

"Achan Oommen" as he was affectionately called by the students and staff of CMC & Hospital was born on 19th June 1921, the second child of a teacher couple, the Cherians, of Ambattu family, Kaviyoor, Kerala. After schooling, he joined the C.M.S. College, Kottayam, for the intermediate course and then the Union Christian College, Alwaye for the B.Sc degree course. He was a brilliant student and both colleges wanted him on their teaching staff, but he felt his calling was different and soon afterwards joined the Children's Special Service Mission (C.S.S.M). He next worked with the Kerala S.C.M. as its General secretary and then went for theological studies in Serampore College, Calcutta. He secured the B.D.degree with first rank and came back to Kerala and served the C.S.I. Madhya Kerala Diocese as the Youth Secretary. There was a call that came to CSI M.K.Diocese to send a missionary to the heart of Africa. The Diocese felt Rev.Oommen was the right choice. So he and his wife went to Uganda in Africa. There, Rev. Oommen taught in the seminary and Rebecca his wife taught in the Mission School. They both were fully involved in all the activities of the church and were greatly loved and appreciated. There, Rev.Oommen was ordained as a priest by the Anglican church. Later they felt God's leading to come back to the mother church. Back in C.S.I. Madhya Kerala Diocese, they of their own choice accepted a small rural pastorate and was one with the poor people in every way. They lived up to their idealism as servants of Christ in every place.

Rev.Oommen came to Vellore with a rich experience of working in Churches in India and abroad. Under the leadership of Rev.Oommen, the Religious Work Department found many new avenues of service among students and the staff. Through retreats, work camps,teaching missions and worship services, Rev.Oommen helped the students and staff to develop a sense of belonging together as a committed "CMC Community". His dynamism, conviction, and ability to communicate deep theological insights in simple language made him an outstanding leader for Bible study groups and a much admired preacher. In the midst of all his activities Rev.Oommen found time to counsel and pray with individuals -students, staff, patients and their families.

Rev.Oommen's contribution was not restricted to the C.M.C community alone, he was actively involved in training several batches of theological students and pastors who spent time in C.M.C. He was very much involved in the establishment of the Christian Counselling Centre in Vellore and in working out the arrangements for clinical experience of the C.C.C. trainees in CMC Hospital. His services were extended to the Church of South India in their "Pastoral Aid Programme" at the request of C.S.I. Synod for a period of one year in 1979. He helped to establish links with churches in the U.K, where he spent a sabbatical year as a missionary in residence in the Canterbury Diocese of the Church of England, and by encouraging several

visiting church leaders to come for periods of two to three months to CMC. His contacts in Uganda have led to links with churches there following the re-opening of communication with Uganda in the last two years.

Rev. Oommen was deeply interested in the "Faith and Healing Ministry" and it was his desire to see that the relationship between work and faith in C.M.C. was understood at the same high level as health care was understood. During visits to the U.S.A. he made contacts with persons in the Holistic Health Movement there, and he helped to organize a Symposium on Faith and Healing with International representatives at C.M.C. in 1980.

During the period Rev. Oommen was in C.M.C., he kept up his connections and participation in important ecumenical and international conferences, especially those of the World Council of Churches. He is one of the founder members of the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education in the U.S.A.

He is a good organizer, teacher, preacher and spiritual leader and a good pastor. At home he has been a caring husband and a loving father. Thanks be to God for Rev. Oommen and his family.

The Alumni Association of Christian Medical College is pleased to present the Alumni Award for the distinguished services of Rev. A.C. Oommen.

14th Aug. 1999

President
CMC Alumni Association