



Paul Harrison Award 2014

The Paul Harrison award was instituted to honour medical graduates or post-graduates of CMC Vellore, who, through their outstanding contribution in the field of healthcare, have been able to uphold the motto of our institution “Not to be ministered unto, but to minister”

The awardee of this year has contributed for over five decades towards developing and sustaining high quality, cost effective medical care for the people of Oddanchatram and the surrounding rural areas of Tamil Nadu; for his role as an inspiring mentor to many young physicians and for his leadership in developing Christian health organisations like the Christian Fellowship Hospital, the Emmanuel Hospital Association and the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India.

The astute and keen mind of Dr. Kuruvilla was shaped in a small village school in Kerala. He completed MBBS from Trivandrum Medial College in 1963. As a medical student, he was aware of the hand of God in his life and was part of a group of friends who gathered for regular prayer which grew into the Christian Medical Fellowship of Kerala. This helped to foster in him a sensitivity to the spiritual and physical dimensions of the suffering of ordinary people.

After his medical studies, Dr. Kuruvilla volunteered to serve in the Union Territory of the islands of Lakshwadeep. Here, he was faced with the challenging experience of medical practice in dealing with life threatening illnesses like myocardial infarctions, ectopic pregnancies as well as severe infectious diseases with minimal resources that helped to hone his clinical skills and build confidence in addition to endearing him to the local fisher folk.

He joined the Christian Fellowship Hospital in 1968 along with his wife Susan, a brilliant graduate of Mysore Medical College. He became part of the Fellowship Group of the founders: Dr and Mrs A K Tharion, Dr and Mrs Cherian and Sister Kunjamma. In 1970 he joined for MD at CMC, after which he returned to CFH in ODC where he developed the Department of Medicine which included Paediatrics and Psychiatry. He became well known in the area for his extraordinary clinical skills and his compassionate care as he developed a model of low cost, high quality medical service along with the others in the fellowship.

Dr. Kuruvilla had a passion for teaching and many young doctors were inspired by his gentleness, clinical repertoire, his Christian commitment and his simple lifestyle in the community. He started the formal DNB programme in General Medicine, nurturing it and setting up systems for teaching. He was a popular speaker and spiritual leader at student retreats and conventions and a role model for Christian medical service in India. He encouraged and mentored many young doctors to work in mission hospitals in remote parts of the country. He helped to develop and sustain the “Oddanchatram model” which has become one of the most vibrant and effective examples of Christian medical mission work.

Dr. Kuruvilla also took on administrative responsibilities in the hospital and the Fellowship and helped to address the challenges as it grew to become a busy hospital with 1500 outpatients a day and 300 beds with 120 doctors. In addition he was actively involved in the wider Christian medical mission especially with the Emmanuel Hospital Association and the Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India where he provided leadership, moulding these organisations in their early, formative years.

Dr Susan, his wife, who has specialized in Dermatology has been a companion and constant support on this journey, providing much expertise in patient care wherever it was needed in the hospital.

The guiding principle of Dr. Kuruvilla Varkey and Dr. Susan has been 1 Corinthians 4: 7, which says “for who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? If you did receive it, why do you boast as if you did not?” For them, everything has been given, not accomplished. ‘All that we have is a gift received from God’, he says. ‘Medicine is a gift from God to be used not for our comfort and gain, but for those who need our service the most.’

For his role in strengthening and enlarging the impact of Christian medical work in our country, Christian Medical College, Vellore is proud to present the Paul Harrison Award for 2014 to Dr. KURUVILLA VARKEY.

DIRECTOR

PRINCIPAL

Vellore
17.11.2014