

CERTIFICATE FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

From the time she could remember, Dr. Latha Paul always wanted to be a doctor. Committing her life to Christ at the young age of 17 added a new dimension to her ambition - she decided to become a medical missionary. The biographies of medical missionaries like Dr. Hudson Taylor and Dr. L. Nelson Bell, both American missionaries to China, had a profound impact on her.

Dr. Latha completed her undergraduate medical training from the Kurnool Medical College in 1978. She then worked in the Lakhnadon Christian Hospital, Madhya Pradesh, a mission hospital under the EHA. This was followed by a short stint at the Kugler Hospital, a mission hospital in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh that dates back to 1897. The experience of working in these two mission hospitals convinced her of the great need that existed in India for committed doctors and medical personnel.

Dr. Latha joined the Christian Medical College, Vellore in 1982 for her postgraduate training in Anaesthesia. She mentions Dr. Valerie Major, the then Professor and Head of Anaesthesia as her mentor and teacher who urged her to excel at all times. Dr. Latha completed her MD training in 1987, following which, she and her husband, Dr. Paul Emmanuel, joined the Christian Fellowship (C.F.) Hospital, Oddanchatram.

The Christian Fellowship Hospital, Oddanchatram was started in 1955 by a fellowship of Christian doctors. With a Vision Statement of *'Wholesome Healing for Transformation'*, the CF Hospital is a remarkable model of a mission hospital in India. It stands out as much for the low-cost, effective healthcare that it provides, especially for the marginalised, as for the simple and humble way of life that it espouses. Inspired by the likes of the late Dr. A.K. Tharien and Dr. Kuruvilla Varkey, Dr. Latha, too, has dedicated herself to this calling, and to the cause of medical missions in India.

For the past thirty years, Dr. Latha has been based in Oddanchatram, except for a few years when she was sent by the Hospital to Maldives and the Stedford Hospital, Chennai to help the Departments of Anaesthesia in these places. For the past four years, Dr. Latha has been the only anaesthetist at the CF Hospital. Given the heavy workload of the hospital, around 6000 surgeries annually, it makes for a busy, hectic and challenging life as an anaesthetist. However, given her selfless and Christ-centered nature, Dr. Latha has been able to give of herself beyond anaesthesia. She has been involved with the ministry of the EMFI and with medical work in North India, particularly in Kashmir. She trains Nurses from other mission hospitals in the techniques of basic anaesthesia. She serves on several mission boards and was the National Vice- President for the Haggai Institute. Dr. Latha also conducts seminars on Inner Healing, for which she was trained in the UK. Inner Healing is a grassroots counseling movement that helps people with emotional problems.

When asked what motivates her, Dr. Latha humbly says, *"My commitment to Jesus keeps me going. There is no turning back."*

For her years of faithful service to others, in keeping with the motto of her alma mater, Christian Medical College, Vellore is proud to honour Dr. Latha Paul with the *Certificate for Meritorious Service* for the year 2017.