

## **The College Motto award 2010**

### **Dr. Mong Stephen Chowdhury**

The College Motto Award, instituted by the class of 1949, recognises and acclaims each year an alumnus whose life and work has exemplified the motto of the Christian Medical College Vellore, “not to be served but to serve”. In this fifth year after its institution, this award is presented to **Dr. Mong Stephen Chowdhury** of the class of 1984.

Dr. Chowdhury comes from a family involved in mission medical work and residing in a remote village in Bangladesh. Mong, during his college was a much loved student, one of the best footballers and athletes of his time and one who enjoyed life to the hilt. For such a fun loving character, his classmates have found it surprising that he has spent his whole life in the service of the poor and disadvantaged people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. Following his graduation he returned to his native village to work as Medical Officer in the Christian Leprosy Centre (CLC) at Christian Hospital Chandraghona (CHC), progressing through the ranks as Deputy Medical Superintendent of CHC (1996), Medical Superintendent (1998) and finally to become the Medical Director of CHC (2000).

CHC exists to provide medical and surgical care to the poor and marginalised communities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. These are mainly tribal people with a very low level of education, literacy, income, access and opportunity. The population of the Hill Tracts is about 70,000, but CHC in addition serves over 2 million people from the surrounding areas of Chittagong Plains. It provides care to 4500 in-patients and 28,000 out-patients every year and is the only hospital in the region which provides 24 hour emergency services.

Throughout his career Dr. Chowdhury has been heavily committed to clinical responsibilities including emergency surgery and obstetrics. He has the reputation of never refusing care to any patient, however poor. In this administrative role, he has obtained recognition for Junior Midwifery training (CSBA) at CHC. The Nursing Institute trains over 80 nurses every year and is one of only two nursing institutes for South East Bangladesh. He was personally responsible for designing and implementing the Community Health Programme of CHC, which provides comprehensive health care to remote villages of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Their programme has trained 150 UNDP health workers and 60 basic medical workers. It has had a beneficial effect on

the health indices and health access of these communities. Towards staff welfare he has developed the Continuing Professional Development Programme, which enables staff to attend training at CMC, Vellore. Another example of his innovative thinking is the construction of the Staff Sports and Recreation facility with materials obtained from demolished buildings. Dr Chowdhury has had to work very hard to achieve financial sustainability for all these varied activities of CHC through raising of external resources.

In the midst of all these arduous clinical, educational and administrative responsibilities, Dr. Chowdhury has also attended to his own continuing education according to the needs of his leadership roles, securing master's degrees in Public Health in Developing Countries from the UK and in Business Administration. He undertook training in reconstructive surgery in leprosy also and is one of the few trained leprosy surgeons in Bangladesh. He has also found time to work for a number of Christian medical groups in Bangladesh and is currently General Secretary of the Christian Medical Association of Bangladesh.

For his life of steadfast, self-denying and significant service in the spirit of his alma mater and its promise of greater fruitfulness in the years to come, the CMC Alumni Association is honoured to present the College Motto award of 2010 to

**DR. MONG STEPHEN CHOWDHURY**

Awarded at the Annual Alumni Reunion in Vellore on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2010.