

Special Issue

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Living Our Legacy **An Experience of Amazing Love**



Very few people know about a gift that came to CMC from Mr. Herbert Martin and Mrs. Lora Fillebrown of USA. The Fillebrowns were not wealthy people, but they had heard about the medical work in Vellore and were looking for a way to help support the work there. It so happened that their only daughter Rachel decided to get married and instead of using her wedding gift money to buy things for her and her new husband, the Fillebrowns decided to donate the entire sum of 10,000 Dollars for the much needed Nurses Hostel. Along with the gift came an unexpected note from her parents- *“Though Rachel may never go to India to see her own wedding gift, she will have the joy of seeing it in her enriched consciousness, and she will gain unlimited pleasure out of the thought of what that nurses home is doing for the young women of India and through them for the suffering women and children of India.”* {June 1920}.

Perhaps you will wonder where this hostel is and look around for it. You will not find it as the Rachel Fillebrown Hostel was pulled down to make room for the new Ida S. Scudder Centenary Block. Rachel herself never came to Vellore to see to what use her wedding gift had been put to. But as her parents predicted, she got enormous joy out of knowing that the hostel had housed many hundreds of nurses over the years.

We live at a time when bonuses, perks, our rights and the monetary benefits that we are entitled to at work, often dictate what kind of work we do and how we do it. The idea that we could give away an entire amount of gift money seems preposterous to us. When we see or hear of people doing such amazing things we think, *‘It’s ok for them. They have more than enough to give away.’* But actually this is not true. Those who give generously give through sacrificing a great deal of something deeply personal. They are driven to give by an experience of amazing love.

Dr Scudder’s biographies and diaries show that she did not want to build just a hospital and medical college alone, but the Kingdom of God, here in Vellore. It was not enough to heal the women and children who came to her of their diseases; it was her great desire to give them the new life that Jesus promised to all who came to him – a life away from superstitions, traditions and societal and patriarchal oppressions. Here, too, was amazing love in action.

Dr Scudder lived life on two levels – on one level, she was very practical and knew exactly what she needed to build the new buildings and equip the college with suitable faculty and she went about this with steely ambition. On the other, she knew that it was experiences of love and compassion alone that would slowly build the Kingdom of God. And she set about making sure that those who came her way had this amazingly love experience.

Over the past one hundred years, many who come for treatment to CMC and those who work here have been witnesses to this amazing love. Each experience has become the building blocks not for the hospital and college, but on which the Kingdom of God has slowly been built. As we meditate on this, how close are we today to experiencing the Kingdom of God here in Vellore? Do we too have an experience of amazing love to offer to the next generations?

Usha Jesudasan
ushajesudasan@gmail.com