

## **Shiloh, annual medical students' mission conference held**

Shiloh, the annual medical students' mission conference of the Christian Medical College, Vellore, was held from the 28th of September to the 1st of October 2017. This year's Shiloh, themed 'Transformed for Transformation', was attended by about 1000 participants from various medical colleges across South India and a few from North India.

Shiloh is a forum where students are given a glimpse of the breadth of Christian medical missions - to inspire, challenge and mentor them into future leaders in healthcare. The plenary sessions led by Dr. Sam Thomas, Mr. Rajkumar Ramachandran and Dr. Sujith Varghese, who challenged the students to undergo a personal transformation in order to bring about transformation in the communities they will work in as medical professionals.



The highlight of Shiloh 2017 was the presence of medical professionals - doctors, nurses as well Allied Health Sciences (AHS) workers, who are carrying on medical ministry under difficult circumstances, mostly rural India. Some of the speakers who inspired with their lives and their presentations were: Drs. Famkima and Joydeepa Darlong from The Leprosy Mission, West Bengal; Drs. Vijay Anand Ismavel and Ann Vijay Anand from Makunda Christian Hospital, Assam; Dr. Oby Cherian, from the Christian Fellowship Christian Health Centre, at Ambilikai; and Dr. Nibedita Pramanik from Evangelical Hospital Khariar in Orissa.

The John Scudder Oration, the main oration of the five-day conference, is delivered every year by a person who has worked in medical missions his / her entire life, dedicating his life to bringing healthcare and the



message of Christian faith to the unreached and marginalized.

This year, the oration was delivered by Dr K Jeychandran, who attended the conference along with his wife, Dr, Rita Padmini (CMC alumna from the batch of '64).

The couple have pioneered medical work in the tribal area of Kamagiri, in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, where they have persevered and succeeded in bringing quality healthcare, education and a better life to the people they serve.

During the evenings, there were worship sessions including an evening of worship led by the NLAG – New Life Assemblies of God concert group from Chennai. Other events organized for the students included an exciting and interactive quiz session, a visit to the Christian Medical College Hospital, a blood donation camp and a climb up the College Hill, near the medical college campus at Bagayam.



This year also saw a new component specifically for young faculty and postgraduates to encourage them, and to have interaction with friends from various mission hospitals.



There were sessions specifically for nursing students by Mrs. Sashi Thomas from Development Associates International (DAI) as well as for dental students by Dr. Rabin Chacko, Head of the Department of Dental and Oral Surgery challenging them to a life of commitment.



Equally inspiring were the sessions conducted by the Distance Education Team and the team from the Chittoor campus of CMC.

Mr. Charles Joseph, from Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM), led an apologetics session on questions that pose mental blocks to our faith and practical challenges in our day-to-day activities.

Drs. Famkima and Joydeepa Darlong from The Leprosy Mission, Purulia, West Bengal brought to light the plight of leprosy patients, liaising to bring in policy changes for better privileges and healthcare facilities for them. Drs. Rajkumar and Mary Ramasamy, work in the Palani hills, in central Tamil Nadu and with their remarkable model of primary health care have improved the health indices of the region. They presented the significance of family physicians in tackling India's large, marginalized population.

Drs. Vijay Anand Ismavel and Ann Vijay Anand from Makunda Christian Hospital, Assam, shared their experiences and challenges of about thirty years in building the community not just by developing the medical work but also bringing in social changes through education and community development programmes.

Dr. Oby Cherian, a urologist by training, who has continued the work started by the Inter-Ashram Fellowship at the Christian Fellowship Christian Health Centre, Ambilikai, Tamil Nadu and developed it into a secondary care hospital brought forth the importance of being innovative in an under-resourced region and the joys of a serene and rewarding life among the lesser privileged.

Dr. Nibedita Pramanik from Evangelical Hospital Khariar, in Kalahandi a remote district of Orissa, spoke about her experiences in working towards upscaling the hospital to a tertiary care center. Mr. Johan Dhinakaran, physiotherapy alumnus of CMC shared his experiences of starting a Physiotherapy unit at Broadwell Hospital, Fatehpur.

Stalls by various groups like, Christian Medical Association India, Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India, Healthcare Christian Fellowship India (HCFI) mission hospitals, and the Department of Distance Education, were put up, to display their publications and to create awareness about their activities among medical students.

Various departments of CMC and the student community, along with the volunteers were instrumental in making the programme a grand success.

