

## Obituary

### MELVILLE CHRISTIAN

MD

1932–1988

One of India's leading leprologists, Dr Melville Christian, died of a heart attack on 12 June, aged 56. He leaves behind a wife and two children. Dr Christian was Director of the Schieffelin Leprosy Research and Training Centre at Karigiri in Tamil Nadu, one of the largest and most influential leprosy programmes in southern Asia. He had held the Directorship since 8 May 1987, previously having served as Deputy Director (Training) and Head of the Branch of Epidemiology and Leprosy Control. Preceding his appointment to Karigiri in 1979 he was Medical Superintendent at the Government of India leprosy centre Chingleput.

Dr Christian's main contribution to leprosy work lay in the areas of leprosy control and epidemiology. He was a World Health Organization (WHO) Consultant, a member of the independent evaluation team set up jointly by the Government of India and the WHO, and a member of the Task Force for the Eradication of Leprosy constituted by the Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. His research involvement has been valued at the THELEP (Therapy of Leprosy) Steering Committee of the WHO and the THELEP Scientific Working Group since 1982. His most recent appointment was as Medical Consultant for India with The Leprosy Mission International.

Dr Christian's priority at Karigiri was staff development and training. Under his leadership the vital areas of service, research and training were strengthened, and particular attention was accorded to relationships between staff, patients and the community.

Dr Christian concluded his first annual report with words which spoke of hope and confidence in God, and the firm conviction of his guidance for the future:

'Be our strength in hours of weakness  
In our wanderings be our guide  
Through endeavour, failure, danger  
Father, be there at our side'.