

Christian Chiropractors Association to Celebrate 50th Anniversary

Editorial Staff

It was at the Palmer Lyceum Homecoming in August 1953 that Dr. Robert Thompson, a missionary chiropractor from Ethiopia, challenged the chiropractic profession to get involved in bringing chiropractic care to underdeveloped countries. He and his wife, Dr. Hazel Kurth Thompson, had been in Ethiopia for 10 years, working primarily with the government of Emperor Haile Selassie. In 1951, the Sudan Interior Mission had asked him to establish a clinic for leprosy in the southern highlands of Ethiopia, and the Thompsons left the service of the government.

At that time, there were very few chiropractors outside the English-speaking world. The opportunity, which Dr. Thompson presented at the Palmer Lyceum, was for chiropractors to provide x-ray, chiropractic and hospital equipment for the mission to enable him to provide chiropractic along with the medical care in the leprosy clinic. The International Chiropractors Association promoted the project and, within two years, two truckloads of equipment were shipped to Ethiopia for use by the Thompsons.

Taking the lead in gathering this equipment and raising the necessary funds was a Christian fellowship group at Palmer College and a number of Christian doctors in field practice. With these students and doctors as a core group, the Christian Chiropractors Association (CCA) was formed to carry on the support of the Thompsons, and to seek out other chiropractors serving as Christian missionaries around the world.

The group soon learned that Dr. J. Bridgens Johnson, a chiropractor from Pennsylvania, had been serving as a missionary in Peru and Bolivia since 1938 with no chiropractic equipment at all. Dr. Flora Hill Colby from California had been in Lebanon since 1939 without any equipment. Dr. Don Pibbs from Vancouver, B.C., had been in Japan since 1946 with only a portable table. And Dr. James Dean, a chiropractor from Calgary, Alberta, was serving in New Guinea. The group committed themselves to providing equipment and support to doctors in need.

In 1957, Dr. Thompson asked the newly formed CCA to undertake the sponsorship and support of two Ethiopian men if he sent them to chiropractic college in America. This was done. Dr. Mulattu Baffa and Dr. Beyene Mulattu graduated from Palmer in October 1960, and returned to Ethiopia. They were the first native African chiropractors, and they received their education through the support of members and friends of the CCA.

Over the next 50 years, the CCA would give support to 50 doctors of chiropractic who established chiropractic missions in under-developed areas. In addition, almost 500 CCA member doctors have gone to almost 100 under developed countries on a short-term basis, serving the people with chiropractic care. These doctors paid their own expenses and did not receive any remuneration from the patients they treated. Thus, chiropractic has been introduced into the lives of hundreds of thousands of very needy people.

The CCA will celebrate its 50th anniversary at its world headquarters in Fort Collins, Colorado, June 18-23, 2003. There are many special events planned, including a "mortgage-burning" for its

new office building, which houses its international organization.

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