

## Moment of Silence for the Remarkable Robert Thompson, DC, PhC

Glenn Hultgren

Robert Thompson, DC, PhC (1914-1997): missionary; colonel; pilot; Ethiopian deputy minister of education; member of Canadian parliament; confidant to Emperor Haille Selassie; foreign mediator; teacher and college president.

Tribute by Glenn Hultgren, DC, executive secretary/treasurer, Christian Chiropractors Association

One of the original members of the Christian Chiropractors Association, Dr. Robert N. Thompson of Langley, British Columbia, passed away on Sunday, Nov. 16, 1997 after a lengthy illness.

Dr. Thompson was born May 17, 1914 on a farm in Innisfail, Alberta. From his humble beginnings as a rural school teacher, he dedicated himself to the service of God.

He graduated from the Palmer School of Chiropractic in 1939, and married one his instructors, Dr. Hazel Kurth. He went into chiropractic practice in Alberta. When WWII broke out, Dr. Thompson joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and became a flight instructor, rising to the rank of colonel.

In 1943, with the freeing of Ethiopia from the fascist occupation, the allied high command appointed Dr. Thompson to head a delegation to Ethiopia to help rebuild that war torn country. At the same time, the Thompsons had applied to the Sudan interior mission to go to Ethiopia as missionaries. Drs. Bob and Hazel Thompson and their two young daughters arrived in Ethiopia, and Dr. Thompson began his service to Emperor Haille Selassie.

Dr. Thompson commanded the Imperial Ethiopian Air Force, and trained its first pilots. After the war, he continue on with the government as deputy minister of education, helping to establish the Ethiopian educational system. He also served as an advisor in foreign affairs to Haille Selassie, with special assignments to India, the Sudan, Nigeria, Canada, and the U.S. He was instrumental in helping establish the Organization of African States. As a confidant to the emperor, he was awarded the star of Ethiopia, and the rank of grand officer.

In 1948, he went into full-time mission work with the Sudan Interior Mission, and in 1951, was assigned as director of the Southern Leprosarium in Sheshemane, Ethiopia.

In 1953, Dr. Thompson returned to the U.S. He was asked to speak at the Palmer homecoming (known as the lyceum at the time). He challenged the profession to provide him with some chiropractic equipment to do basic research on the effects of chiropractic on leprosy. The Christian students at Palmer took up the challenge and raised enough money to buy two truck loads of equipment to send to Ethiopia. This effort was the start of what became known as the Christian Chiropractors Association (CCA). Two of Dr. Thompson's Ethiopian assistants, Mulatu Baffa, and Beyenne Mulatu, came to the U.S. under the sponsorship of the CCA to study chiropractic, and returned to Ethiopia in 1960 as Africa's first chiropractors.

Because of the ill health of a number of the Thompson children, five of whom were born in

Ethiopia, the Thompsons returned to Canada in 1958. Dr. Thompson felt led into politics, and in the early '60s was a member of the Canadian Parliament, where he was a third-party leader that controlled the balance of power in that house.

In the late '60s, Dr. Thompson was elected president of the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College.

In 1972, the Thompson family moved to Fort Langely, British Columbia, and Dr. Bob began teaching at Trinity Western University. He was frequently called upon by his own government and by the United Nations to serve as mediator in foreign wars, counselor to foreign governments, and delegation leader in such countries as Nigeria, Zaire, China, and Vietnam. In those years, he made dozens of trips overseas to help bring peace and harmony to many troubled peoples.

His wife of 53 years, Dr. Hazel Thompson, died in 1992. He later married a former missionary co-worker widow, Evelyn May Brandt, who survives him, along with seven of his eight children.

Dr. Thompson will be missed by thousands of friends in his home country of Canada, in the U.S., in Ethiopia, and around the world. His funeral was held Sat. Nov. 22 at Trinity University, with Dr. Franklin Graham presiding.

A memorial fund has been established through the CCA for Dr. Thompson to be used towards paying the mortgage for the new CCA building.

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