

OBITUARIES

Stanley George Browne,
C.M.G., O.B.E., M.D.,
F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., D.T.M., F.K.C.

1907-1986



A lifetime of service of one of the world's outstanding physicians of his generation came to an end when Dr. Stanley G. Browne died suddenly on 29 January 1986. He was born in England into a working class family on 8 December 1907. He took his early education in the local schools and attended the Drummond Road Baptist Church regularly. At the age of 15 he took up employment as a junior clerk in the town hall at Deptford. While working, he continued to study at night and obtained a first class pass in the National University Entrance Examination in June 1926. Because of his achievements, he was awarded a "non-vocational scholarship," and this and other scholarships made it possible for him to qualify in medicine in 1933. Dr. Browne obtained distinction in several subjects.

After graduation, he held a number of important positions. After completing graduate training in medicine (F.R.C.P.), he completed training in surgery (F.R.C.S.) and tropical medicine (D.T.M. Antwerp). The Baptist Missionary Society, looking for a young dynamic doctor for their work in the then Belgian Congo, immediately recruited the highly motivated Dr. Browne.

From 1936 to 1959, the development of medical and mission work in and around Yakusu provided ample opportunity for the fullest utilization of his gifts and skills as a physician and surgeon, as a medical research worker, as an administrator and teacher, as a pastor, and as a leader. He never regretted having chosen to spend so much of his life in relative obscurity. Dur-

ing these years, Yakusu became well known as an effective center for the training of medical auxiliaries, with Dr. Browne as the (*inter alia*) principal of the school. Eighteen dispensaries were built and staffed, and over 50 clinics were opened in the 10,000-square-mile area for which Yakusu had accepted responsibility. Primary health care services were developed years before this title was invented, and Yakusu became a major referral center.

Sleeping sickness was eliminated as a public health problem in the area, and the last case was declared cured in 1947. Stanley Browne was also involved in pioneering studies of onchocerciasis, and he became the discoverer of a hitherto unknown factor in the transmission of this disease when he recognized that the larvae of *Simulium damnosum* attached to the carapace of freshwater crabs. He received his M.D. (London) on presentation of a thesis based on this work.

Stanley's lifelong commitment to leprosy began in 1939 when, in the aftermath of the Cairo Conference, colleagues at Yakusu asked him to undertake a survey of the prevalence of leprosy in the area. Some foci of extraordinarily high prevalence were discovered, and a camp for leprosy cases was opened nearby at Yalisambo. Prior to the discovery of the effectiveness of dapsone, leprosy work was discouraging, but 4500 cases had been identified and registered at the Yakusu dispensaries and when in 1950 he obtained a consignment of Diasone from the American Leprosy Missions (ALM), work began in earnest.

From 1959 to 1966 Dr. Browne was senior specialist leprologist at Uzuakoli in eastern Nigeria, and lecturer in leprosy at the University of Ibadan Medical School, and from 1966 until it closed in 1980, Director of the Leprosy Study Center in London and

consultant in leprosy in the Department of Health, and medical consultant to The Leprosy Mission. From 1966 to 1973, he was also Medical Secretary of LEPROSIS and Editor of *LEPROSY REVIEW*. Dr. Browne was a prolific and effective writer, publishing over 500 contributions to the scientific literature, mostly on the subject of leprosy, and author of a number of books and pamphlets. He was a forceful and eloquent speaker, always meticulously careful and painstaking in preparation and admirably clear in presentation.

His contributions to the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LEPROSY (IJL)* began in 1955, with a characteristically careful and critical report of a clinical trial of a new chemotherapeutic agent, and these contributions continued over the next 30 years.

From 1966 to 1978 he was Secretary/Treasurer and, following this, from 1978 to 1984 he was Secretary of the International Leprosy Association (ILA). In this capacity he was personally responsible for much of the organization of the London Congress (1968) and heavily involved in the preparations of subsequent conferences in Bergen (1973), Mexico City (1978), and New Delhi (1984). His oral summaries of the presentations at these conferences, delivered on the last day and subsequently published in the *IJL*, were vivid demonstrations of his mastery of the subject of leprosy and his command of the English language. Among his major contributions to the ILA was his instrumentality in obtaining for the *JOURNAL* the financial support of ILEP which continues to this day. He was a frequent traveler, visiting nearly 80 countries as a government-invited consultant on leprosy, as a representative of the ILA, as a teacher, and as a preacher.

His contributions to medical work were not limited to his speciality nor were his contributions to the mission of the church limited to the simple local churches in the forests around Yakusu and Uzuakoli.

He was President of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (1977–1979), one of the founding members and a consulting editor of *TROPICAL DOCTOR*, and winner of the Stewart Prize for Epidemiol-

ogy of the British Medical Association in 1975. His Presidency of the Christian Medical Fellowship (1972–1974), of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (1980–1981), and of the International Congress of Christian Physicians (1982–1985) were only the most prominent appointments in a lifelong commitment to the Christian faith. Much in demand as a speaker at home and abroad, at international gatherings and humble, and often tiny, local churches, he characteristically preached twice on the Sunday before his death.

His numerous awards include Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal du Lion (1948), Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold II (1958), C.M.G. (1976), Damien Dutton (1979), Honorary Foreign Member, Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium (1979), and Commander of the Ordre of Léopold (1980).

His influence in leprosy worldwide has been immense. Through his clinical research and his writing, through his teaching in medical schools and professional society conferences, through his chairmanship of many national and international committees including the WHO Expert Committee on Leprosy (1976) and the ILEP Medical Commission (1971–1974), Dr. Browne has had a direct impact on leprosy work worldwide. Perhaps his greatest impact has been outside of leprosy circles altogether, where his long experience in medicine in the tropics and his position as Secretary of the ILA for nearly 20 years gave him a platform for the advocacy of scientific leprosy work. He consistently challenged the most able to engage in leprosy research, and he tirelessly promulgated leprosy patient care as an obligation to be accepted by all men of good will.

Dr. Browne is survived by his wife, Mali, his helper and companion since 1940, and three sons, Derek, Alastair and Christopher.

- Prof. M. F. Lechat
President
International Leprosy Association
- Dr. R. H. Thangaraj
Secretary
International Leprosy Association