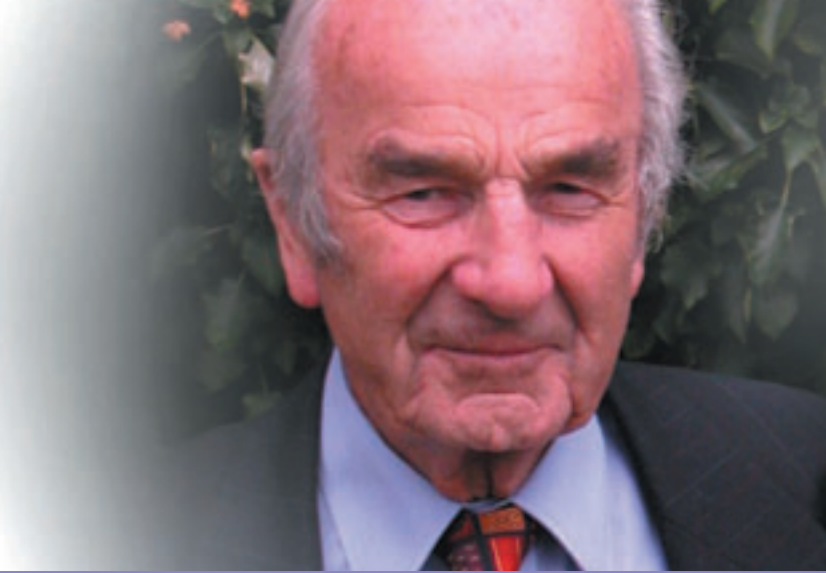


David S Short

6.8.1918 - 4.5.2005



On 4 May this year following a short terminal illness, the culmination of four months with the knowledge of acute leukaemia born with astonishing positivity and courage, David Short went to be with his master. His family, many friends and colleagues and the CMF lost a true friend, a wise counsel, an unforgettable Christian role model. A disarmingly gracious and kindly character hid a steely determination and an invariably optimistic outlook, both born out of a life of discipline and devotion to his Lord. His mature faith and many achievements (for which he would never take credit) owed at least something to his Christian family and upbringing and to his devoted wife, Joan.

David Somerset Short was born in Weston-Super-Mare as the first world war drew to a close into a Christian medical family. His uncle was Rendle Short. His great-grandfather had taught at George Muller's School. He went to Cambridge on a Macloghlin Scholarship of the Royal College of Surgeons – though the surgeons never received their money's worth for he was to become a physician! He had planned to go to France for his clinical training having become fluent in French during a year spent in Chateau d'Oex, Switzerland, as a schoolboy but Hitler – and much more importantly God – had other plans. He qualified at Bristol with the Gold Medal. His postgraduate career took him to the London, the Middlesex (with Moran Campbell) and the National Heart Hospital where his research centring on pulmonary vasculature and cardiac rhythm earned him a PhD to add to his MD.

David's postgraduate career was punctuated by war service in India and Burma and, because of his pacifist leaning, as a stretcher-bearer. To show he was not a coward he one day decided to press forward into the line of action and only narrowly escaped death from sniper fire. His CO was not amused – or impressed! The long nights in tents had one silver-lining – he taught himself NT Greek.

There followed ten long years from 1949 to 1959 waiting for a Consultant post. The post-war bulge of senior registrars at the inception of the NHS caused frustration – even despair – for so many able young men. David called them 'the wilderness years' and they proved a severe trial of David and Joan's faith. But God's hand was poised and finally he was appointed Physician and Cardiologist to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. His 22 years as consultant were challenging and fruitful. He earned the immense respect of his colleagues – though some were irritated when he took a public stand to refuse a pay rise. But David saw that as a stand for his principles and felt that it stood him in good stead in ensuing years. This faith spurred him to set up hospital services for patients recruiting Christian colleagues as the years passed. Students were enticed to help in transporting patients with the legendary Short hospitality which generations of Christian doctors since remember

with gratitude. With others David's efforts led to the building of a hospital chapel. David continued to support these services almost to the end and, indeed, just before he died published an editorial on the provisions for spiritual care in hospitals.

His conviction that Christian doctors need to work together and support each other led him to establish a CMF group. He was himself a constant source of advice, help and inspiration to

Among the four or five mottoes he kept on his desk was, 'Everyday will I praise you and bless your name for ever and ever'

countless colleagues over the years, not least to the writer.

In 1977 the Queen honoured him by appointing him as her Physician in Scotland. He had, in fact, treated Prince Charles much earlier in 1964 being unsuccessful in attempts to keep this out of the media. Before he retired in 1983 the university made him Clinical Professor of Medicine. His relaxations were his family (four daughters and a medical son), music, cricket and latterly, touring with Joan in their little motor-home.

But David's influence spread very far from Aberdeen – not least in the CMF both as Chairman and President. His interest in ethics lead him to become Chairman of the Regional Research Ethics Committee and nationally in work with the Church of Scotland and others. His many writings included *Medicine as a Vocation*, *The Bedside Book* and *Pastoral Visitation* (a special interest).

For all his years in Aberdeen he was a staunch member of Hebron Evangelical Church, for many years as elder, and was much in demand as an excellent speaker. However, his Christian contacts and friendships were wide and generous; the RC Bishop Mario Conti (now Archbishop of Glasgow) was a close friend.

David served his Lord all his life on five firm principles: his belonging to God through faith in Christ, God's sovereignty and purpose, the promises of Scripture, his accountability before God on the Day of Judgement and God's infinite love and care. David and Joan began every day with prayer, his life was disciplined, his work for his patients was for God's glory and love. Among the four or five mottoes he kept on his desk was, 'Everyday will I praise you and bless your name for ever and ever'.

He did.

Peter Brunt is Emeritus Consultant Physician in Aberdeen