Obituary

PAUL WILSON BRAND, CBE, MB, FRCS (Eng) 1914–2003

Dr Paul Brand, world-renowned hand surgeon and leprosy specialist died on 8th July 2003. Born in the mountains of south-west India of missionary parents in 1914, Dr Brand returned to the UK for his education in 1923 at the age of 9. He trained at London University Medical School where he met his wife, Margaret, a fellow medical student. Qualifying as a doctor during the war years, Dr Brand specialized in surgery, successfully becoming a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and gaining experience as a war casualty surgeon at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

In 1946, Dr Robert Cochrane invited Drs Paul and Margaret Brand to join him at the Christian Medical College in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, South India. Dr Cochrane challenged Paul Brand to use his skills as an orthopaedic surgeon to research and treat disability. It’s hard to imagine a leprosy programme now that does not contain some aspect of POID; Paul Brand was the pioneer in this area.

The Brands joined the staff of The Leprosy Mission International in 1953, and continued to develop their research and training work at Vellore and the newly founded Schieffelin Leprosy Research and Training Centre, Karigiri. In 1964 Paul Brand was appointed as the International Leprosy Mission’s Director of Surgery and Rehabilitation, based in London.

In 1966, the Brands were invited by the United States Public Health Service to work at the National Leprosarium in Carville, Louisiana. Paul became Chief of Rehabilitation. For more than 20 years, he conducted research and taught surgery and orthopaedics at the Medical College at Louisiana State University.

He also remained actively involved with international medical missions by serving on the Expert Panel for Leprosy of the World Health Organization, serving as Medical Consultant and then International President of The Leprosy Mission, from 1992 to 1999, co-founding the All-Africa Leprosy and Rehabilitation Training Centre (ALERT) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and serving on the Board of the American Leprosy Missions.

In the mid-1980s, the Brands retired and moved to Seattle, where Paul became Clinical Professor of Orthopaedics, Emeritus at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Paul authored 100 scientific papers and seven books, including Clinical Mechanics of the Hand, which is the premier handbook for hand surgeons, physiotherapists and other hand specialists.

A gifted speaker and writer, Paul Brand has received many honours and awards in recognition for his outstanding achievements: he was Hunterian Professor of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1952; in 1960 he received the Albert Lasker Award for outstanding leadership and service in the field of rehabilitation; in 1961 he was honoured by Queen Elizabeth II with a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) for promotion of good relations
between the Republic of India and Great Britain; in 1977 the Damian–Dutton Award for outstanding contributions in prevention of disabilities due to leprosy; and the US Surgeon General’s Medallion for his rehabilitation work in Carville, Louisiana.

Paul died from complications related to a subdural haematoma. He is survived by his wife Margaret, a distinguished leprosy ophthalmologist, five daughters, one son and 12 grandchildren. He also leaves a legacy of excellence and care for leprosy affected people. Those of us privileged to have been taught by him caught his passion and enthusiasm for rehabilitation and learnt much from his years of experience and research into the cause and effect of leprosy disability. Paul’s Christian faith inspired and maintained his service. Always a Christian gentleman, his humble yet passionate approach to both care and teaching inspired many. In his enthusiasm for surgery and research he never forgot the person behind the disease.

Memorial services for Paul were held in Seattle on August 2nd and in London at the end of September.

June E. Nash