

# Press Release

## Home Going of Prominent Pioneer of New Testament Church of God, England & Wales

Bishop Dr Sydney Uriah Thompson (1922-2015)

**BIRMINGHAM, February 25, 2015:**



Bishop Thompson, seventh of twelve children was born on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1922 in Clarendon, Jamaica to Agnes and Alfred Thompson. He immigrated to England in 1955, followed by his wife Dorcas and three children in the early 60s. Here they had another 7 children.

Bishop Thompson began his journey in ministry as an Evangelist and then as a local pastor at the Mile Gulley Church in Manchester, Jamaica. Stories are told of his diligence, commitment, steadfastness and holy living which set him apart in the local community as a powerful God directed disciple.

Not long after his arrival in England, he realised that God had a greater plan for his life than simply taking care of his family's welfare. He connected with a fellow Christian from his hometown in Jamaica, Jim Tomlin and together they nurtured a small group of believers in South East London that grew in faith and numbers to become the thriving Brixton New Testament Church of God. It was at this time that he and Oliver Lyseight who was ministering in Wolverhampton in a similar way, clearly by divine intervention made contact and established links with the Church of God International office in Tennessee, USA. The New

Testament Church of God was consequently inaugurated in England and Wales with Oliver Lyseight appointed as the National Overseer. Pastor Thompson encouraged Jim Tomlin in his own ministry and sent him to plant the Church in Catford which has now become a flourishing church NTCG in Lee. Pastor Thompson, in his zeal and wisdom planted Churches in Deptford, Woolwich, Mile End and Clapham, West Norwood whilst pastoring the church in Brixton.

Rev S. U. Thompson became a pivotal member of the senior leadership of the denomination in England and Wales during this time, serving on the National Executive Council and various mission, church polity and administrative committees. In 1967 he was transferred to the church at Handsworth in Birmingham where he served as local and District Pastor. Here he initiated Church planting programmes out of which Chemsley Wood now known as Kingshurst, Castlevale, Rubery and Tipton were established.

Many ministers within the New Testament Church of God emerged under his leadership. Bishop Thompson's ministry extended beyond his immediate faith community. He is celebrated as a spiritual companion and/or father, as a mentor, guide, counsellor, teacher, Pastor, model preacher, exemplary Christian leader and friend.

Bible colleges within and outside the Pentecostal stream, regularly sent students on to him on placement, particularly at the Handsworth Church where he served for 29 years. It was here that community initiatives such as a Supplementary School, a nursery, a project for unemployed young people and another for the senior citizens were developed.. Handsworth Church services and initiatives were featured in various community/regional newspapers, local and national radio and television programmes. Many people came to faith through his community drive. The Majestic Singers amongst other choral and music groups gained prominence in the wider world. Bishop Thompson himself became a renowned international inspirational preacher in countries such as

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South Korea, Ghana, Canada and the USA. Quite recently a prominent churchman in Ghana came to visit Bishop Thompson and told him that he went to Bible school many years ago as a result of his financial and spiritual support. Bishop Thompson was totally unaware of this!

Bishop Thompson received an honorary doctorate in 2005 from the Church of God European Seminary for his pioneering ministry under the auspices of the Church of God before he retired from fulltime ministry in 1996. He and his wife were guests at the Queens Garden party in 1998 in recognition for his service to the community. They received royal recognition for their 60th Wedding Anniversary in 2012.

In his book 'Unfolding Destiny, Bishop Dr Thompson writes:

*'.....the story of my own journey of faith.... has enabled the unfolding of God's purposes for my life – a life enriched by people from all walks of life and diverse cultures, pleasant surprises and significant challenges. I believe the ministry has been God's way of using my life to tell **His own story** of hope against the odds.*

*God is a faithful God, He made '.....my life a little light, within this world to glow, a little flame that burneth bright wherever I may go'.*

#### ADDENDUM:

Bishop Dr S U Thompson died peacefully on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2015.

His Home-going Celebration will be held on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at Bethel Convention Centre in West Bromwich.

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