

TO GOD
BE
THE GLORY

(IN MEMORY AND HONOR OF DAVID VAN BIK)

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TO GOD BE THE GLORY

Preface

First of all we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the contributors of the articles in this small book.

David Van Bik was not a perfect man, yet he was a courageous man who had a strong desire for the development of the Chins.

We hope that the reading of the articles in this book, which are mostly reminiscences of David Van Bik, may encourage the readers to engage in the development of the Chins.

There are two sections in this book: English and Chin. We hope that the readers of this book will enjoy the reading of both sections.

Cung Lian Hup
Publisher

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Rev. David Van Bik--a Man of Faith and Works

(A sermon given by Rev. Robert G. Johnson at David Van Bik
funeral service on August 26, 2000)

Dear Friends, we are gathered together this afternoon to celebrate the life of our dear Brother in Christ, David Van Bik, truly a man of God, a man of faith, a man of great works for Christ. We say farewell with sad hearts, yet we know that he has entered the presence of God and is at peace. He has kept the Faith and has entered his eternal rest. We therefore sorrow, but not as those who have no hope for eternal life. I pray that the Lord will comfort and bless his wife, his children, his brothers and sisters, and all his family, and us who have been his friends.

On August 7, a bit short of three weeks ago, Mrs. Johnson and I had a nighttime call from Kenneth who told us that his father was in the hospital, critically ill, with pneumonia, and with a zero white blood cell count. We had been praying for David every day for months, and now came the alarming news. I could not sleep any more. Around midnight I got up to read, and my thoughts went to the Haka Chin Bible near our dining table. I opened it to the 23rd Psalm and read what Van Bik had translated:

"BAWIPA CU TUKHAL BANTUKIN A KA VENGTU A SI, KA
HERHMI VIALTE KHA A KA PEK DIH."

This wonderful translation of the Bible, called LAI BAIBAL

THIANG, represented years and years of work by this man who lies before us. What a blessing David Van Bik has brought to his people! Every Christian Chin own him a debt of gratitude almost beyond compare!

My wife and I have been closely associated with David Van Bik, and later with his wife Mabel Zo Kai and the family for 53 years. We are richly blessed by this family. We know them as Steven Pa and Steven Nu, that is, father and mother of Steven, their oldest child. They have been often in our home, both in Burma and in America., most recently just ten months ago in Southern California.

As in the quiet of midnight I looked at this beautiful passage in the Psalm, my eyes filled with tears, tears of sorrow that this man, like a younger brother to me, was dying, and tears of gratitude to God for his years of labor for Christ and His Kingdom. Then, until his death; we never ceased to pray for healing for him. I want to say very strongly that as a close associate, working daily beside him for many years, I know that he was an informed Christian, a committed Christian, a man of vision with a creative mind, a man who saw things to do and stepped in and did them, a tireless worker, a man who loved God and the Church and who loved his wife and family dearly.

The first verse of the 23rd Psalm quoted above in Chin is so well known in English:

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD;
I SHALL NOT WANT.

Truly, the Lord is the Great Shepherd of the sheep and we are

the sheep of His pasture. Even though we go through the valley of the shadow of death, we can fear no evil, for God is with us. What a marvelous thought from King David, written about 3,000 years ago!

Let me stop for just a moment to say how sorry I am that Mrs. Johnson (Dicky Nu) was unable to come on account of health. She sends her sympathy and love to all the bereaved family. She wanted to come very much, but it seemed unwise.

As we, have had close contact with Van Bik (sometimes I will call him David, or Rev. Van Bik, or Dr. Van Bik, just to be different), contact for over five decades, please let me tell you something of his life, as I know it.

I first met David Van Bik in India in 1947 on a trip to Calcutta to get my freight. I met him by happy chance along the road somewhere and he joined up with me and helped arrange transport of our things into Burma via Tamu and Kalemyo. He was a student at the Presbyterian Theological College in Cherrapunji at the time. He spoke good English and seemed a very personable fellow and a dedicated Christian.

We kept in touch, and upon graduation from the three-year course in India, he came to Hakha in May, 1949, to become a teacher in our Haka Bible School, a forerunner of the present Zomi Theological College located in Falam. He was also our language teacher and translation assistant. One of the first jobs we did together was to produce little books to guide pastors in giving Communion, Baptism, Funerals, and Weddings.

David Van Bik was born on July 28, 1926, in Tlangpi village in the

Chin Hills (now Chin State), about 5 days' journey northwest of Hakha. He was the first-born son of Saya Chawn Tur and his wife Renh Tial. Chawn Tur was a preacher working under Pastor Van Lo, and his salary was 7 rupees a month- one rupee from the Chin Hills Baptist Association and six rupees from the personal pocket of Saya Aung Dwe, the Karen schoolmaster in Tlangpi. On this slender amount, augmented by work in the field and garden, David's father raised five children. When the father died, David, then ten years old, went off to school in Falam, the chief government center, supported by Aung Dwe, the Karen teacher who saw great promise in the young lad. Eventually the government gave Van Bik a scholarship of 8 rupees a month, just enough for him to get by on.

When World War II, known in Burma as the Japanese War, broke out, Van Bik was just 16 years old. He became a clerk in the Allied supply services and spent the war years in the Lushai Hills and learned the Lushai language. He also acquired the name David at this time. His knowledge of both Lushai and Burmese was to come in very useful in translation work.

David's mother remarried and had five more children, so David was the eldest of a large family of ten children.

David's three years at Cherrapunji really fitted him to teach in our little Bible School in Haka when he came in May, 1949. I was a new missionary, still struggling with the language, and teaching theology was beyond my ability, so David taught theology and other subjects until the school graduation in late 1950. Imagine, that was fifty years ago! Where have the years gone?

In 1951 my wife, our two children, and I went on furlough in

America and the Bible School suspended operation for two years. At that time, 1951, David went down country to Insein to the Burma Divinity School, which is now called Myanmar Institute of Theology, the premier school of its kind in Burma. David took the 4-year course, finishing in March, 1955. He then returned to Haka in April to teach in the newly started Bible School, which has had several name changes and is now called the Zomi Theological College. It is now located in Falam, but for five years my wife and I were the principals and ran the school in Haka. It was to this important school, preparing men and women to be pastors and evangelists in the Chin Hills, that David returned for a period of two years of valuable teaching of theology and Biblical subjects. It was at this time also he married Mabel Zo Kai in Tlangpi in April, 1956. Zo Kai became a student in the school and I recorded that "Mabel did very well academically and kept up with the brightest of the men."

We realized that soon my family would go on furlough and we needed a good principal for the Bible school. David Van Bik was the logical choice. So in 1957 he went to California to the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School for 2- year course of study. He returned in May 1959 to become the principal, opening the Bible School with nice new buildings in Falam, where it has remained ever since, a Theological College now, even granting degrees. David got those buildings off to a great start!

About Bible translations, the Hakha Chin people had the New Testament done previous to World War II by a former missionary, Dr. Strait. But they had nothing of the Old Testament. Not only David and I, but all the pastors and teachers were anxious to have the complete Bible.

For this reason, Van Bik and I translated *Genesis* and *Exodus* in the years 1955-1957, and David delivered the manuscript to the British and Foreign Bible Society in London when he went to the Berkeley seminary in 1957. This was the first published portion of the Old Testament in Haka Chin.

In 1960, when my family returned to Burma after furlough, things in Burma seemed different. It was apparent that American missionaries were not wanted in Burma. We knew that our days and years were numbered. What was the most important thing for me to do?

To me, the most important thing for the development of the rapidly growing Chin Christian churches was to make the Holy Scriptures available to the people. The future looked uncertain and we felt that repression and even persecution of Christians might be coming. David and the Bible Society of Burma concurred in this, so Van Bik and I made Bible translation the highest priority for my third term of missionary service. But Van Bik was in Falam running the school, and I was in Haka. The solution seemed to be to have a 6-weeks rotation with Van Bik coming to Haka for two weeks, then I going to Falam for two weeks, then two weeks working separately. We did this for two years, and it was not very satisfactory. Too much time wasted in travel.

In 1962 it was apparent that Van Bik should give full time to the Bible translation. A new principal for the Falam school was found, Paul Thuam Thang, and Van Bik was free to move his family to work full time with me in Haka.

Then began long years of work together on the Scriptures. David and I sat together at a big table in the upstairs of the mission

house looking northward over the compound. We used the Revised Standard Bible as our text, supplemented by various English versions plus Lushai and Burmese. Occasionally we checked the Hebrew for accuracy. Slowly, sometimes painfully, we worked our way through *Isaiah* and the *Psalms*, then returned to the beginning. With *Genesis* and *Exodus* already done earlier, we began at *Leviticus* and as the years rolled on we were in the book of *First Samuel* when the government axe fell on me and I had to leave Burma forever. The axe fell on me and the family in 1966. Forced to leave the Chins and Burma, I yet rejoiced at what had been accomplished and that we had a man like Rev. David Van Bik dedicated to complete the job. I said a sad farewell to David at the Rangoon airport and flew home to the United States.

I could talk at length about the production of the Scriptures in the Hakha language, but I will just say that David Van Bik continued the work, chapter after chapter, book after book, until the old Testament was completed and all checked over by two separate committees to ensure accuracy. Then David went on to do the complete New Testament. That was more than a revision of what Dr. Strait had done years earlier - it was a completely new translation. No longer a "missionary translation" it was a work done by a well trained native speaker of Chin.

So finally, to the glory of God, the COMPLETE BIBLE was finished and ten thousand copies published 1978. Thus it can be said that the work covered a period of 21 years! Why so long? For some years David was in seminary in California, and he was also teaching, preaching, touring villages, and a member of about every committee ever made by the Hakha Association and the Zomi Baptist Convention! He was a prominent and enthusiastic

member of committees. He needed to attend meetings in Falam, Tiddim, and Rangoon. And all that took time.

Also, he was the leading spirit of a group of six men and women who enlarged the Haka songbook, the hymnal, to a total of 469 hymns and 50 responsive readings. That hymnal required one full day per week for years. When finally finished and published in 1970, David has the credit for writing the text of many of the hymns, revising old song texts, and my wife had the laborious job of putting the solfa music to every song. For many of the songs, she transferred the staff notation to the solfa system used by the Chins.

I need to say a word about my small contribution to Bible translation. I was mainly a scribe, not the real translator. My job was to write down on paper, in longhand, what David dictated. There were passages that went quickly, with no real problems. Then again, we ran into questions and we discussed a word or a phrase in detail. At times I was able to clarify the English meaning. But it was David, the native speaker of the language, the man who knew the idioms and the nuances of the Hakha language, who was definitely the chief translator. I was just his assistant. To Van Bik goes the credit for this great achievement.

But that is not all. The complete Bible came out in 1978. In more recent years, David took up the pen again, this time to make a good translation even better, perhaps more idiomatic and clearer to understand. So in the providence of God, the newly revised LAI BAIBAL THIAN came out just last year, in 1999. I was given a copy of this Scripture when I went to Burma in March last year, being assured that it was "the first copy off the press." I prize it highly.

So I have indicated that work of our dear brother, now silent, will continue on to bless his own people, the Chins. His greatest contributions can be listed as the translation of the Bible in 1978, the revised Bible in 1999, and the enlarged Haka hymnal in 1970. And his teaching ministry will be remembered by scores of pastors and preachers to whom he explained the scriptures.

In addition to the various degrees he earned in Burma and the United States, he was given the honorary Doctor of Divinity by the American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley. He was also Alumnus of the Year, another honor given by his seminary. He was justly worthy of these honors. In addition, he was an ordained Christian minister and upheld the responsibility and dignity of that high office. These many honors did not make him puffed up and proud. He ever remained a loving spirit, a spirit of service for Christ in whatever humble job needed to be done.

David leaves a loving wife and mother. They are parents of five fine children. Two older boys, Steven and Eric, are in Burma. The two younger boys, Rollin and Kenneth, are presently in the United States. The daughter, Alice Jane, is in Rangoon with her husband and 2-year-old son. We all grieve with those left behind, but we have the sure hope of life eternal with the Lord, and someday this loving husband and father will be reunited with his dear ones. The grave has no final victory!

In the little Baptist church in Hakha, partly broken down during the war years, our eyes in 1947 saw behind the pulpit a cloth hanging, on which were printed the words of Revelation 2:10. The sign was in Chin, but in English the reading is:

BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH
AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE.

That simple sign made a great impression upon me. And when our dear Pastor Sang Ling died, also from cancer after a long illness, I realized that he had been a pioneer, the first pastor of the Hakha church, and that he had received his crown.

Today we gather to celebrate this pastor, teacher, evangelist, scholar, writer of books, scripture translator, songwriter- a man who was faithful all his life, faithful unto death. We know that he has been received into heaven by our loving God, and that he has received a crown of eternal life. I thank God that I have been a friend of David for so many years. I grieve for him as a friend and really as a younger brother. And I rejoice that the course has been run with patience and now he is in the presence of God the Father. Praise be to Christ our Lord!

David Van Bik

Ken Blazier

[One of my retirement goals is to write short sketches about people whose lives have greatly influenced mine. These will become part of a family history which I plan to write in the coming years. This sketch is prompted by the death of David Van Bik. What I have written is based on my personal reflections of David as a friend and on a file of letters which I received from David during the past 15 years. That file is one and one-half inches thick. David was a great letter writer, even though I have not been. I wish I had kept his letters from earlier years. 8-24-00]

David Van Bik was born on July 28, 1926, at Tlangpi village, Chin State, Myanmar (Burma). His father was Saya Chawn Tur, a village evangelist, and his mother was Pi Renh Tial. David went to primary school in Farrawn village and to middle school at Falam town, Chin State. During World War II (known as the Japanese War in Burma) all schools in Burma were closed, and by age 16 David worked under the British government at a storage depot in Bungkhua and Thangzang villages in Civil Supplies as a store clerk. It was then that he first felt the call to Christian ministry. He went to Cherrapoonju Theological College in Assam State, India, in 1946 to take a Diploma of Theology course which he completed in 1949. He then returned to Hakha as a teacher in the Chin Hill Bible School under the American Baptist missionaries, Robert G. and Betty Lou Johnson in 1949-51. He went to the Baptist Divinity School in Insein, Rangoon in 1951. In 1955 he got a Bachelor of Theology degree from the Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas, to which the Burma Baptist

Divinity School was affiliated. He again worked with the Johnsons in 1955-57. He married Mabel (Daw Zo Kai) in the Tlangpi village of the Chin Hills on April 23, 1956. In June, 1957, David was ordained to the Christian ministry by the Zomi Baptist Convention at its triennial meetings, which commemorated the golden jubilee of the first converts in that area. In order to prepare him for becoming the principal of the Zomi Theological School (now Zomi Theological College), David was given a two-year scholarship to attend the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School (now the American Baptist Seminary of the West) in Berkeley, CA.

I first met David when he came to Berkeley in the fall of 1957. David lived in the singles' dorm, and Elaine and I lived in the Piedmont Apartments of the seminary. We had David over to our apartment for a meal a few times. I don't remember having special classes with him or studying with him or working with him on any school projects, but in informal times and ways we became friends. At the seminary commencement on April 26, 1959, we received degrees as classmates- a Master of Arts degree for David and a Bachelor of Divinity degree (now the Master of Divinity degree) for me.

David had left Mabel and a son Steven in Burma to come to Berkeley. After he returned to Burma, Mabel gave birth to three more sons and a daughter, Alice. The sons were named after friends David had made in the States. Erik was named for Erik Madsen, a BBDS classmate from Washington and later ABC pastor; Rollin was named for Rollin Wildin, an ABC regional staff person in New Jersey; and Kenneth was named for me. Kenneth was born on September 1, 1964. In the first letter I even received from Kenneth, dated May 1, 1987, he wrote: "You might have heard that my name Kenneth is given me by my father, who is a

close friend of yours, for your namesake. I was named after you in appreciation of the love and sincerity that bind between you and my father." Having Kenneth as my namesake has intensified my ties of friendship with David and Mabel.

David returned to Burma in 1959 and worked for four years as Principal of the Zomi Theological School in Falam. When it was clear that missionaries may soon be unwelcome in Burma, David resigned from the school in 1963 and worked in Bible translation with Bob Johnson for three years until all missionaries were forced to leave the country. After the Johnsons returned to the U.S., David carried on the work of translating the Bible into the Lai language almost single-handedly, until 1978 when the translation of the whole Bible was completed. The manuscripts were taken to the Bible Society of India Bangalore where 10,000 copies of the Chin Lai Baibal Thiang were printed in 1979. When they were brought into Burma, all copies were distributed within the first year and during the rainy season. I remember vividly how excited I was to receive a copy of the Lai Bible by mail from India. It had been sent by the India Bible Society at the request of David. Unfortunately, I cannot read the Bible, but to this day my copy is a cherished symbol of my friendship with David.

In 1985 David was given the Alumnus of the Year Award by the American Baptist Seminary of the West. Unfortunately, he was unable to come to the States to receive the award. I believe that Bob Johnson received it in the commencement service on David's behalf.

David was the organizer and first secretary of the Hakha Council of Churches. After the Bible was translated, He started the Christian Communication Center in Hakha as an interdenominational

project. David served as director and publisher at the center until 1985. He had always been interested in Christian literature and believed that without it the church cannot have deep roots in Christian teaching. He had an intense interest in both the Chin and English languages. I once wrote to him that our son Kyle had a computer job working in some way with hardware and software, and he immediately responded that he had heard of the words *hardware* and *software*, "but please clarify their meaning for me." Through the years David has written and translated commentaries (including Daniel and Acts), church history books, Sunday school literature, and other materials. He also wrote an English-to-Chin Dictionary, a 540-page book published in 1987 to help students learn English. David was not pleased with the workmanship and the paper of the printing, but he said that "it was the best I could get." In 1988 he was translating *The History of the American Baptist Chin Mission* by Bob Johnson from English into Lai. Through the years David has been active as speaker and Bible lecturer in conferences, youth camps, and annual meetings. He continued these activities even after his official retirement in 1987.

Through the years we and others have helped David and his family by sending money, and in earlier years used clothing or food. We didn't begin this until about 1970 because of our own limited finances. Many times I have felt a sense of guilt for having so much even in our rough years-when the Van Biks had so little. In a letter, dated January 29, 1987, David wrote: "I do really thank God that good friends like you and Bill {Wells} and others have been very faithful to me sharing my burdens of economic problems."

One April 6, 1988, David fell from a horse as he was on his way

to a village of Hakha township for a conference. He hurt his back. He reported that his injury was less severe than it could have been, "but recovery was slow at age 63."

Elaine and I were planning to go to Burma for the Judson Jubilee Celebrations originally planned for December 15-18, 1988, to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the arrival of Adoniram Judson as the first Christian missionary in Burma. Unfortunately, the trip was canceled because of the severe political condition of the country. The celebration, actually held in December, 1990, featured the awarding of several "Fellow of Distinguished Service Awards" to leaders who had made outstanding contributions to the work of the Burmese Baptist Convention. The recipients included Russell Brown, Lloyd James, Paul Clasper, and one Chin leader-David Van Bik.

The first time I saw David after our graduation from the American Baptist Seminary of the West was in September, 1989. Elaine and I picked him up at the home of Rollin Wildin in Red Lion, PA, and brought him to our place for a couple of days. I then drove him to the Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey to see a friend before he participated in the study program at the Overseas Mission Study Center in New Haven, CT, during the 1989-90 school year. During that year he visited us four times: Thanksgiving weekend; a weekend in March when he spoke at our church in Norristown; in April during the spring break at the Center; and in August prior to his return to Burma. These visits helped us to appreciate David's contribution to the Christian work in the Chin Hills, Burma. We were in awe of his continued skill in speaking English (for the past thirty years he had been regularly listening to the radio broadcasts of the British Broadcasting Company and the Voice of America). He would ask

questions about English slang words and about differences in the meaning of words. He was truly a student of English. There was a depth to his spirituality and his commitment to the Kingdom of God. Even though we had not seen his work firsthand, we somehow gained an appreciation for his contribution to the Christian work in the Chin Hills of Burma.

While David was in the States in 1998-9, Bob Johnson, then in retirement and in California, took the lead in raising money for David to be able to take back to Burma an electronic typewriter to enable his writing and translation work. They had electricity several hours each week in Hakha. I put together a proposal to raise \$584.78 to purchase a sleeping bag and garment bag for David to use during his travels in Burma and to provide \$500 for securing "roofing tins" for re-roofing his house in Hakha. Our children and members of the Roger Williams Class of our church responded with over \$600. Since about 1990 we have sent our copies of *Reader's Digest* and *Guideposts* to David two or three times a year. In a letter of December, 1996, David wrote that the magazines had arrived and commented: "Cung Lian Hup and I have been enjoying reading them as there is not much other materials in English. We have only one newspaper for the whole country in Burmese and English and it contains only doctored news."

When David returned to Burma in 1990, he became the principal of the Chin Bible School which he helped to establish. He also taught in the school, and it had 104 students and its first commencement in 1994. He led the school to obtain accreditation. One of its big projects on the road to accreditation was establishing a library of several thousand books. Many persons in the U.S. donated books, and I made an appeal to ministers in the Ministers-at-Large Program to send books to the school in

Hakha. At the third graduation exercises of the school in 1996, 27 graduates received their diplomas in theology.

David and Mabel came to the U.S. in 1994 when David was given a Doctor of Divinity degree during the commencement of the American Baptist Seminary of the West on May 21. David gave the commencement address that day with the title, "That the Sower and the Reaper May Rejoice Together," sharing about the Christian work in the Chin Hills of Burma. Elaine and I went to Berkeley, CA, for the service. Theodore Keaton, the president of ABSW, asked me to introduce David in the service because he knew that David and I had been friends for many years. That was a special privilege. Some of us had donated United Airlines Mileage Plus miles for the plane ticket which enabled Mabel to come with David. A United Airlines vice president had arranged for the miles for the ticket to come from more than one account—something which is not normally allowed by the airline. David came east to visit the Rollin Wildins, and this enabled us to have him in our home for a brief time before he and Mabel returned to Burma in late September.

David claimed to have retired "finally" in May of 1996, but his activities remained much the same. In April of that same year the house, which the Van Biks had built in 1960 and used for over 32 years and which their son Steven and his family were then occupying, was dismantled and moved by order of the government. So was the house bought for Kenneth and his family. Apparently, land was being cleared by the government for the building or expanding of a stadium for some major national youth games to be held in Hakha that year. At that time David and Mabel were living in a house with their son Rollin and his family, and six students.

On July 12, 1996, David was arrested for alleged connections with the Chin rebels. It seems that his name was found among other names in the notebook of a captured rebel. He was called to the Police Station at 2 P.M. At dark he was told that he was under arrest, so he sent for blankets and food for dinner. At 9 P.M. he tried to eat, but he couldn't because of the tenseness of the situation. A few friends visited him, and his son Erik, a police officer, stayed all night with him. There was a large bell, made from a car wheel drum, a few feet from David's room in the Police station. It was rung every 15 minutes all night long, making sleep almost impossible. On the third day David was moved into the lock-up with 17 other inmates. He was quite concerned about what would happen there, but they "sort of welcomed me as most of them were Christians." At 8 P.M. that day David led a vesper service in the lockup, including a short sermon from John 14 and Psalm 23 on the providence of God. He reported: "I was trying to reassure them and myself of the presence of God even in the lockup." He thanked God that no harm came to him in the lockup. Soon he was allowed to go home on bail, but he was not allowed to go outside of Hakha and for 52 days he had to sign in at the Police Station at 9 A.M. daily. During these days he was working on the revision of the Lai Bible and on the Chin-to-English Dictionary. (He finished the first draft of the dictionary almost a year later). David was "discharged" on September 19, meaning that he was no longer on bail and did not have to "sign in" at the Police Station daily, but that he could be arrested again at any time. After this experience friends and family were concerned for the safety of David in the present situation in Hakha, so he went to Rangoon. There he stayed with his niece and her husband, Cung Lian Hup, a professor at the Myanmar Institute of Theology. Mabel joined him later. Soldiers occupied their house in Hakha

from January 12 to the end of April in 1998. David and Mabel remained in Rangoon until May of that year.

The printings of the first edition of the Lai Bible totaled 25,000 copies. The last copies were printed in 1990. A revision of the Bible was started in June of 1996, with David as the main reviser and with a committee of professors of the Myanmar (formerly Burma) Institute of Theology as consultants and reviewers. The goal was to have the revision ready for printing in March of 1998 and for distribution as a Centennial Publication at the time of the Chin Evangel Centennial Celebration on March 26-28, 1999. This event commemorated the 100th anniversary of the coming of the first Christian missionaries to the Chin Hills: David gave the message at the morning service that Sunday morning. The year before this there were reportedly 2,880,000 Christians in Burma 6% of the total population of 48,000,000. In the Chin Hills well over 90% of the population was Christian.

On July 28, 1996, the Immanuel Baptist Church of Hakha surprised David with a celebration of his 70th Birthday. I have a picture of David and Mabel, taken on that occasion. It too is a cherished symbol of our friendship.

In August, 1999, David came to the U.S. for the final time. He never again saw the Chin Hills of Burma. He came to Berkeley, CA, to be a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California to collaborate on the project of the Lai (Hakha Chin)-English Dictionary, under the sponsorship of Professor James A. Matisoff and with the help of the Open Society Institute and the Endangered Language Fund of Yale University. As to the importance of this trip, David wrote, "The policy of our government is five Ones: One Country, One Nation,

One Government, One Language, One Religion, and One Ethnic Dialect. Lai Chin is becoming an endangered language. We are allowed to teach our children the Chin language only up to the Second Standard and even now many of our young people can no longer write or speak our language. This policy of Burmanization is costing us a lot and we can never say if our language will be able to survive the next one hundred years. Once our language is gone, our culture and our identity will also follow and we believe that Christianity alone will be our national salvation. Maybe we are too pessimistic," David managed to finish a draft-entry of the entire dictionary.

Several of David's friends helped with the cost of the plane ticket and insurance coverage for Mabel to accompany him to the U.S. David and Mabel stayed with Kenneth and his family in San Pablo, CA. By December they were staying with Rollin and his family in Frederick, MD. We were expecting them to visit us in January, 2000. Mid January I received a letter from David with the news that doctors in Berkeley had discovered he had a cancerous tumor in his nostril and that he was about to have further tests in Maryland. A chemotherapy and radiation treatment was begun in February, 2000. It seemed that the treatment was effective. The additional six treatments, normally given to ensure the effectiveness of the treatment plan, were not allowed by the hospital because the insurance company was refusing to pay all his prior claims, stating that his cancer existed before the start of his insurance coverage under the policy of the University of California. After several people intervened with the insurance company on David's behalf, the insurance company began to pay the claims. The doctors then proceeded with the final treatments. One week he had the first four of the remaining six treatments. His body could not stand the chemotherapy then.

He developed pneumonia and an extremely low blood count. I am sorry to say that I never saw David alive during his last visit to our country, although two visits had been tentatively scheduled after he came east.

David Van Bik died on August 19, 2000, in Frederick, Maryland. In the last letter I received from him were the words: "I am very happy that Mabel is with me and she has been a great help." Mabel and the rest of his family will miss him greatly. The Kingdom of God on this earth has lost a patriarch of the Baptist work in the Chin Hills of Burma, a biblical and linguistic scholar, and a mentor of younger Chin leadership. I have lost a friend of 43 years. But David had gained his eternal resting place with our Lord. My memory of David gives me great joy!

David's body was returned to his native land, Myanmar (Burma). It was reportedly going to cost nearly \$10,000 for shipment, but the Chins were very anxious for his body to be buried in Hakha. The Chin Church, in which his funeral service was held in the United State (West Silver Springs, MD), paid the cost and was reimbursed by contributions from family and friends of David. His body arrived safely in Rangoon where a funeral service was held in the Chin church. It was then taken to Mandalay and to several places up in the Chin Hills where services were held. Finally, a service with 20,000 people in attendance was held in Hakha, Chin State, where he was buried in the town or church cemetery. What a tribute to David!

DAVID VAN BIK

MY FIRST Theological Student In Myanmar

Paul Clasper

By FIRST I mean the one I came to know about FIRST. Actually, I got to know about him before I arrived in Myanmar in 1952. When I met him I felt that I already knew him quite well.

Before leaving for Myanmar I had my first taste of rice and curry in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson. They were living then in the Northern Baptist Seminary in Chicago. During that meal they told me about this student I would soon meet when I reached Myanmar. I was struck by the name-David Van Bik. With the "Van" it sounded to me like a Dutch name, I could never forget that name; and they spoke so highly of him.

So, when we first met at Seminary Hill, Insein, I felt like I already knew him quite well.

Our connection was teacher/student, but it was always MORE than that. We quickly connected heart to heart, friend to friend. We could each learn from each other, and share with one another.

I soon had great respect for his capacity to absorb Biblical and Theological ideas. He was surely one of the best students in that quite exceptional group who made up the first class in the resurrected form of what was then known as the Burma Divinity School.

But those school days were only the beginning of a long and fruitful friendship. Later, when he would visit Rangoon, he would come to my home and we would share our interests in such matters as Christian discipleship, Christian ministry, Theological trends, current challenges and temptations in the life of the churches in Myanmar. Conversations were always heady, hearty, probing, full of real dialogue and the wonder of the Gospel.

He would often try me on some word he was wrestling with in his Bible translation work. I was of very little help in this matter, but I found it stimulating to try to face with him the translator's task of putting the Word of God into another language. This was to be his life-work. In this I learned far more from him than he learned from me.

Often he would borrow some book to take home with him, to be brought back on his next trip. I recall the time he wanted something on Augustine.

He would usually share some of the struggles of the fast growing churches in the Chin Hills of Myanmar. He always seemed to have a wide breadth of understanding when it came to facing "problems." He was not dogmatic about his own ideas.

I don't think he ever quite shared my special concern for the matter of the Christian Dialogue with Buddhism. But we each respected the special concerns which each of us had to live with. Theological work can often be a rather lonely calling. We have to live with those special concerns which Our Lord the Spirit gives us as OUR work for the Kingdom and the Mission. Later, when his son, Kenneth, began to be concerned with these matters Kenneth told me that his Father said: "I can not help you very

much in this area; but share them with Paul Clasper. He'll be eager to share with you."

Once on a long train trip together, perhaps it was going to a Baptist Convention in Myitkyina, I was reading a good novel. (Literature was fast becoming my second scholarly love, in those long Monsoon nights). That time I had taken along Pearl Buck's famous *THE GOOD EARTH*. When I told him of my enthusiasm for this novel he gave me a kind of strange look. I wasn't sure what he was thinking, but I can still vividly remember his quizzical look. But, he looked like he thought I was wasting my time in Literature when I should spend all my time on Bible and Theology. I may have read his look wrongly. But he certainly was always single-minded and wholly dedicated to his own kind of work and study.

When I returned to Myanmar for a visit, many years later, he came all the way down to Mandalay to meet me at the Airport and have a few days together in Maymyo. But, then he had grown a little beard; and I joked him and said that he looked like Ho Chi Min. We laughed together. But, before long, we were into the serious subjects that always characterized our relationship. Many years later it turned out that I was asked to read the citation in Berkeley when he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the American Baptist Seminary of the West, his old school. He asked how I felt about the difference between an "Honorary" Doctorate and an earned Academic Doctorate. I said that they represent two very different things. The Academic Doctorate represents scholarly investigation and writing. The Honorary Doctorate, at its best, represents a recognition of a solid contribution to the life of the churches in their mission in the world. He had given himself to scholarly work all his life. His

Bible translation is surely solid evidence of that. But the Honorary Doctorate was a timely recognition of his long, and many-sided, contribution to the life and mission of the Christian Church in Myanmar, especially in the Chin Hills.

If ever there was a worthy representative for an Honorary Doctorate it was David Van Bik. Some have had earned Academic Doctorates who have contributed little or nothing to the total mission of the Church. David was recognized for a most fruitful life-time of demanding, specialized and difficult work at a strategic time and place- in the Chin Hills.

David, in my book, is one of the really GREAT ones!

MY FRIEND, DAVID VAN BIK

Rev. Lloyd G. James

I first met David Van Bik shortly he had completed his studies abroad and had returned to Burma. In fact, we got to know each other well when we visited the Chin Hills in 1955. We had gone to see the work of the Chin Baptists and visit the Robert Johnsons. I soon came to realize that David was a very talented and committed young man with a determination to serve the Lord Jesus among his people, and he was well equipped to do just that. The years of service that followed proved how well he carried out his commitment.

While we were in the Chin Hills in 1955 I had the privilege to attend the meetings of the Zomi Baptist Convention in Zokhua and got to observe David as a leader among his people. I had the honor of having him be my translator for a message I delivered. I am enclosing a copy of a picture taken when we were on the platform together.

In the years that followed during the missionary service of my wife and myself from 1951 to 1964 I had many opportunities to work together with David and to attend meetings of the committees of the Burma Baptist Convention with him. My admiration for David's qualities of leadership and the service he performed for his beloved Chin Baptists grew during this time. I learned also from Dr. Robert Johnson as to how good David was in translating the Scriptures and I was impressed by the amount

of material that was translated and printed, first together with Dr. Johnson and later that which he did on his own. Surely a great testimony to David's devoted service will always be recognized by Chin Christians as they use the products of his work.

Toward the close of his life I learned through letters from David of the seriousness of his illness. I joined with others in prayers for him during this difficult period. I was once again impressed by the depth of his Christian life as he shared with me through letters of his experience in handling the disease, and of his hopes for this life and the next which he had through his loving Lord. I still have some of those letters in a file by his name.

God had greatly blessed the Chin people by sending to them someone of the quality of David Van Bik, as I am sure they are well aware. Many have already come to know the Lord through his efforts, and many more will do the same in the years to come. I thank God also for blessing me through letting me know and serve together with David Van Bik.

Through Christ Jesus our Lord.



Lloyd James and David Van Bik speaking to the Zomi Baptist Convention in Zokhua, Chin Hills, in 1955

FACING UP TO LIFE AND MINISTRY

John 6:1-14

By Dr. Kenneth Blazier

It is difficult to face up to life, because much of life seems frustrating, meaningless, mysterious, and hopeless. Sometimes we don't face up to life: We only endure it. Enduring life is merely letting life happen, enduring whatever comes, and accepting the consequences of whatever happens. But facing up to life as a Christian is much more than that. The steps in facing up to life are suggested in the story of the feeding of the 5000 in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John.

This story shows us that Philip couldn't face the problem at hand. Jesus looked out over the 5000 people and asked Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" Philip answered in despair that six months wages can't buy enough bread to give each person a little. Philip was defeated even before tackling the problem.

How like Philip we are sometimes - so quick to despair, so unaware of the resources of life, so blind to possibilities, and so ready to complain and only endure the tide of life.

Unlike Philip, Andrew began to face up to the problem when he said to Jesus: "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish." Andrew seems to be suggesting that this is all that Jesus will need to feed the people. However, Andrew didn't stop there. He said: "But..." What a terrible addition! "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are they among so many people?"

How like Andrew we are sometimes. We see a glimmer of hope in Christ, and then we add the "but," the doubt that he can act or will act.

Jesus here was taking THE FIRST STEP in facing up to life when HE RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEM. That's our first task. Face the problem, define it as best we can. Accept the problem as a problem and be honest about the situation. The problem in the scripture was getting enough food to feed 5000 people. The inability of the disciples and the crowd to solve the problem is recognized, and it seems like an impossible task. The first step in facing up to life is to recognize it as a problem.

THE SECOND STEP in facing up to life is to RECOGNIZE THE RESOURCES WHICH ARE AVAILABLE for solving the problem. Philip couldn't see any resources for the problem. The five barley loaves and two fish, which Andrew saw, seemed inadequate to feed 5,000 people. Jesus gave Philip the opportunity to say, "We have no food or money, but we have you." But Philip was a practical man, and he was quick to scorn faith.

What resources do we have for facing up to the problems of life?

First, each one of us individually has resources within ourselves. We have talents, abilities, and skills—all of which are "gifts" from God. There are potential answers and problem solutions in what we ourselves are and in what we have. The inner resources in us include not only gifts and abilities, but also biblical knowledge and experiences of living as disciples of Jesus Christ. I sometimes think that God must be very impatient with the person who prays for an answer to a problem which he could easily resolve on his own if he would only use the resources within

him—resources which are already God-given gifts.

Second, we have resources within relationships that is, resources which come to us from our relationships with other people. I am speaking here of what we gain from fellowship and from the Christian community. In our relationships with one another we find resources for facing up to life—resources of strength, courage, comfort, answers to questions, and so forth. When I was a pastor years ago, I sometimes felt that much of the ministry of our church rested on my shoulders. But then I would remind myself of the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers and remember that all believers of a church—pastor and each lay person—minister to one another and to others outside the church. God works in the relationships we have with one another. Remember the words of Jesus: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Because God is at work in our relationships, those relationships provide resources to assist us in facing up to life.

In English we have the word "serendipity," which means finding something wonderful or experiencing something wonderful in unexpected places or at unexpected times. Once I attended a training conference for pastors during which we were divided into small groups to work on personal communication problems which we shared with one another. The experience proved to be more than an exercise, because we experienced the working of God in our midst. Some pastors there were surprised that the experience could be so meaningful. Our leader asked us: "Why are you surprised? Don't you believe that God is at work among you?" Our leader was suggesting that there should be no serendipity about God's working, because we should be expecting God to be present and at work all the time.

The second step in facing up to life is to recognize the resources we have within ourselves, the community of believers, and the working of God in our midst.

THE THIRD STEP in facing up to life is to OFFER THANKS FOR THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE. Jesus gave thanks for the five barley loaves and two fish. Even though they seemed inadequate to feed everyone, Jesus was thankful for what there was. Perhaps we will find no more resources for facing up to life until we can give thanks for what we already have no matter how meager they may seem to be. How meaningful and rich life is for those who can give thanks for very few provisions, as certain evidence that God is at work in the situation, supplying their needs. Jesus gave thanks for what he had.

THE FOURTH STEP in facing up to life is to ACT AND LEAVE THE RESULTS IN GOD'S HANDS. Imagine this picture. Jesus faces the hungry crowd, with thousands of eyes intently watching him. He starts to distribute what appears to be hopelessly inadequate supplies. Preposterous, isn't it? No, not for faith. The crowd was fed, and there was food left over. The teaching seems clear to me: Do what you can with what you have and leave the rest in the hands of God. THE TEACHING IS NOT: Wait until you have all the resources you need before you act. BUT: Do what you can, indeed what you must, and trust God to do the rest.

This story suggests that to face up to life we must first recognize its problems, then be aware of the resources we have within ourselves and the Christian community for tackling the problems, give thanks for what we have, and do what we can, leaving the rest in God's hands. Such a life will be blessed by God.

A Tribute to Rev. Dr. David Van Bik

(L.Th., B.Th., M.A., D.D.)

James Sangawi

I first met Dr. Van Bik in 1944. He was tall, fair-skinned, and very good looking young man just beginning to bloom into manhood. He had come to my village, Sihhmuh, to obtain an authorization from my father, Rev. Van Lo, to attend a Bible school. At that time, Rev. Van Lo was pastor for over 40 villages, and he was the only ordained pastor. I still remember vividly the earnest discussion Dr. Van Bik and my father had regarding his desire to attend the Bible School in Cherrapunji in India.

I met him for the second time at the Lai Baptist Middle School in Farrawn village. I was attending Grade VII and he was our English teacher. What I recall most is how beautiful his handwriting was. After that he helped Rev. and Mrs. Johnson in their missionary work in Hakha. Although I saw him quite often there, I was very diffident in addressing him. When I did, I called him "U Bik" and he called me "Awite"

In 1952, after completing my Matriculation Examination, I joined the Burma Divinity School where Dr. Van Bik was already in his second year. We became firm friends there, and from that time onwards, we shared the same basic thoughts, beliefs and convictions. Even when, in the course of our work, we occasionally did not see eye to eye, people in Hakha and Thantlang often said, "This is just a ruse: deep down inside, they are still very much together."

During the nine years in which I served as the General Secretary of the ZBC (Zomi Baptist Convention), I did not undertake any decisive action on crucial issues without first consulting with Dr. Van Bik. We always shared our problems, our sorrows and our joy. Now that he has left me, there is a deep, aching void in my heart. It is with a heavy, heavy heart that I face the thought of going back to Hakha without him.

We met for the last time in Indianapolis. I arrived there on July 14, 2000 to visit my relatives. Dr. Van Bik and his wife (Steven nu) arrived in the evening. We spent two days and two nights together, happily reminiscing about the past, and sharing our dreams and aspirations for the future, as always. Little did we know that this would be our last time together. We thought that he had recovered completely from his illness.

Kenneth Van Bik phoned me and said, "Since you were his close friend, I would like you to speak in his memory. You also knew my father more intimately and extensively than anyone else" I do know the life and work of Dr. Van Bik very well indeed. But how can I do justice to Dr. Van Bik's memory and his work of 50 years in ten minutes? Since time is limited, I shall mention only those things I consider most important.

What I wish to talk about is HIS MONUMENTAL LEGACY. His legacy comprises the following: his translation of the Bible into Lai language; his completion of two dictionaries (English to Chin and Chin to English); and his authorship of nearly 30 books. I know of only two famous Baptist missionaries who left such monumental legacies: Dr. William Carey in India and Dr. Adoniram Judson in Burma. We are truly proud of Dr. Van Bik's achievement in completing these great tasks.

At this point, I would like to point out a very significant additional effect of Dr. Van Bik's translation of the Bible into the Lai Language. This is the fact that his work has immeasurably enriched Chin language and literature, and has ensured the perpetuation of our language and literature. The Lai Language used in our Bible has deeply influenced our every-day language. It also permeates the language and phrases we use in our prayers and from the pulpit. This is a true indication of the firm foundation his work has set for our language. Let me mention the fact that the very evangelists who most criticize Dr. Van Bik's translation of the Bible are the ones who use the language of this Bible the most. The evangelists make their names and enhance their reputations by quoting many verses of the Bible verbatim. Since this is Dr. Van Bik's use of our language in the Bible, this in itself is the surest testimony that he has enriched our language.

Such a man is one in a thousand. This is not just to praise Dr. Van Bik and to put him on a pedestal. I just wish to emphasize how fortunate we are in having had a man like Dr. Van Bik. So I cannot help but call the work he left behind **A MONUMENTAL LEGACY**. Some of you may laugh at me, but I would like to call him the Shakespeare of the Chins.

There is one thing I remember fondly. In 1966, the Government decreed that all missionaries must leave Burma. Although his family had left, Dr. Johnson stayed on in Hakha up till the last possible moment. As he was about to leave, many pastors and Christian elders from Hakha and Thantlang area paid our farewell respects to Dr. Johnson. Dr. Van Bik translated his farewell message into Lai Language. This is what he said, "Do not forget that you Lai people have a precious gem. The gem is Rev.

Van Bik." Dr. Van Bik was reluctant to translate that. Dr. Johnson, however, repeated his statement in the Lai Language. We understood the message that Dr. Johnson wanted to give us.

Now Dr. Van Bik has left us. We can hardly bear our sorrow. But just as a precious gem never loses its lustre, the light that Dr. Van Bik shone for the development of the Lai people will never dim. It is impossible for Lai people not to revere and praise Dr. Van Bik. On behalf of Lai people I would like to say, "Dr. Van Bik, we are deeply grateful to you; we will never forget you". May glory and honor forever be given to our God who gave us such a precious gem.

Thank you.

A Letter to the Living

Our beloved and respected father David Van Bik,

From beside the golden throne of your Father in paradise, please accept (with the endearing smile of yours we still remember) a great many signatures of honorable men and women of our land, a timid letter from trembling hand of an unworthy man such as I.

When one thinks about your life-long commitment and sacrifices in the sacred cause and your dedication to the glorification of God, one cannot keep aloof from cherishing its force and magnitude - so is the letter.

On the journey to eternity haven't you captained well the flagship of people against violent storms of satanic destructions on the ocean of humanity? Yes, indeed! So well steered that many have landed on the shore of angelic life; still more are embarking.

The love of your land and its men, your image and courage, your teachings and sufferings, your faith with unerring gait, your meekness and selflessness, your standing ground and loving sound...and lastly but not the least your graveyard and coffin now complete lasting "Institute."

May our prayers make that "Institute" emit divine light and heavenly warmth, showering with blessed drizzle, breathing out living breezes forever, soothing every heart that craves for peace.

Faint as my voice may be
with mere scribbles this page ended though,
Oh! hear me this fervent cry
That you are God's chosen man
To strike all things mundane
As is/was mightily written in the Book
Why doubt about a joyous harvest
When thousands with endless tears
Are joining your seed-bed now
Visit us in our midnight dreams
And strengthen our daylight hopes
So prayers unfulfilled as yet
Shall then be all complete
May your works and name remain
Till the end of time.

With all lingering memories,

Thawng Ling
LBC, Kalaymyo

A Short Biography of David Van Bik

Cung Lian Hup

David Van Bik was born on July 28, 1926 at Tlangpi village, Chin State, Myanmar (Burma). He was the eldest son of Saya Chawn Tur, an evangelist and preacher, and Pi Rent Tial. His father died on May 3, 1936 when David was in the second grade of Primary School in Tlangpi village. With the help of Thra Aung Dwe, a Township Education Officer at Falam, David Van Bik passed the 6th grade at Anglo-Vernacular High School at Falam just before the Second World War began in 1942 in the Chin Hills. During the Second World War, he worked for Allied Services at a storage depot in Bungkhua and Thangzang from 1943-45.

In 1945, at a meeting of the Chin Baptist Association at Tlangpi village, David was chosen to attend a Bible College at Cherapunjee, Assam State, India. He graduated from there in 1948 with a Diploma in Theology and passed the Matric Examination of Serampore College in 1949.

Upon his return to the Chin Hills, David was appointed lecturer at the Chin Hill Bible Seminary at Hakha where he was working with Rev. and Mrs. Robert Johnson, the last American Baptist missionaries to the Chin Hills. After teaching two years at Chin Hill Bible Seminary, David Van Bik continued his theological education for four years at Burma Baptist Divinity School in Insein, Burma. In 1955, he was awarded a B.Th degree by the Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Kansas, to which Burma Baptist Divinity was affiliated. He was the first

degree holder of Bachelor of Theology among the Chin Christians in Myanmar. He returned again to Hakha, Chin State to teach at the same Bible School. He married Mable Zokai on April 23, 1956.

In June 1957, the golden jubilee year of the first converts in the area, he was ordained to the Christian ministry by the Zomi Baptist Convention at its triennial meetings in Bualkhua village. In order to prepare him for becoming the principal of the Zomi Theological School (now Zomi Theological College) he was given a scholarship for two years at the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School (now American Baptist Seminary of the West) in California. He earned his M.A Degree from BBDS in 1959. Soon after his return, he became the principal of Zomi Theological School in Falam, Chin State. He had helped the Falam Baptist Church as a part-time Church Pastor during his years in Zomi Theological School. In 1963, he left Falam to be a full-time Bible translator for Hakha Lai Chin. He completed translating the entire Bible in 1976 and the Holy Bible in Lai (Chin) dialect (Lai Baibal Thiang) was published by the United Bible Society in 1978.

After the completion of his Bible translation in 1976, he began to engage fully in the promotion of Chin Christian Literature. His main task was the translation of much the Christian literature which he thought was so meaningful for the Chin Christians in Burma. His work includes at least the following books in Lai (Chin) dialect.

1. Holy Bible
2. Commentary on Gospel According to Matthew
3. Commentary on Gospel According to Luke
4. Commentary on the Acts of Apostles
5. Commentary on the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

6. Commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews
7. Commentary on the first Letter of John
8. Commentary on Daniel
9. Commentary on Isaiah
10. Beatitudes
11. The Second Coming of Christ
12. Foundation of Christian Faith
13. Understanding the Old Testament
14. Peace Corner
15. A New Being in Christ
16. The Master's Men
17. What is Salvation?
18. How Came Our Bible
19. Jesus' Quotations of the Old Testament
20. Pentecostalism in the Chin Hills
21. Good Stewards
22. The Book of Psalms
23. About The Holy Spirit
24. The Work of the Holy Spirit
25. The Morning Stars: Missionaries to the Chin Hills
26. Forward Through the Ages
27. History of American Baptist Mission to the Chins (Vol. I & II)
28. English - Chin Dictionary
29. Chin - English Dictionary
30. And many articles

Since he had been so involved in publishing of Chin literature, the World Association of Christian Communication awarded him a six month full scholarship to attend Print Media at Oxford Polytechnic Center at Oxford, England in 1983. In 1989, he had the opportunity to attend the Overseas Mission Study Center at New Haven, Connecticut, for six months.

He was given the *Alumnus of the Year Award* in 1985 by American Baptist Seminary of the West, Berkeley, CA. Myanmar Institute of Theology and Myanmar Baptist Convention named him *Fellow of Distinguished Christian Service* in 1990. He was the Principal of Chin Christian College at Hakha, Chin State, from 1990-1996. In 1994, the American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley, CA conferred on him an *Honorary Doctorate Degree (D.D.)*.

In August 1999, he was appointed as a visiting scholar at University of California at Berkeley, CA. for the project of *Lai (Hakha Chin) English Dictionary* under the sponsorship of Prof. James A. Matisoff, and with the help of Open Society Institute and Endangered Language Fund of Yale University. He managed to finish a draft-entry of the entire dictionary.

A cancer tumor in his nostril was detected in December, 1999. A chemotherapy and radiation treatment was begun in February 2000. Despite the apparent early success of the treatment, his body could not stand the chemotherapy. Rev. Dr. David Van Bik went to his Heavenly Home at 9:05 a.m. on Saturday, August 19, 2000. He is survived by his beloved wife Mabel and their children: Steven, Eric, Rollin, Kenneth, and Alice, and eleven grandchildren.

**INTRODUCING
DAVID VAN BIK FOUNDATION
(DVBF)**

By **Cung Lian Hup**

The tragic death of Rev. David Van Bik on the 19th of August 2000 at Frederick, Maryland, had shocked many of his friends and relatives around the world. Our sorrow was deepened when we had heard that it might be impossible to send his body to the Chin Hills, for the fact that giving our last respect to our dear friend by seeing his or her body and weeping at the funeral takes an important role in Chin culture and tradition. By the grace of God which came through David's friends in the USA, the Chin Baptist Mission Church in Washington, D.C, had initiated and organized to send his body to Myanmar. When we heard that his friends and family members in the USA had donated \$16665.50 to send his body to Myanmar, his friends and family members in Myanmar also had a plan to give their highest respect to David by taking the responsibility of conveying of his body from Yangon to Hakha, his native town in the Chin Hills.

The transportation cost of his body from Yangon to Mandalay, therefore, was incurred by Lai Baptist Church (Yangon) and Thantlang Association of Baptist Churches, and Mandalay to Hakha by Hakha Baptist Association. The tomb was made by Chin Association for Christian Communication, and the memorial stone by Chin Christian College. Since the casket which was made in the USA has been displayed in his memorial museum at Hakha Baptist Association, a new teak casket was made by

Hakha Baptist Church. For the refreshment of our quests, from various part of Zomi Baptist Convention, who wanted to show their last respect to David Van Bik at his funeral, many individuals donated rice, meat, vegetables, cows, pigs, chicken, etc. The responsibility of preparing and serving meal to our quests was taken by Immanuel Baptist Church.

By seeing this benevolent acts of his friends around the world, David Van Bik's children and his close relatives have decided not to use the condolence gifts for the expenses of his funeral, so that it can be used for the betterment of his beloved people, the Chins. Therefore, his children and relatives have covered all the other funeral expenses which are about 500,000 Kyats. With consultation of his children and friends in the USA, the family and friends of David Van Bik in Myanmar has established David Van Bik Foundation (DVBF), and the Executive Committee of DVBF was formed on October 08, 2000 in Yangon. The condolence gift becomes the initial capital of DVBF. The Executive Committee of DVBF (USA) was also formed in January 2001. The main objective of DVBF is to help the Chins in getting education. As of October 11, 2002, the total amount of money that we have in our bank account is 8,300,000/- Kyats. The Executive Committee members of the DVBF in USA are:

Chairman	Zo Tumhmung
Vice Chairman	Rual Uk
Secretary	Rev. Rollin Van Bik
Assistant Secretary	Kenneth Van Bik
Treasurer	Sui Cin Tial
Members	Mang Cung Nung
	Thawng Za Lian
	Salai N.C. Lian

Rev. P Hreng Ling
Rev. Thawngling Mualhlun
Rev. Dr. Mang Tiak

The Executive Committee members of DVBF in Yangon are:

Chairman	Rev. Sang Awr
Secretary	Dr. Cung Lian Hup
Treasurer	Sung Cer
Members	Biak Mang
	Hre Lian Kio
	Tial Ling
	Siang Hu Thang
	Alice Si Thu Hla
	Anthony Ngun Uk
	General Secretary- CACC

With the intention that DVBF would be for all the Chins, the following aims and objectives has been constituted in consultation and consent of the Executive Committees in the USA and Myanmar.

- I. The name of the Foundation shall be called David Van Bik Foundation (DVBF).
- II. The Aims and Objectives of DVBF shall be:
 1. To improve the living standard of the Chins through giving them health and economic education.
 2. To help promising Chins students.
 3. To promote Chin Literature through helping authors and publishers.

4. To promote theological education among the Chins Christians.

III. Fund Raising

1. As all the expenses of David Van Bik's funeral in Myanmar have been covered by his family and friends, the condolence gifts of David Van Bik will be used for the initial endowment.
2. Friends of David Van Bik around the world will be solicited to kindly donate funds in memory and honor of David Van Bik.
3. Only the interest of the endowment will be used for the objectives.

All the donations received for David Van Bik Foundation will be deposited as endowment and only the interest will be used for its objectives so that the Foundation will be working as long as the Chins can be identified around this world. The Foundation has been established not for the benefits of the family members and relatives of David Van Bik, but for the development of the Chins throughout the world.

When DVBF was established in 2000, it was decided that the years 2000 and 2001 be designated as fund raising period. Therefore, DVBF begins to function only in 2002. First, it creates a program called David Van Bik Merit Award. The award will be given to the most promising student of the graduating class, chosen by the staff council, of the Chin Christian College where David was the principal for six years. The recipient of David Van Bik Award for the year 2002 is Um Mnai Pui. Secondly, the DVBF establishes a scholarship program. Every year two students each from the third year and final year classes of Chin

Christian College will receive the scholarship. The recipients will be chosen by the staff council. The recipients of the years 2002 are Dawt Tin Rem (Third Year), Buan Thawng Lian (Third Year), Vung En Cing (Final Year), and Duh Tin Kep (Final Year).

Anyone who wants to help the Chins through David Van Bik Foundation may send his or her donations to the following persons:

Sui Cin Tial
1221 Allison Dr.
Rockville, MD 20851
USA
Tel. 301-836-9704
Email: lian141@cs.com

Rev. Sang Awr
Myanmar Institute of Theology
Seminary Hill, Insein
Myanmar
Email: sangcin@mptmail.net.mm

David Van Bik was not only a Theological educator for the Chins, he was also a man who wanted to improve the living standard of the Chins. He introduced new crops, new vegetables, and new fruits to the Chins: He brought the seeds of sweet cherry from USA and planted in Hakha to test whether it can be fruitful in the Chin Hills; He brought star apple seedling from Kachin State and planted in the Chin Hills. Once he consulted the experts to make windmill at Rungtlang (a mountain top of Hakha town) for electricity for the Chins. At his funeral service, one of his friends in Hakha said that David Van Bik was one of the leaders who

organized to pave the motorway from Hakha (Chin Hills) to Gangaw (the plain area).

To follow his benevolent spirit for the Chins, let our efforts for the development of the Chins be fruitful through participation in the works of David Van Bik Foundation.