DR. SHELBY WILLIAM VANCE, 84, retired mountain physician and foreign missionary, died Tuesday in a Crossnore hospital.

He had practiced general medicine for 52 years, primarily in rural areas in Western North Carolina and also on mission fields in China and Africa. A native of Pineola, he was a son of the late John W. and Emma Cuthbertson Vance.

He was a 1928 graduate of Davidson College, a 1930 graduate of UNC Medical School and a 1932 graduate of Emory University Medical School. From 1934 to 1941, he served as Southern Baptist medical missionary in China. After service with the Coast Guard during World War II, he practiced family medicine in Mars Hill and Marshall from 1945 to 1956. He was later a missionary in Africa and returned in 1959 to practice in Pineola and Newland until his retiring in 1984.

He was past president of Avery County Medical Society and former public health director in Madison, Yancey, Mitchell and Avery counties. He was a former member of the board of deacons at Mars Hill Baptist Church and former chairman of board of deacons at Pineola Baptist Church.

Surviving are his wife, Frances Hudson Vance; four sons, John S. Vance of Pineola, Richard H. Vance of Yadkinville, Sam L. Vance of Charlotte and Robert L. Vance of Raleigh; a brother, Zeb B. Vance of Pineola, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday in Crossnore Baptist Church. The Revs. Ernest Bustle, Lander Heafner and Kenneth Baker will officiate. Burial will be in the Cuthbertson Cemetery.

The family will receive friends from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday at Reins-Sturdivant Funeral Home.

Memorials may be made to the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230.