



Book Review:

*The Hospital by the River*

by Catherine Hamlin and John Little

Catherine and Reg Hamlin, together with their 6 year old son Richard, arrived in Ethiopia in May 1959 on what was to be a short contract to establish a midwifery school in that country. They were both doctors and had answered an advertisement in the British Medical journal for work in the Princess Tsehai Hospital in Addis Ababa.

Before long they came into contact with a forgotten and neglected segment of Ethiopian society and their hearts went out to them. As is the custom, young teenage girls are married off and often go with their husbands to live in isolated and inaccessible areas. They become pregnant and because of their physical immaturity they suffer prolonged and agonising labour often continuing for days. Without help the babies are born dead. Unfortunately the damage done to these young girls is irreparable and they find themselves permanently incontinent. Because of the constant leaking of bladder and sometimes also bowel the smell becomes very offensive and their husbands walk away leaving them afraid, lonely, ashamed and destitute.

"The Hospital by the River" tells how these girls often walk for many miles in rags and bare feet because they have heard of a place where they can be helped. Through surgery their physical problems are repaired and through the love of Jesus their broken hearts are also renewed. This work continues today.

Reg died in 1993 at age 84, and was buried in the land of Ethiopia that he had come to know and love so well. When the book went to print in 2001 Catherine at age 77 was still able to perform operations and had no intention of retiring while she was still able to continue.

Take time to read this wonderful story of compassion and service which is told with a sense of gratitude and joy for what they have been able to do for these suffering women and for the Lord they both loved.

This book is available in the Surfside library.

Reviewed by Shirley Peart