

May 1999

As I sit in this Ethiopian hospital room listening to the cacophony of sound....cars honking...taxis yelling their destination....amharic spoken by hospital staff and patients....the swish swish of the hand held straw broom bound with string going over the floor.....my heart is stirred by the sound of How Great Thou Art softly reminding Bill and me from my computer, that God is great and worthy to be trusted. The last few days have been an incredible blend of high tech and appropriate technology all put together in a way that has ministered to us in unbelievable ways. We truly can echo, "Oh Lord my God, when I in AWESOME WONDER, consider all the worlds Thy hands have made". The Lord was with us every step of the way....may we retrace some of those amazing steps with you so you can thank the Lord for the way He so cared for us during these very difficult days.

May 16th Bill was very involved in the wedding of our guard. Since his father had died a few years ago ...Bill was the shamagalee (old man) :) that was by Yetu's side. This involved a lot of Ethiopian food. Monday, Bill had a lot of diarrhea. The next few days his stomach just didn't feel quite right...ached sort of all around. Friday night at 10:00 , it started hurting and cramping in earnest. Bill tried everything to relax...tylenol pm....but he continued to roll around in the bed and then pace and then sit for a while....and even tried a hot bath at 4 in the morning. About 7:15, he phoned our nurse and when into our Headquarters....tylenol with codeine did not touch his pain. We came home only to gather a few things and go to the hospital. There is a new hospital , privately owned, better facilitated that we have seen here in Addis. We know that it is still a long way from home as far as a lot of things go. But we could not have asked for a more caring staff and I am moved to tears even as I type that fact down. The Dr. on call which ended up being his surgeon , was there with another for the initial diagnosis. They were afraid of a perforated ulcer...but did not really know. All Bill knew was that they could finally give him a shot of something that relieved the cramping pain.

He had said to me in the car , in all the chaos of the traffic getting to the hospital, "I am not too sure I can make it through this." The pain medicine helped and they put him thru a battery of tests...ultrasound and x-rays. His white blood count was very high showing some infection going on and continuing to rise in the evening. By Sat. night a decision was made to go into surgery at midnight.....which was reversed about 1 hour later. So our emotions were going from one end to the other. Sun morning saw improvement from pain. But by noon it was terrible again.

With a lot of ups and downs and a lot of pain medicine, we made it thru the weekend. I had been with Bill and spent the night on a mat on the floor. Mon, I left and went home to bathe and bring back something that Bill could drink or eat. But when I returned...the results of quite a battery of tests had come back. My sister in law, Kay , had been with Bill while I was gone. They had seen that there was a blockage in the small intestine and would definitely have to operate. The Lord gave us peace about the decision....but we kept trying to think of some other way...but the Lord showed us thru the council of Drs here and our mission medical personal...that this was the only option. I cannot say I

had no fear...I love Bill and did not want to lose Him. But we all read together Psalm 61, "Hear my cry, o God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I . and on in 61:1-5 and 62:1-2. We also found great comfort in Ps.139....knowing the Lord knew Bill from the inside out. I was given the privilege of shaving him and getting him ready for surgery. We quick phoned Joe and asked him to bring some shaving lotion so I wouldn't have to do it dry. And here in Ethiopia we were given a wonderful gift of a cell phone by the owner of the hospital who is a Muslim. He has been so caring and helpful in every way. Cell phones have just come in to the country. It was so wonderful because it saved me going up and down the stairs. The only phones are downstairs. We were even able to call the US and inform Bill's folks and call after surgery was all over with a report.

The surgery went well. THEY FOUND IT WAS NOT A PERFORATED ULCER BUT HIS SMALL INTESTINES HAD SEVERAL PLACES WHERE THEY WERE TWISTED AND STRANGLER. IF THEY HAD WAITED ANOTHER 2 HOURS THEY SAID....IT COULD HAVE EITHER BURST OR GOTTEN GANGRENOUS. As it was ,the strangler places were bruised and red but should be just fine. Our friend ,who actually kept Kyle and his cousin, Kelly, described to Kyle that Dad's stomach (intestines) had been like those long skinny balloons you see at fairs and they twist them to make them look like animals. So when I called to tell him...he said , "I know, Mrs. Baker already explained it too me." She said that after we hung up Kyle went right for a Bible and looked up Ps. 139 and read it. :)

The worst part of the whole ordeal, besides the stomach pain, is that tube that had to be put down Bill's nose. The Dr. was trying to drain his brain first he is quite convinced!!!! Bill had to yell in Amharic to stop and grab his hand. The 2nd time they got it in the right direction and Whew ... what a release of junk it his stomach.

Bill has improved in the last 36 hours. We can not say enough about our mission family and the wonderful help they have been. Nurses spending the night Getting the nurses here to give the pain injections at the right time...etc. Trying to reassure me that things are ok....but to remember we are in Africa....and to give me a break so I could actually sleep a few hours on the pad here knowing someone else was looking out for him.

WE WANTED SO MUCH TO GET WORD OUT TO YOU BUT DID NOT HAVE A WAY. Thanks for praying for us even when you don't know why you are prompted to. AND PLEASE DON'T STOP. HE STILL HAS A WAY TO GO. HE HAS NOT EATTEN ANYTHING FOR 41/2 DAYS AND CANNOT START UNTIL EVERYTHING IS FUNCTIONING AGAIN. SO PRAY THAT IT BEGINS SOON. HOW WE LOVE YOU ALL AND TREASURE YOU AS GOD'S GIFTS TO US. KAY SHARED SOME SCRIPTURE WITH US FROM HER DEVOTIONS THE MORNING AFTER SURGERY ABOUT HOW THE LORD WILL MAKE THE CROOKED PATHS STRAIGHT!!!!!! Sometimes he uses a Dr. to do it!!!!!!!:)

Thanks for praying for me too...I needed it very much. So glad we know Jesus and that

He is our peace... .Basking in His peace...Grace for my sweetie too. Every time we would tell him something that the Lord had answered as he was coming out of his anesthesia....he would lift his hand to heaven and whisper "thank ou". Now we wish we could shout it to you and the Lord.