

## LALIBELA TRUST - 2021 Trustees Report

Norman Coward, our partner, and a staff/student group from Royal Cornwall Hospital, Treliske visited in March 2020 just before Covid travel restrictions and quarantine requirements – and later the civil war. Neither we nor Norman visited in 2021.

Internal fighting in Ethiopia between Government forces and Amhara Defence Forces against Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) began in March 2021. This led to the cessation of Lalibela Trust's long-term development projects in Health, Education and Water initiatives and focused on humanitarian projects for the local population and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were severely affected by the civil war.

6,000 IDPs, many of Amharic ethnicity but working in Tigray, fled from Tigray to the protection of the holy churches in Lalibela. Our Project Manager, Derebe, formed a town committee to supply grain for the 1,100 most needy with food poverty.

The collapse of local government budgets caused a serious lack of medicines at Lalibela Hospital including the maternity unit. Lalibela Trust (LT) agreed a priority list of medicines. Derebe travelled by road to Addis Ababa to buy the drugs. LT also agreed to pay for new ambulance tyres and one battery.

August 5<sup>th</sup> – TPLF occupied Lalibela with troops, tanks and trucks. Electricity, roads, water, banks, internet and telephone were cut off. Most government workers including our Project Manager fled. TPLF forces were very aggressive and murderous in villages and towns they occupied but in Lalibela, although threatening, said they would hurt no-one unless somebody hurt them first. Perhaps the religious significance of the Christian churches played a part?

During the occupation, Lalibela Hospital remained open with a skeleton staff. The maternity unit was not damaged and deliveries went ahead. The Abba, head of churches in Lalibela, negotiated locally with TPLF in Lalibela who agreed to allow medical and food supplies if the hospital would admit TPLF patients.

December 1<sup>st</sup> - All TPLF forces left Lalibela in the night. Lalibela Trust paid the cost of a bus (£800) to return hospital staff from Bahar Dar to Lalibela.

December 31<sup>st</sup> – Derebe returned to Lalibela

January 2022 – Formal re-opening of Lalibela Hospital and Maternity Unit - Derebe much praised.

FINANCES	Carried Forward	1/1/21	£33,457.20
	Income 2021		£101,628.65 - £33,457.20 = £68,171.45
	Expenditure 2021		£40,616
	Carried Forward	1/1/22	£101,628.65 - £40,616 = £61,012.65

Neil and Ros Johnson continue to part-fund the Lalibela Secondary School girls hostel.

Millfield School donated £3,000 towards Lalibela Secondary School equipment.

All other items of expenditure were dedicated to LTs Health, Water and School projects plus emergency humanitarian assistance.

Hugh Sharp, Chairman Lalibela Trust

