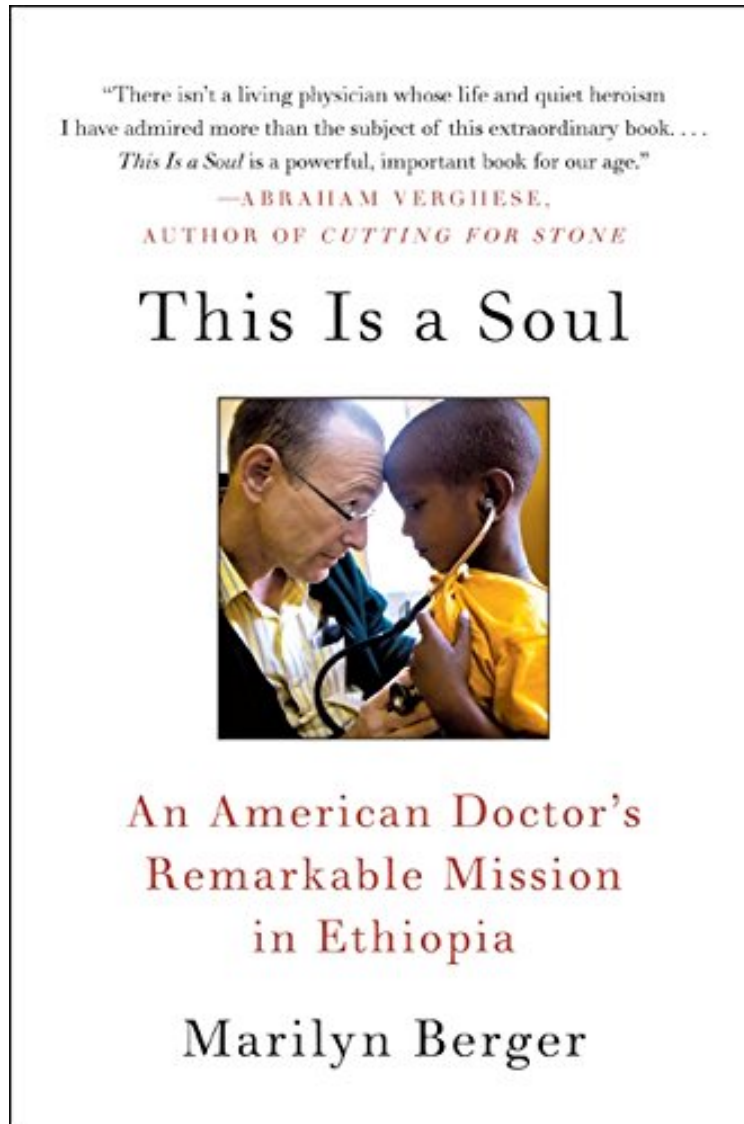


## This Is a Soul: An American Doctor's Remarkable Mission in Ethiopia

Marilyn Berger

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#1405551 in Books Marilyn Berger 2011-04-12 2011-04-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .65 x 5.311, .48 #File Name: 0061759554288 pages This Is a Soul The Mission of Rick Hodes | File size: 38.Mb

**Marilyn Berger : This Is a Soul: An American Doctor's Remarkable Mission in Ethiopia** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised This Is a Soul: An American Doctor's Remarkable Mission in Ethiopia:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A fine depiction of a samaritan who shuns the spotlightBy TikibroMarilyn Berger has done a fine and straightforward portrait of an unusual and fascinating man, who clearly

doesn't have a great deal of interest in publicity. As a retired physician, all the NGO docs I have ever met burned out after 3 - 5 years due to what Abraham Verghese mentions in the book - the vast abyss between 'needs' and 'resources'. Hodes seems to be one of those rare individuals with what I call 'selfless empathy'. They do it not for what they consider an essential service (when there are 5 million orphans in Ethiopia, the saving of hundreds can be seen as an exercise in futility). They don't do it for recognition or fame, and they don't do it out of their own personal needs for self-worth or to assuage inferiority complexes. They simply see the world in a certain way (different than most) and realize that's what makes them feel right about their own lives. It's just what they want to do with their lives. I think those are truly remarkable people and Rick Hodes is one of them. And somehow, Ms. Berger found him and wrote a very unembellished, non-proselytizing, and clear-eyed depiction of both Hodes' adult life and the reality of the impoverished people and children who live in third world countries like Ethiopia. I particularly was impressed at her honesty regarding the vagaries of merit among the many NGO's, some of which are just great, and some of which are a disgrace to the first world.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. "he spends each day treating whoever comes his way, one by one, no matter how hopeless" By Foster Corbin "He was the most beautiful child I had ever seen--and certainly the dirtiest." With that first line, Marilyn Berger takes the reader on a wonderful journey that he or she will not forget. THIS IS A SOUL: THE MISSION OF RICK HODES\* is the account of one extraordinary individual,-- through by all accounts, he probably would shy away from that description-- Dr. Rick Hodes, a cardiologist who single-handedly with pretty much only a stethoscope for the past 20 years or so has been treating everyone who comes to him in Ethiopia, one of the two poorest countries on earth. The most beautiful child Ms. Berger had ever seen was a little boy named Danny, an orphan and beggar with a deformed spine caused by tuberculosis, the kind of youngster for whom Dr. Hodes spends much time and effort finding physicians the world over to perform surgery. (According to UNICEF, in 2007 there were five million orphans in Ethiopia; many of them had lost their parents to AIDS.) Although Ms. Berger did not know it at the time, her own life would be threaded in a beautiful way with that of this bright little boy. Rick, as he apparently is called by many, cares for the sickest patients at his clinic just outside Mother Teresa's mission in Addis Ababa; furthermore, he has adopted five youngsters and has at least fifteen more living with him. In the chapter aptly entitled "Everybody Goes to Rick's Place" Ms. Berger highlights some of the many children who come to his clinic for help, where he turns nobody away. Ms. Berger tries with not much success to find out what makes Dr. Rick tick. Why is he willing to do what he does year in and year out when he could have a lucrative medical practice in the U. S.? His own mother says that she hasn't the slightest idea how he got this way. And Ms. Berger opines that altruism was not imprinted on the DNA "as deeply on every individual as it was on Rick." An Orthodox Jew, Rick believes that God makes everything happen and gives many examples throughout the narrative to support his belief. But happily there is room for all, regardless of his or her religion, at Rick's Shabbat services where everyone joins hands and sings Pete Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer"-- somehow I suspect the recently deceased Mr. Seeger would approve-- and Rick sometimes dons a T shirt that reads "May the God of your choice bless you." A particularly moving passage-- among many-- has to do with Rick's seeking guidance from the rabbi he had studied with in Maryland for advice when he was dispatched to Goma to treat the sick and dying from Rwanda. "I wondered if I should give priority to children (the future of the country), or perhaps to parents (if they died, their children would become orphans). Should I give each person fifteen minutes of time? Should I ignore the elderly or people who would take a long time to save?" The rabbi replied that he should not decide who to treat and who not to treat, that every life is precious. Dr. Rick Hodes' story is one that the world should know about; Marilyn Berger has done a beautiful job of telling it. I cannot imagine anyone, having read it, who would not be profoundly touched.\*The title comes from Rick's insistence of sending a photo of the patient's face along with a photo of the back, x-rays and blood studies to doctors because he wants them to see that the patient is a human being. "This isn't just a back. This is a soul."

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Remarkable story well told By Donna rubens Turns out my family knows Dr. Rick Hodes- partly through the network of Orthodox Jews doing humanitarian work abroad- and turned me on to Marilyn Berger's book. She is a lively writer who balances the adulation that Dr. Hodes deserves with an effort to get to the real story--is this guy for real? What motivates him? What about his personal life? Is his work and impact exaggerated in by him, his supporters and donors? In the course of the book, the reader learns all too much about the plight of children in Ethiopia and around the world suffering from diseases like TB of the spine, the network of doctors willing to operate on these patients, and the extraordinary day to day life of Dr. Hodes who works under the radar with absolute commitment to these kids. With all the hype that goes on (and outright lies) of a few other heroes we read about who are saving the world one child at a time, it was so refreshing to learn that one man really is the real deal and just can't stop helping these kids-including adopting a parcel of them and opening his home to a dozen more. I can't say enough about this book.. It's a very quick read and you'll come away moved and enlightened.

A powerful, important book for our age. Abraham Verghese, author Cutting For Stone Passionately written by journalist Marilyn Berger, This is a Soul is the moving and inspiring story of Dr. Rick Hodes, an American doctor living in Ethiopia, who has devoted his life to caring for the sickest of the sick and the poorest of the poor. Dr. Hodess

life and work makes for fascinating reading, especially for those who have been profoundly touched by Tracy Kidders Mountains Beyond Mountains.

From the Back Cover "Whoever Saves a Life, It Is Considered as If He Saved an Entire World" Dr. Rick Hodes arrived in Africa more than two decades ago to help the victims of a famine, but he never expected to call this extremely poor continent his home. Twenty-eight years later, he is still there. This Is a Soul tells the remarkable story of Rick Hodes's journey from suburban America to Mother Teresa's clinic in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As a boy, Rick was devoted to helping those in need, and eventually he determined that becoming a doctor would allow him to do the most good. When he heard about famine in Africa, that's where he went, and when genocide convulsed Rwanda, he went into the refugee camps to minister to the victims. When he was told that Ethiopia was allowing its Jews to emigrate to Israel, he went to help. While there, he was drawn to Mother Teresa's mission in Addis Ababa. It was there that Rick found his calling when he began caring for the sickest children in one of the world's poorest countries. But he did more than that; he began taking them into his home and officially adopted five of them. This Is a Soul is also a book filled with great joy and triumph. When Rick's kids return from surgery or life-saving treatments, he is exultant. "Seeing these people after surgery is like going to heaven," he says. Marilyn Berger went to Africa to write about Dr. Hodes, but while there, she became involved with the story. When she came upon a small, deformed, and malnourished boy begging on the street, she recognized immediately that he had the exact disease Rick could cure. She took him to Rick, who eventually arranged for the boy to have a complicated and risky surgery, which turned out to be incredibly successful. The boy's story intertwined with Rick's, and Marilyn's as well is unforgettable in its pathos and subtle humor. This Is a Soul is not just a story of the savior and the saved, it is a celebration of love and wisdom, and an exploration of how charity and devotion can actually change lives in an overcrowded, unjust, and often harsh world. About the Author Marilyn Berger is a contributing writer to the New York Times. She was previously a diplomatic correspondent for Newsday and the Washington Post, and was the United Nations correspondent for ABC News and the White House correspondent for NBC News. She was the moderator on the public affairs program The Advocates and anchored WNET's City Edition. She was the director of programs and public affairs for the Council on Foreign Relations. Her articles have been published in the New York Times Magazine, The New Yorker, and New York magazine.