

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Fall 2010

Practicum Student's Ministry Rescues Enslaved Girls

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Cofounder

The world has come to us at SIFAT again this fall, as 19 Christian workers from 10 countries are studying with us. They come from different cultures, speaking among them more than 40 languages, each having had vastly different experiences. Our faith grows more as we see through our students' eyes how God is working all over the world in some situations so hard we can hardly imagine it! Some have

lived through years in refugee camps, some have escaped from kidnappings, some are from countries where they are prohibited from worshipping God publicly. They have one thing in common: they are all dedicated to helping their people obtain their basic needs and to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

One day, Grace told about her ministry at our lunch devotions. A Baptist minister from Ghana, she led

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From the Desk of Tom Corson

When the earthquake hit Haiti, Reggie opened his home to orphans and soon found himself with 70 children! Their well pump gave out, so they got water from a chicken factory. Recently, the factory quit giving them water. The orphanage was down to three gallons of water with no hope of more when Cowboy (Brian Ferguson, one of SIFAT's water personnel) arrived. John Booker, a missionary of Four Square denomination in Haiti, had brought Cowboy in his truck. John bought a truck load of dirty water, and Cowboy set the water purifier to work to serve until we can get them another pump.

We have found that when mission agencies work together, the total of what we can do adds up to more than the sum of what the individual agencies could do. Cowboy told us how happy he was to leave those children with clean water, but there are so many more we

have not helped yet, he said.

He wept as he told us of being on a bridge where the river below was flooded. He saw a preteen boy walk out in the rapids and jump into the deep water. The boy went under, surfaced a couple of times and disappeared, washed away in the current. How much hunger and hopelessness can one take? It was evident that the boy just wanted to die.

SIFAT has been working in Haiti since February, helping keep a clinic staffed with volunteer medical personnel and purifying water. Because of lack of transportation, communication and other basic infrastructure, it has been hard to get to many places in need of our water purifiers. Last week, Bahamas Habitat offered to fly our water personnel and water purifiers to Haiti. Their small plane can also fly to different sites on the island,

thus overcoming the obstacle of lack of transportation that has plagued us. With their help, we provided clean drinking water to more than 10,000 people last week. Cowboy and Trey Reed have been SIFAT's main water men on the ground, joined by various volunteers at different times. We are using different types of purifiers now, depending on what is more appropriate for the circumstances.

We are thankful for those who have contributed to our Haitian fund to make it possible for us to continue working with the Haitians. We are thankful for the organizations that work with us, especially with transportation. Dr. Byron Morales has joined our staff to teach Christian leaders in Haiti and other countries how to help their communities develop holistically—spiritually and physically. Please keep the Haitians and those working with them in your prayers.



The First Wedding at Agua de Vida

In September 2009, Kimmy Bailey of Alexander City, Ala., and Wes Thompson of Goodwater, Ala., committed to travel with a mission team from Alexander City Methodist Church to serve in Ecuador. When they became engaged in March 2010, they thought it would be wonderful to get married in Ecuador, especially since they did not want an elaborate wedding. Kimmy and Wes knew if it could be worked out, they would receive all the blessings and love they could ever imagine.

After talking with their team leaders, Bryan and Kristi Hanna, the details fell into place, and Kimmy and Wes knew the Lord had every part in making their international wedding happen.

On Sunday, July 11, 2010, the much awaited day arrived. The couple began the day with a team devotional and a trip to the Middle of the World to stand on the equator. After some shopping, lunch and a surprise bridal shower, Kimmy only had an hour to get ready!

Kimmy and Wes were the first couple to wed at Agua de Vida, the church many of their team members helped build. The community of Atacucho felt the excitement. Many church and community members joined the team to celebrate Kimmy and Wes' marriage.

The ceremony was conducted in Spanish by Rev. Ramiro Balseca with Dr. Roberto Contreras, SIFAT Ecuador director, translating. According to Kimmy, the wedding was exactly as if they were Ecuadorian, including dancing from some of the church women and a lacing presentation, during which she and Wes were tied together with ribbon to symbolize the two have become one.



Short-term mission team members Wes and Kimmy Thompson were married on Sunday, July 11, 2010, at Agua de Vida in Atacucho, Ecuador. The Thompsons' wedding was the first to be held in this church. They spent their honeymoon with Alexander City Methodist Church serving in Villaflora. Dayana, a child from the community who is special to this team, and Lauren Hanna served as the flower girl and ring bearer, respectively.

The wedding party consisted of Barry and Robyn Mann, honorary parents; Bryan and Kristi Hanna, honorary godparents; Lauren Hanna, ring bearer; and Dayana, flower girl. Dayana is from Atacucho and a special friend to the team. Two years ago, she was badly burned and unable to attend the team's VBS. Lauren decided to take VBS to Dayana, and the two developed a special friendship. When the team saw Dayana in her dress, it was touching for all.

Kimmy and Wes spent their honeymoon helping build a daycare and teaching VBS to the children of Villaflora, and they would not have planned it any other way.

They said, "We are so blessed to have the opportunity to marry in Ecuador and would not have been able to do so without the help of SIFAT! Thank you for the most wonderful memories that will be cherished forever!"

Help SIFAT continue making a difference in our world:

Become a SHAREholder by pledging to give monthly. SIFAT offers automatic withdrawal from your bank account, so you never forget to write a check. Together, we can demonstrate Christ's love to impoverished peoples. Contact Marie Lanier, lanierm@sifat.org, or visit www.sifat.org/share.html.

Grace
(Continued from page 1)

an outreach to some isolated rural villages. They discovered in each of several villages a large thatched hut where 30 to 60 women and girls lived. None had shoes or regular clothes, but only pieces of bark tied around them. In those villages, when one commits a crime, the family of the criminal has to pay by giving the voodoo priest one of their virgin daughters. The crime is then forgiven. Although the Baptist churches of the area were able to get their government leaders to make slavery illegal, the law was not enforced and the practice continued.

Grace would not give up. Her convention began to raise money to buy these slaves from the priests and give them freedom. They have founded a three-year school to help these young girls spiritually and psychologically. They also teach each of them a trade such as sewing, baking or hairdressing. Eighty girls have finished the school. All of them are now productive members of a caring fellowship of Christians and are self-supporting with their own microenterprise. At present, they have 64 girls they have rescued in their school and are constantly adding more as they can raise funds. Our students at SIFAT represent a wide variety of ministries, all faithful to the task of sharing God's love in practical ways in their unique situations.

The Haitian Grandmother

By Dee Myers
Short-term Mission Team Member

She came to our clinic alone. After a quiet physical exam, I sat in silence a few seconds knowing, as a mother myself, something else was terribly wrong here.

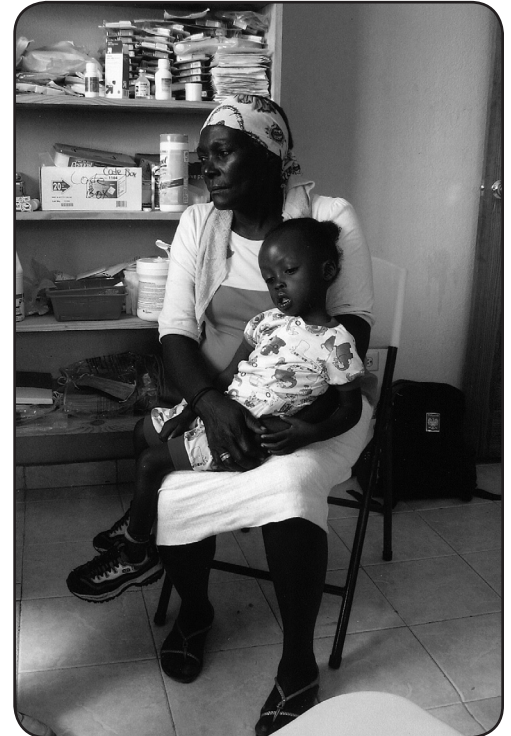
So with the help of my translator, I discovered her joint pain and insomnia was a front for all that had happened to her. True, she did have joint pain at 66 years of age. True, she could not sleep (a complaint we frequently heard). Her home was destroyed in the darkness of a new day approaching. As she bowed her head and tears rolled down, I wondered how she continued each new day or how she had survived the day she had left behind.

Her home was completely destroyed in the earthquake. She lost her husband of many years. Her son, daughter and their spouses also died. The only members of her family that lived were her five grandchildren: four toddlers and an infant. She was the only caregiver for all five of them. With no home, food or clean water, they were all in different degrees of need. To provide water for her family, this grandmother hauled water from a creek far away.

The first order of help was to call Rev. Rob Haynes, our mission pastor. Our team held hands with her and prayed. The stress of her pain as I held her hands seemed to lessen, and she opened her heart to all of her unbelievable story. She left the clinic in an uplifted spirit and with an assortment of vitamins, a sleep aid and our much needed verbal support.

We made but a small dent in the needs of those we met and treated. Their needs were overwhelming. Our team truly became flexible, and none of us ever became bent out of shape. We worked as one just as our heavenly Father works as one through his Son and Holy Spirit. And it is this Spirit that defies all odds and compels us to reach out and help those in need.

Note: SIFAT teams will continue serving in Haiti next year providing clean water systems. To donate to this project, please designate your gift "Haiti".



Dee Myers used her nursing skills to serve in Haiti. Dee was part of a SIFAT team from Fairhope UMC. Many of her patients' stories impacted Dee, including the young boy pictured above and the grandmother described in this story.



Fall 2010

My Month in Ecuador

By Julie Simons
Intern to Quito, Ecuador

This summer, I had the opportunity to intern with SIFAT in Quito, Ecuador. I wish there was one short story I could tell you about this experience to express the impact it had on me, but I cannot. The people, the country, the culture and the work that God is doing in Quito made this summer one of the best experiences of my life. To see the work that God is accomplishing with just a few people was inspiring and something I will never forget.

In Quito, SIFAT is partnering with graduates from SIFAT Ecuador's practicum in their projects and with Compassion International. In my four short weeks, I split my time between three SIFAT sites: Mama Yoli's, a finished work site; Villaflores, a work in progress; and Puengasi, a future work site. The most interesting thing about this internship was the ability to see the entire cycle of a SIFAT project.

Each Sunday, I attended Agua de Vida Methodist Church at Mama Yoli's, and every Friday, teams would go there to actually see all 250 children using a building like the one they were building in Villaflores. Here, I was able to see what a finished project looked like and the impact it has on the community.

Two weeks of my time in Quito were spent doing construction in Villaflores at an after-school program called Dulce Refugio, which translates as "Sweet Refuge." There, I was able to see teams from all across the Southeast work together to help finish the building. Not only were the teams helping, but the community would come work with them as well. You could see the community's desire to improve their neighborhood.

My other two weeks were spent in Puengasi, which is a future location for SIFAT teams to serve. I could see the excitement in the eyes of the pastor and his wife as they were looking forward to the dream they knew God was going to bring for their lives and their church.

Every aspect of the trip taught me something different. While working with the construction teams, I learned how to mix concrete with a shovel and how God provides. The work site did not have all the modern advances of one in the United States, but the building still is being built well. Working with the Vacation Bible School gave me insight into the mind



Julie Simons, a student at the University of Alabama, gave one month of her summer break to serve in Quito, Ecuador. Julie helped the SIFAT Ecuador staff host teams and translate at our project sites.

of a child, and I was able to see the love that God has for us through these kids. The most inspiring thing about VBS for me was to see how hard the community mothers worked to provide a safe place for the neighborhood children. The mission teams that come down showed me faithfulness to God and a love for people. Finally Nanny, Dr. Roberto and his wife Monica, who represent SIFAT in Ecuador, showed me a second home. Through their leadership and love, they made me love Quito for its people. I cannot wait to go back and see what else God has in store for this country and its people.

2011 Interns Needed

Are you interested in interning internationally? Whether you are a college student taking a semester break or a teacher on summer break, SIFAT projects need you!

Want more info? Please contact Peggy Walker, perdidopeg@aol.com. Spanish or French language skills are preferred, but not required.

Drilling with Bolivar - Interning in Ixiamas

By Troy Wetherholt
Intern to Ixiamas, Bolivia

During the summer, while I was on break from my studies in mechanical engineering, God provided me with an exciting opportunity to serve in Bolivia through SIFAT.

For my first few days after arriving at SIFAT's internado in Ixiamas, Bolivar taught me the basics of the type of wells we would be constructing using a method taught by Water for All International. The existing well at the internado helped provide an understanding of the mechanics behind these PVC pipe wells. In creating the piston which moves the water up the pipe, we made the seal and valve out of leather and old flip-flop sandals, respectively, cutting and sanding them into the proper shape.

Plans were made to install a well in Puerto Russo after members from the community came and talked to Bolivar. That night, we played a game of soccer with the kids and adults who had come. The next morning, we loaded all the necessary materials and equipment into the ancient truck from Puerto Russo and began the bumpy hour-long journey there, passing through grassy grazing land for cows and then finally into the jungle. I was excited to finally be in the jungle, although we needed to dismount several times to help the truck through deep muddy ruts in the narrow road. As we approached Puerto Russo, we passed through banana and plantain groves.

We arrived at the community's school, and Bolivar and I were shown our house, a sturdy thatched hut with a dirt floor and stick walls. We also saw the river the community uses as the water source, a minute's walk from the school. Upon seeing this dirty brown river, far from its once fresh source in the distant mountains, the need was apparent for a well that would provide clean water, free from sickness.

The next day, the soccer-goal-like framework from which the pulley and drill hang was quickly constructed by the men and their machetes. The digging process began, consisting of a quick, repetitive picking up and dropping of the drill, which is entirely human powered. The photo shows the community



members drilling their new well. A rope is attached to the drill and travels vertically upwards until redirected by the pulley to an area behind the hole. Here four men, in a constant rowing motion, haul on the rope to bring the drill up so that the driver, who stands next to the drill, can push down on the top of the drill to dig. Water hauled from the river is poured into the hole around the drill, loosening the dirt and sand at the bottom and bringing it up out the top of the hollow tube. Sections of tube are added on as the hole gets deeper. The work was tiresome, though easy compared to digging a well with shovels.

Each day several community women cooked lunch for the twelve or so workers. For breakfast and dinner, Bolivar and I ate in the hospitable home of Santos. One could expect rice at each meal, with which delicious jungle pig was often served. I also enjoyed picking and eating the plentiful wild papayas and peppers.

Under the expert leadership of Bolivar, we would complete this well and install one other while in Puerto Russo, providing clean water. My two weeks here prepared me for the remainder of my service in Bolivia, and I will always remember the hard-working people of Puerto Russo.

Sign up now for 2011 Short-term Mission Teams

Teams are already making plans to serve in Bolivia, Ecuador, Uganda, Zambia and Haiti in 2011. Don't miss your chance to have a life-changing experience while serving alongside SIFAT graduates in their communities. Contact Peggy Walker, perdidopeg@aol.com, for more information about organizing a team from your church.



Where are They Now? Felipe's Children Continue Their Education

Many years ago, members of a SIFAT short-term mission team met Felipe Callisaya, a pastor in the Andes Mountains of Bolivia. Felipe suffered from tuberculosis of the bone in his leg. Despite the pain, he continued walking the mountain trails, taking the Gospel to communities without a pastor. Before he died, Felipe confided that his one concern with dying was leaving his family behind.

The team members, now Felipe's friends, assured him they would take care of his three children. They have kept this promise to Felipe by helping his wife, Rupertina, provide an education for their children. Recently, Freddy and Rebeca sent letters to Bill Jeffery, their adopted godfather.

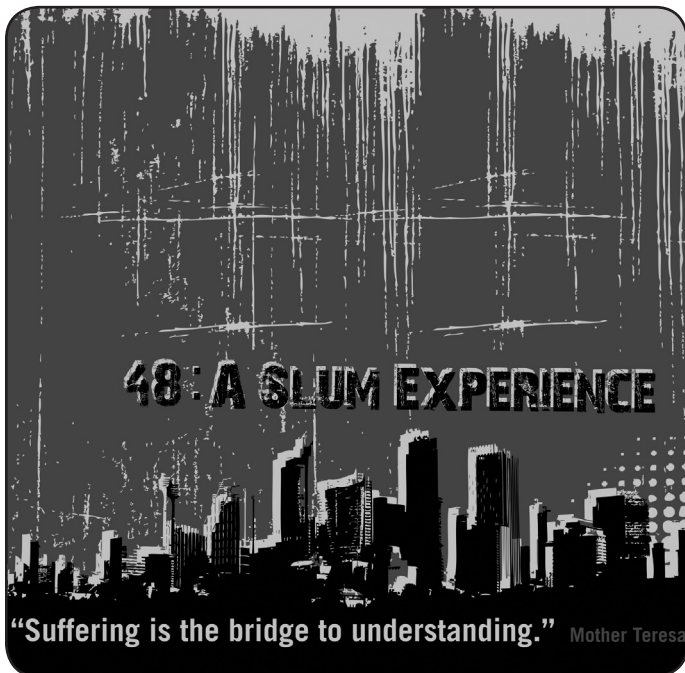
Rebeca writes that she is in her third year of dental school. Her work load is increasing, but with the help of the Lord and her family, she says she is doing fine in her subjects. Rebeca plans to work at the SIFAT health care center in Quesimpuco after graduation. Freddy shares that he is in his freshman year of seminary and wants to continue the work his father began. Freddy also updates us that Joel, the youngest, is now in high school and doing well.

We thank our mission team members who have continued the work they began so many years ago with our dearly beloved Pastor Felipe.



Pastor Felipe's daughter, Rebeca, exams a patient during her third year of dental school. Because of mission team members' support, she and her brothers have the opportunity to attend college and pursue their dreams.

48: A Slum Experience - Jan. 15-17, 2011



By Nate Paulk
Campus Director

By 2011, one-sixth of the people alive will be living in an urban slum. By 2030, that number is expected to double. Imagine, a third of our world living in a slum village somewhere around the world.

As more people move from rural villages of our world into dense cityscapes, they face many challenges while seeking the life-giving opportunities that a city can afford them. Where will they find work? Where will they find food? Where will they sleep?

SIFAT invites you to experience how millions in the world are living today. They have names. They have faces. They are real. Their stories are much like ours...we are just in different places...until now.

Your youth or college group can spend 48 hours in our urban slum on Jan. 15-17, 2011 (MLK, Jr. holiday weekend). The retreat costs \$48 per person and includes a t-shirt. For more information or to register your group, please e-mail Mary MacInnis at learnandserve@sifat.org.

Alumni Update: Making a Difference in Pakistan

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Cofounder

In Pakistan, there are few opportunities for many rural children to receive an education, and they yearn for such a chance! Often the Taliban goes into villages and offers scholarships to young boys to study. Many parents, seeing no other alternative to helping their young sons learn to read, send them with the Taliban. We know the results. What a difference it would make in the whole country if this generation of children in Pakistan had access to another kind of school! We personally cannot establish a Christian school in this Muslim country.

However, one of our graduates from Pakistan has done this in a rural village in his own country. For his protection, we are not printing his name. The school teaches from kindergarten through grade eight. There are 202 students in the school. They need to extend the school through grade 10, which would enable their graduates to go on to the university and become leaders in their country. But at this time, they are struggling to keep the eight grades operating.

We have the opportunity to help by partnering with this school in Pakistan! The first project needed is a science lab. The total cost of the lab is \$3015. SIFAT extends this opportunity to you to help influence the hearts and minds of children in Pakistan.



Two young girls have the opportunity to receive an education at a Christian school because of the work done by a SIFAT graduate in Pakistan. In a country where Christian missionaries are not allowed, our graduate is making a difference in the lives of both Christian and Muslim children.



While Haiti is still struggling its way out of the most destructive earthquake in years, Pakistan has been hit with a flooding disaster estimated to affect three times as many people as the earthquake affected in Haiti. One third of the country is reputed to have been under water. Millions of acres of food crops have been washed away. A graduate of SIFAT operates a school 80 miles from part of this disaster. The village people around him, though affected themselves, have shared some of their clothes and food. Our graduate has traveled to the devastated area five times to share his village's donations with the victims.

If you would like to help our graduate and his neighbors feed and clothe the flood victims, please designate your contribution for Pakistan. Designated gifts may also be used for his school.



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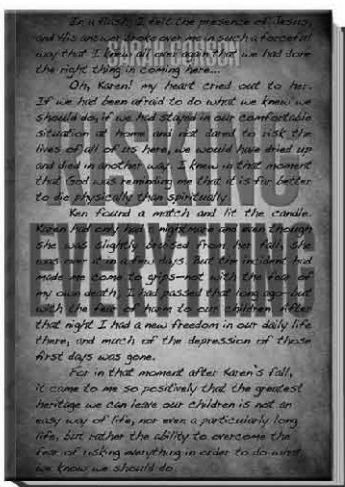
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SIFAT's Mission: To share God's love through service, education and personal involvement with a needy world.



Sarah Corson's latest book chronicles her family's years as missionaries in the jungle of Bolivia. Risking Everything will be released in early November.

Order Risking Everything for Everyone on Your Christmas List!

Drawing from articles she wrote with vivid detail at the time they happened, SIFAT cofounder Sarah Corson takes the reader into the reality of the world we live in...both then and still today. God's call to mission rings out on every page of this book as she takes us into the hearts and lives of the people of Bolivia.

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