



SIFAT

2944 County Road 113, Lineville, Alabama 36266
Phone: 256-396-2015 Fax: 256-396-2501 www.sifat.org

An excerpt from

Risking Everything

By Sarah Corson

One night, during our first month in the Alto Beni, Bolivia, everything came to a climax for me. We had all gone to sleep, when, in the middle of the night, Karen, our youngest, who was sleeping on the top bunk bed above her sister Kathy, suddenly began to scream. Our little living room served also as dining room and bedrooms, so we were separated from the girls only by a straw mat, which we had hung up to create a provisional wall. But it was dark and we were still unaccustomed to the house.

When we heard Karen's piercing scream, Ken and I both jumped up, but we got tangled in the mosquito netting and then the straw mat. We stumbled in the dark, for there was no electricity that late and we couldn't find a match for the candle. While Ken searched for a light, I rushed toward Karen's bed. As I reached her side, she became hysterical and either jumped or fell from the top bunk, slipping through my fingers. She hit a chair and then the floor and lay there screaming and writhing at my feet.

All the gruesome events we had witnessed in the past week flooded my consciousness. I feared that Karen's neck or her back might be broken. I saw in my mind that dangerous twelve-hour-long road we'd have to travel before we could get any real medical help. I saw our neighbor weeping beside the lifeless body of her son; I saw the man with the half-blown-off hand. I saw a vast throng of people in a place called the Alto Beni, where few lived to be old. Mentally I was screaming out in anguish, but my main thought remained unexpressed: *What have we done? Have we brought our children to this lonely, forsaken place to die?*

In a flash, I felt the presence of Jesus, and His answer broke over me in such a forceful way that I knew all over again that we had done the right thing in coming here. As I knelt there, trying to calm my daughter, even before Ken found the light and even before I knew how badly she was hurt, the realization came to me that there is more than one way to die. We will all die physically. But if we are afraid to follow God, if we are afraid to step out into the unknown when He calls us, then we can die mentally and spiritually while still existing physically.

Oh, Karen! my heart cried out to her. *If we had been afraid to do what we knew we should do, if we had stayed in our comfortable situation at home and not dared to risk the lives of all of us here, we would have dried up and died in another way.* I knew in that moment that God was reminding me that it is far better to die physically than spiritually.

Ken found a match and lit the candle. It was only a nightmare, and even though Karen was slightly bruised from her fall, she was over it in a few days. But the incident made me come to grips—not with the fear of my own death; I had passed that long ago—but with the fear of harm to our children. After that night I experienced a new freedom in our daily life, and much of the depression of those first days was gone. For in that moment after Karen's fall, it came to me so positively that the greatest heritage we can leave our children is not an easy way of life, nor even a particularly long life, but rather the ability to overcome the fear of risking everything in order to follow God's call.