

if you knew...

Fall 2009
Prostitution & Trafficking Issue

In March 2009, Samaritan's Purse Canada launched a new campaign focusing on women's projects in the developing world. We believe that equipping women with resources and training, and sharing the love of Christ with them, benefits not only individuals but families and entire communities. The campaign invites you to imagine the possibilities *if* women in the developing world were free from poverty, abuse, and exploitation. It focuses on four areas: literacy, maternal health, vocational training, and combating trafficking and prostitution. Through each edition of our new *If you knew...* newsletter, we will explore one of these four areas and offer you information, project profiles, testimonies, news items, and additional resources or opportunities to get involved. We hope you enjoy the first edition and, as always, we encourage you to visit ifcanada.ca to learn more or to donate.

TRANSFORMATION ROOTED IN LOCAL RESPONSE

"At first the problem seemed to be hidden under the surface, but now my eyes have fallen open," says Sarah*, in discussing her ministry to women trapped in prostitution in one Asian nation.

In many cases, young women come to the city looking for work in the numerous garment factories. However, wages are often as low as \$11 per month whereas basic monthly living costs are approximately \$100. To make ends meet, some women accept the propositions of men who wait outside the factory gates on their motorcycles at the end of the shift.

Starting as a prayer group of women who felt God calling them to respond to this growing issue in their community, Sarah's ministry has grown to see several young women successfully graduate from a multi-dimensional program supported by Samaritan's Purse.

Through the program that incorporates relational counseling, physical exercise, opportunities to learn healthy cooking and handicrafts, cultural outings, local church involvement, and vocational training, the young women are finding holistic healing for the scars of their past.

The strength of this fledgling project is that local Christian women like Sarah are responding to a need they have identified in their own community. These leaders have, in turn, assembled a holistic team of volunteers around them with a variety of skills to help meet the unique needs of these young women.

"I've seen lots of children's projects, and it is certainly good to help children," says one of the program's volunteers. "But I know if we help mothers, we will help entire families."

(*name changed for security)

CONFERENCE DRAWS DIVERSE CROWD

In early June, Samaritan's Purse hosted a 1 ½-day conference in Calgary that examined issues of gender and the exploitation of sexuality, as well as trafficking and prostitution. More than 100 participants—including pastors, ministry leaders, and concerned individuals—came from across Canada. Speakers at the *Embracing the Image of God* conference included psychologist and author Dr. Dan Allender, International Christian Alliance on Prostitution Executive Director Jennifer Singh, and Samaritan's Purse Project Manager Bruce Piercey. The conference focused on understanding the lies evil has taught us about gender and sexuality, and elaborated on the need for a united response from within the Body of Christ to foster true healing and restoration.



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IN THIS ISSUE:

- Ministry Profile: Ethiopia
- Recent News
- Recommended Reading
- Upcoming Events
- Personal Impact Story

Online Resources

WHAT IF SHE HAD A REAL CHOICE?

Without a doubt, many people may feel awkward or uncomfortable discussing trafficking and prostitution. Follow this [link](#) to ifcanada.ca to check out an online resource that exposes some of the lies and reveals the truth about these issues.

EMBRACING THE IMAGE OF GOD

Audio files of the June conference sessions are available on our website by following this [link](#).



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Samaritan's Purse
Women's Projects

MINISTRY PROFILE: ELLILTA IN ETHIOPIA

A leading program among the various anti-trafficking and anti-prostitution ministries supported by Samaritan's Purse Canada is *Ellilta—Women at Risk*, which is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Not only does this ministry have a success rate exceeding 90% in rehabilitating women exploited in prostitution and equipping them to live healthier lives, but it has also taken the lead in fostering a network among similar projects in Africa to enhance collaboration, encourage each other, and increase effectiveness.

Ellilta was established in 1996 and has worked with more than 200 women exploited in prostitution in urban areas of Ethiopia. Initial contact is made with women on the streets and in bars or at the ministry's drop-in center. Only women expressing a genuine desire to change their lifestyle are considered in the recruitment and selection process which identifies approximately 20 women for each nine-month programming cycle.

The first six months of the program are dedicated to structured counseling activities. Each day begins with devotions and then involves a variety of activities such as the 12-step addiction recovery program, one-on-one counseling, basic math and English classes, arts and crafts, as well as discussion of topics such as health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and the effects of abortion.

Throughout the program, participants receive necessary medical care through the services of a volunteer medical doctor. The women also receive a monthly financial allowance during their participation in the program to keep them from returning to the streets to earn a living, and child care or assistance with school fees for older children is provided when needed.

Upon completion of the structured counseling module, program participants move on to a skills training module where they learn applicable market-oriented skills or receive assistance in setting up their own small business. To date, businesses have included pottery, candle making, tortilla chips and other snacks, and French pastries, to name a few. In preparation for this aspect of the program, the women spend each Friday working at various jobs and learning positive work habits through lessons on topics such as ethics, personal goal-setting, and motivation.

Beyond the strength of the actual programming offered, and the high caliber of staff who work with Ellilta, the ministry's founder, Serawit Friedmeyer, is quick to acknowledge that it is really God who is behind the lasting changes seen in the lives of so many women. Perhaps the most important lesson the women are taught is that they were created with a purpose and that God truly loves them and has good plans for their futures. As the staff demonstrates love and acceptance on a daily basis, the hope of the Gospel is lived out in a way that breaks down the barriers of stigma and brokenness that initially surround the women. When asked about the recent group of women participating in the program, Serawit warmly reported: "One of the highlights has been their openness to God. So far, nine women (nearly half of the total group) are attending church very actively and out of this group, two made the decision to be baptized."

See **Full Circle: China's Story** on page 4 to read how God used Ellilta to transform one woman's life...



RECENT NEWS

Samaritan's Purse Partner Honored As Hero

Mariliana Morales, founder of the Rahab Foundation in Costa Rica and partner of Samaritan's Purse, was recently recognized by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton as one of nine "Trafficking in Persons Heroes" for 2009. Mariliana began the Rahab Foundation in 1997 with a vision to see families who were connected with prostitution and sex trafficking restored and re-incorporated into society with new skills by means of coming to know the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The ministry offers counseling, education, and job training to exploited women and their families and also works to stop trafficking before it starts by training government leaders, police, youth, and tourism workers in human trafficking issues. When receiving the award, Mariliana said: "Although we [each] fight against human trafficking in different ways, we have the same goal: to defeat this crime. And we trust in God's grace that He will help us achieve that. We want to return dignity to human beings."



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RECENT NEWS CONT'D...

2009 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT RELEASED

The U.S. State Department recently released its ninth-annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. The report seeks to increase global awareness of human trafficking by shedding new light on various facets of the problem and highlighting shared and individual efforts of the international community. One hundred and seventy-five countries are each evaluated and placed onto one of three tier lists based on the extent of government action to combat trafficking. The report notes improvement in the fight against trafficking, with 26 additional countries enacting new legislation since the last report. Nevertheless, the United Nations' International Labor Organization estimates that there are at least 12.3 million adults and children in forced or bonded labor and commercial sexual servitude at any given time, and of these victims, an estimated minimum of 1.39 million are victims of commercial sexual servitude, both trans-national and within countries. "The report underscores the need to address the root causes of human trafficking—including poverty, lax law enforcement and the exploitation of women—and their devastating effects on its victims and their families," says U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Follow this link to read the [full TIP Report](#).



WANT TO LEARN MORE? RECOMMENDED READING

- *Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade and How We Can Fight It*, David Batstone (2007)
- *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*, Kevin Bales (2008)
- *Sex Slaves*, Louise Brown (2007)
- *Escaping the Devil's Bedroom: Sex Trafficking, Global Prostitution, and the Gospel's Transforming Power*, Dawn Herzog Jewell (2009)
- *The Natashas: The New Global Sex Trade*, Victor Malarek (2004)
- *The Johns: Sex For Sale and The Men Who Buy It*, Victor Malarek (2009)
- *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy*, Kevin Bales (1999)
- *Prostitution and Trafficking in Nevada: Making the Connections*, Melissa Farley (2007)
- *Trophy of Grace*, Bronwen Healy

*These are recommended resources. By no means is this a comprehensive list of resources about trafficking and prostitution; nor is Samaritan's Purse Canada responsible for the endorsement of information and/or opinions within those listed.

IMAGINE FREEDOM

Bring hope to women in the developing world

Thursday, October 8, 2009, 7-9:30 p.m.
The Bow Valley Club, 370, 250 6 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB
(Business attire, no jeans please)
Tickets \$25

Enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres, live jazz music, and a silent auction in support of Samaritan's Purse Women's Projects.

RSVP by October 5 by calling 403.250.6565



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FULL CIRCLE: CHINA'S STORY

Based on first impressions, one would never imagine the dark and painful experiences that defined China's youth. Joy radiates from this young African woman's face and she is full of hope for the plans the Lord has for her future.

To understand her joy, however, one must first realize the bleak beginnings of China's journey. In the late 1990s, China was living on the streets—alone, expecting her first child, and only 14 years old.

Following her father's death, her mother remarried. China's stepfather drank too much and eventually began to sexually abuse her. Although China cried out for help, her mother dismissed the accusations and even hit her with a stick. Pushed out of her family and her community, China ran away to live on the streets, earning money by selling her young body.

There on the darkened streets of Addis Ababa is where the founder of *Ellilta*—*Women at Risk* first met this young girl. The ministry was just beginning, and China was one of its first participants (see **Ministry Profile** on Pg 2).

There were many setbacks for China along the road to recovery—she enrolled and then walked away from the program five times—but the staff continued to love her and accept her throughout these struggles. She now recognizes that the counseling program was touching the deep places in her heart—exposing memories and emotions that were easier to run away from than address head on.

In total, China lived on the streets for eight years. Following her mother's death, China realized that she did not want this kind of life for her younger sister. At the same time, China's friends all moved away and she began to feel very alone. Recalling prayers that she had heard the *Ellilta* team pray, China asked this same God to give her one more chance in the ministry program. Returning for the sixth time, China was welcomed into a halfway house and was nurtured and encouraged by the loving team members she had come to know over several years.

"I saw God not necessarily through words, but through the love of the *Ellilta* team," China remembers.

Healing began when China felt she was finally able to share her story with one of the program's counselors. Once again, she was overwhelmed by the acceptance she received and the walls around her heart began to crumble.

"The trauma I had experienced was not accepted by my mother; how could I expect others to accept me?" she thought.

This time, China remained in the program, and with the unconditional love and support of the *Ellilta* team, she now has hope for the future and a personal relationship with her Savior, Jesus Christ. China's life has been completely transformed, and today she is serving other women who are hurting like she was.

Now a counselor with one of the *Ellilta* projects in Ethiopia, China draws on her own experience as she reaches out to others. "I was one of the first girls *Ellilta* worked with and I know how difficult I was, but I am so thankful that God kept filling up the team members with His love, because they never gave up on me."



China (left) and Serawit (*Ellilta*'s founder) share her story as a testimony of God's faithfulness

If you would like to learn more about Samaritan's Purse and our work with women in the developing world, or would like to donate, please visit ifcanada.ca or call 1.800.663.6500.



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