



## Water & Women

By Elizabeth Limpic

The sun had barely set, it seemed, when it was time for Nsonge to wake up and prepare for the two-mile long trek to the nearest stream. She needed to fetch water for the family before her husband and children awoke. If she was not back by sunrise, her husband would be very upset.

More than half of the 1.2 billion people who do not have access to water are women and girls. Daily, they are responsible for collecting water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, hygiene, and sanitation. The huge burden of fetching water hinders women's and girls' participation in activities such as education, politics, economic endeavors, rest, and recreation.

**Distance and time.** Collecting water is often the most time consuming, yet important daily activity for women and young girls in developing countries. **In rural areas, they can spend four to five hours per day gathering water, making it hard for women to focus on other economic activities and for their daughters to attend school.** The weight of the water they carry also exposes them to a greater risk of malnutrition, back problems, and anemia. They expend immense amounts of energy and often times don't have enough food to replenish their weary bodies, which is especially dangerous if a woman is pregnant. The weight also limits the amount of water they can carry.

**Water Quantity.** The precious, small amounts of water gathered are often only used for drinking and food preparation, leaving little hope for disease-fighting hygiene practices like hand washing. **Too little water for proper hygiene behaviors perpetuates bacterial diarrheas, which are a major cause of sickness, malnutrition, and death.** Women bare the majority of these statistics as the caregivers in the family. Lastly, women are commonly the ones to water and care for the crops, if they have access to land. Without adequate amounts of water for irrigation, crops suffer and women are not able to feed their families.

**Water Quality.** In many places, women's long walks to fetch water result in sickness for their families. This hard earned water, if left untreated, has the potential to kill their babies. **Unfortunately, women may lack time or energy to seek out scarce firewood to boil and treat the water.** Many times new technologies for water treatment are taught to the men in the village and do not get shared with the women who manage the water collection and storage for the family.

***“More than half of the 1.2 billion people who do not have access to water are women and girls.”***

Improved water sources are the first step to empowering women in developing countries. As the main users of water, women's lives, like Nsonge's, are waiting to be radically transformed by Lifewater's well drilling and pump repair programs, which provide safe water close to their homes. **Partner with Lifewater to change women's lives around the world through the gift of water, gift of life.**



*In many places, a woman may have no choice but to bring dirty, contaminated water home to her family.*

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Winter 2004

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# Miracles of Transformation in China

By Elizabeth Limpic

In the mountains of western China, a twelve year-old girl named Joma straps a six-gallon container onto her back for her downhill walk to a stream half a mile away. Daily, she is the one assigned to fetch water for her school where rural, nomadic children live and are educated nine months out of the year. **The water Joma is collecting, however, is contaminated and needs to be boiled before it is safe to drink.** In this treeless landscape, the only fuel she can gather for fires is yak dung. Thankfully, the Chinese Government is aware of the needs of Joma's school, and asked our Lifewater-trained partner to go and drill a new water well there several months ago.

This past July, Lifewater volunteers Rod Thompson, Dave Olsen, Sally Scholl, and John Sedlak traveled to China to work with Lifewater's partner, training nationals in well drilling and hygiene education. Rod and John joined the Lifewater-trained drill crew to drill a well at Joma's school. **Many of the students looked skeptical as they surveyed the flat, dry land and listened to the Lifewater crew talk about accessing water.** However, they watched as a deep hole was drilled after a few days of hard work.

The drilling crew wanted to show the children the water that sat waiting at the bottom of the newly drilled borehole before they installed a hand pump on the well. Their hostess, the wife of the school principal who lives in a one-room home at the school with her husband and children, lent them a precious mirror hanging on her wall. They held the mirror at an angle above the well, and the children shyly peered in. They were amazed to see the water and the straightness of the hole. **For them, it was a miracle to access safe water from a place that, as of a few days before, was only a piece of flat, dry ground.** The school landscape, as well as the lives of these children at Joma's school, was transformed through this new well.



## Spiritual Transformation

While Rod and John worked at the school, Sally and Dave were watching other transformations take place as they taught hygiene to 24 trainers. Two local Christian women eagerly learned and applied the training by teaching their fellow countrymen during the practicum that followed the classroom training sessions.

Another one of their students, a Buddhist monk who had recently become a Christian, decided to make his decision public by exchanging his robes for common clothes. **This symbolized his willingness to leave his former life behind and endure hardship in order to know Jesus.** It was amazing to see a part of the transformation of this young man's life, to see his growing commitment to follow Christ, and to be able to play a small, but significant role in this process.

## Please pray for volunteers in the field...

### Leaving in December, 2004

**Tanzania**, returning December 21st. The team will include Jerry Buckingham, Rev. Lambert Mtatifikolo, and Keith Olson, who will be conducting a survey trip to the villages of Mwanza, Mbulu, and Meru. At Mwanza the team will meet with the bishop of the Lake Victor Diocese to see if a partnership can be formed to drill wells. At Mbulu the team will talk to the Mbulu Diocese about facilitating a water program. Finally, at Meru the team will discuss plans for a survey and gather data on the future of drilling in that area.

### Leaving in January, 2005

**Kenya**, leaving early January. Volunteer Cathy Fitzgerald and Ken and Betty Moore with others will be returning to Rabondo to continue training the crew of nationals on the LS-100 drill rig.

**Togo, Burkina Faso, and Sierra Leone**, leaving late January. Volunteers Garon Harris and Doug Headrick, along with staff member John Nadolski, will travel to these West African countries. During the first part of this trip, Doug and John will meet with a representative of Sudan Inland Mission in Burkina Faso to explore training them in shallow well drilling. In Ghana, Garon and John hope to re-allocate two idle drill rigs to projects in Togo; later they plan to check on the possibility of drilling with an LS-100 rig in northern Togo.

**Mexico**, leaving this winter. The Vineyard Church of Santa Maria (CA) is partnering with Lifewater to help train a local church in Tecate, Baja, in well drilling and hygiene training. The church wants to use their donated rig to minister to the surrounding communities.

### Leaving in February, 2005

**Liberia**, leaving early February. Volunteers Jim Gehrels, Bob Jarrett, Randy Taylor, and Linda Gehrels, along with staff member Cheryl Hertan, will return to work with long-time partner Lifewater Liberia, Inc. The team will focus on advanced drill training, hygiene training, small business development, and setting up a latrine construction program.

**Laos**, leaving late February. A large training team will be working with our two partners in Laos to introduce Biosand filters and give advanced training in hygiene and air rotary and cable tool drilling.

**Northern Africa**, leaving late February. Board member Tim Cleath and retired staff member Odo Siahaya are returning for a visit with Lifewater's long-time partner there who primarily works with the Berber people. Tim and Odo are going in order to encourage this partner and learn about more ways Lifewater can be of help to their ministry.



*Happy Holidays From Lifewater*



## Alternative Christmas Gift-Giving: "Give the gift that will not be forgotten"

In response to requests for meaningful gift ideas this Christmas, we have created a way for you to give the foundational gift of clean water and life-saving hygiene in honor of your friends and family. Donate \$25 to support the hygiene and sanitation program or \$50 toward providing safe drinking water and receive a gift card to send to your loved ones this Christmas.

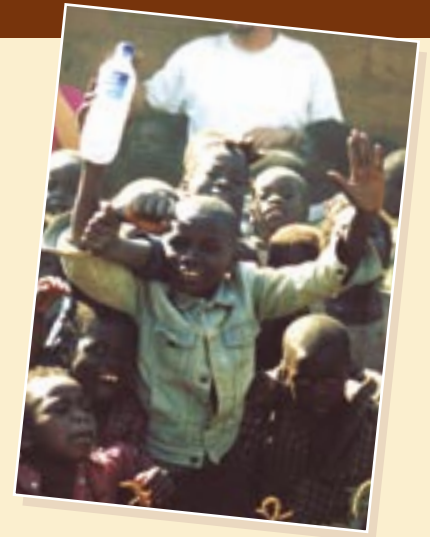
On the enclosed envelope, check the "gift" box and indicate the number of gift cards you wish to receive. Please write in the total dollar amount enclosed. When we receive your donation, we will send your Lifewater Christmas cards to your address, so that you can personalize them and send them out to your friends and family. This is truly a gift that will not be forgotten!



### "Clean Hands, Clean Heart"

*Inside Message:*

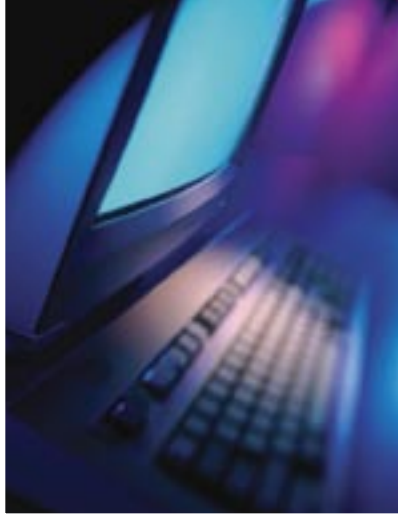
*A \$25 gift has been given in honor of you this Christmas to Lifewater International! This gift will help train families how to prevent disease through hygiene and sanitation training.*



### "Abundant Life"

*Inside Message:*

*A \$50 gift has been given in honor of you this Christmas to Lifewater International! This gift will help provide clean water for the thirsty through indigenous well drilling programs around the world.*



## Mark Your Calendars for February 1st

[www.lifewater.org](http://www.lifewater.org) is having an open house  
and you are invited to log on!

After a substantial remodel, Lifewater's homepage is ready for visitors. On **February 1st, 2005** we are opening the doors to our new website, [www.lifewater.org](http://www.lifewater.org), and we want you to be some of the first people to visit! After ten years of a remarkable site, it was time to freshen up, add new material, and change the fixtures, so to speak.

February is also significant because it marks the start of a very important season for the Christian faith. Lent, which is the 40 days leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection, has been observed by Christians in a variety of ways for many centuries. By logging onto our site, you can remember Jesus' life and sacrifice during these 40 days and have an impact on those that are longing for safe water and *living water* around the world. **Visit [www.lifewater.org](http://www.lifewater.org) on February 1st to find out more!**

## Getting Connected 2004 Volunteers Conference



**"Launch out into the deep  
and let down your nets  
for a catch." Luke 5:4**

Lifewater held its Annual Volunteers Conference October 8-11, 2004 at William Carey University in Pasadena, CA. Volunteers gathered from all over the U.S. to plan project training trips for 2005, attend workshops on water technologies and hygiene, and hear great speakers on holistic community development and cross-cultural relations. It was a very productive four days, all kicked off by a Volunteers Appreciation Banquet the first night. Several of our overseas partners were also able to join us at the conference. They shared firsthand experiences of working within their communities to drill wells, implement good hygiene and sanitation behaviors, and repair hand pumps on wells. At the end of the conference, the volunteers signed up to serve on over 40 training trips around the world in 2005.

The Conference is a great way to get involved and support Lifewater's work around the world. Watch for information about the next Lifewater Volunteers Conference scheduled for August 2005 in upcoming newsletters and on our website, [www.lifewater.org](http://www.lifewater.org).



*Lifewater volunteers learn new water technologies like Biosand filtration.*

## Women and Water Management

An Editorial by Elizabeth Limpic

In the early 1990's the international community recognized that to break the cycle of poverty, women must have equal access to basic human rights, including safe drinking water. **However, achieving this sort of gender equality requires women to be involved in their communities' decisions, which unfortunately is not a common practice in many developing nations today.**

Women play a key role in water management since they are responsible for collecting water for drinking, cooking, cleaning, health and hygiene, and in some places, growing food for the family. Because of these roles, women have a deep understanding about water resources, such as water quantity, quality, reliability, restrictions, and acceptable storage methods. This knowledge makes them natural participants in the planning of any successful water development policy or program within a community. Unfortunately, women have not been historically included, and it is now being recognized that their exclusion from these initiatives has contributed to the high rate of failure of many water projects. **It is imperative that women in the community be involved in any water project so as to avoid solutions that end up needing to be fixed.**

With that said, groups that have begun including women in their development models, are seeing amazing results. For example, in Kenya, Lifewater partner Benjamin Oyoo of GWAKO (Groups of Women in Agriculture K'ochieng) explains what successful community development looks like when women are involved:

"Water projects are not new in our society. Big organizations or companies come in and drill a lot of wells, but after two years they will be broken. **The difference in creating successful solutions is the participatory approach that involves women.** Women participate from the very beginning to the last step, making it very sustainable. GWAKO helps a group of women from each community create an action plan for development after assessing strengths and weaknesses. Then we begin the work."

Thankfully, the trend of excluding women is now changing as more organizations try to evaluate gender issues surrounding water management. **We need to remember that it is women and girls who are most affected by a water project.** Let's not forget these key stakeholders in the process.