



# Lack of clean, **safe water**



# a growing global concern

**F**or Americans living in homes where there are toilets, sinks, a shower, bathtub, dishwasher, hot water heater and washing machine, it's difficult to grasp the reality that millions of people around the globe must walk miles to obtain even one drop of clean water.

Potable water is quickly becoming a precious commodity around the world, as valuable as oil in some regions.

About 18 percent of the world's population — more than a billion people — don't have access to safe drinking water, according to the World Health Organization. Without adequate water to drink, bathe in or irrigate with, people living in the developing world face hunger, disease and loss of income.

"Water is life," says Assemblies of God Africa Regional Director Mike McClafflin. "Without water there is no crop production. Without clean water there are a host of water-borne diseases that affect fertility, life span and basic health."

Throughout much of the undeveloped and underdeveloped world, clean water is in short supply.

To begin with, less than 1 percent of the world's water is fresh and available for use, with 70 percent of that being used for agriculture. The World Bank reports that 80 countries have water shortages that threaten health and their economies.

"One child dies every 14 seconds from a disease related to unsafe water, inadequate sanitation or poor hygiene," says John Bongiorno, an Assemblies of God businessman and president of Maji-Tech, a well-drilling company with rigs on the ground in Africa.

Around 5 million people die annually from water-related diseases such as malaria, river blindness, cholera, typhoid or guinea worms.

Don Tucker, director of Africa Harvest Ministries, says the crisis along

the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina shows how a critical need for freshwater can develop rapidly.

"Other than removing people from perilous risk, the first step taken is to provide clean drinking water because the human body suffers from water deprivation rather quickly," Tucker says.

## SANITARY SOLUTIONS

For much of the world, the answer to a lack of water is drilling wells to tap water underneath the surface. But that isn't a panacea.

"Digging a well every 50 meters can destroy a water table," Tucker says. "We have to look at each situation, evaluate it and do something sustainable in partnership with the local community."

Also, the act of digging a well can be fraught with political, religious and

By John W. Kennedy

keep the water they do have."

In many areas it's not simply a matter of finding water, but finding clean, safe water. Living near a river isn't a solution if upstream cattle wade in the water, factories pollute it or families dump garbage in it.

The situation is most dire in Africa, where 400 million people don't have access to adequate water and sanitation. The Assemblies of God has formed the Africa Oasis Project, a strategic partnership that will identify and prioritize the water needs of 40,000 Assemblies of God churches, schools and medical facilities on the continent.

An Assemblies of God Bible school in Nigeria nearly closed last year — until the committee worked with the national church to drill a deep-water well.

"Sometimes the solutions are relatively easy," Tucker says.



Fetching water on a rugged terrain is a daily chore for Pakistani women.

humanitarian implications.

Likewise, just installing the technology isn't enough. "We can give a village a pump, but if they don't have the capacity to fix the pump down the line we haven't done a great deal for them," Tucker says. "The problem might be better resolved by teaching good hygiene and how to protect, purify and

In some cases, it's as simple as harvesting rainwater in storage facilities. Other times, installing a purification system is the answer.

Frequently in Africa, people must walk miles to a source to haul water. Once water is obtained it is only used for the essentials — drinking, and sometimes cooking. People don't

## Assemblies of God Faculty Positions Available



The Assemblies of God Commission on Christian Higher Education continues to develop a national database of all interested persons who would like to be considered for faculty positions at endorsed A/G colleges and universities.

The greatest area of need is in the non-Bible and theology disciplines, particularly math, science, behavioral science, business, music, and social science areas. However, all interested persons are encouraged to apply regardless of discipline. Previous college teaching experience preferred but may not be required in all situations.

### Requirements for database eligibility:

- Member of Assemblies of God with faithful attendance at an A/G church
- A/G pastor's recommendation
- Master's degree minimum, Doctorate preferred

Online application available at  
[www.colleges.ag.org](http://www.colleges.ag.org)

For further information,  
please contact:

**Christian Higher Education  
Department**  
1445 North Boonville Avenue  
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# safe water

believe they should squander water to wash themselves. But a lack of hygiene creates a host of disease risks.

"Women and children must expend a tremendous amount of energy to find water and carry it long distances," Bongiorno says. Tucker notes that many girls don't receive an education because they spend entire days walking to and from wells.

In fact, a majority of Africans don't have water connections in their dwell-

ings, provides opportunity to preach that we didn't have before. Our most important goal is to get people to heaven, but whatever we can do on that journey to provide physical relief, we will do."

According to the United Nations, in the next two decades the average supply of water per person worldwide is expected to decline by one-third because of increased pollution, population growth and climate changes. If usage continues at its current pace, 2.7 billion people will face severe water shortages by 2025.

The trend toward growing urbanization will only make stretched resources in metropolitan areas even more acute.

Environmental conditions — the recent climatic patterns that have caused drought and resulted in expanded deserts — are largely beyond human control.

Increasingly, there is the possibility that nations could go to war over water rights. More than a dozen nations from various regions, including Bulgaria, Cambodia and the Sudan, receive at least 75 percent or more of freshwater supplies from rivers flowing from neighboring nations.

For the most part, the United States has escaped the environmental and climatic hazards that cause water shortages elsewhere. Americans on average use 101 gallons of water daily, which is more than 15 times as much as those living in developing nations.

Americans spend millions of dollars — and gallons of water — annually just to keep their yards green, cars clean and swimming pools full. But as the population continues to soar in arid cities such as Las Vegas, Americans may learn firsthand that there isn't an unending supply of water.

"We're to be good stewards of our environment," Tucker says. "Wasting water is as bad as, if not worse than, wasting food." ■

*John W. Kennedy is news editor of Today's Pentecostal Evangel.*

*E-mail your comments to [pe@ag.org](mailto:pe@ag.org).*



Ken Horn

**Burkina Faso residents gather water from a community well.**

ing places. Sometimes entire villages are served by one hydrant. On the continent, where there are vast stretches of arid desert with no water anywhere, a person can walk for hundreds of miles and never see a well or a pump.

### LIVING WATER

When an organization drills a well in a community where water previously had been unavailable, residents are naturally grateful. Thus, by providing water to meet physical needs, the Assemblies of God often gains a platform to talk about the eternal water that Jesus referred to in John 4:14.

"We don't provide physical water just so we can preach the gospel," McClaffin says. "But many times it