

N.C. Company Uses Profit to Provide Clean Water in Africa

✖ **May 7, 2009** – Every 15 seconds a person dies from a water-related disease. One in every six people lives without consistent access to safe drinking water. And more than a third of the world's population lacks access to proper sanitation.

It's statistics like those that motivated Matt Peterson to start a water bottling company and use the profits to provide clean drinking water in developing nations. Known as Zao – a Greek word meaning "to live" – the Clemmons, company works primarily in Kenya and Tanzania, where it provides clean water through 33 springs, 19 wells and one tank that catches rain from rooftops. Work recently began in Burkina Faso, and will soon spread to Ghana.

Currently, Zao's water is available in churches, coffee houses, bookstores and grocers in North and South Carolina, and Illinois. But the company recently began a partnership with LeBleu bottled water company to make its water more widely available. Although 100 percent of the profit supports Zao's clean water projects, Peterson said the company has seen an incredible return.

"In a warring area where tribes hated each other and had been killing each other for years, we provided a spring and shared the gospel at the dedication of the spring, and 10 of the villagers met the Lord for the first time, stopped warring and asked us to plant a church there, which we helped to do," Peterson said. "There's so many ripple effects from providing clean drinking water and giving it away and sharing the gospel."