

World Water Day Sees Flood of Christian Response

The nonprofit organization, **charity: water**, is asking Christians to make a personal pledge on Thursday–**World Water Day 2012**–to give up their next birthday to help the nearly 1 billion people worldwide who don't have access to clean, safe drinking water.

The idea is to ask friends and family to take the money they would normally use to buy birthday gifts and donate it to the cause of providing life-changing sources of clean drinking water in the least developed countries, which are marked by extreme poverty and human suffering.

Charity: water statistics show that more than 4,000 children die each day around the world because of unsafe drinking water and poor sanitary conditions. Diseases increase in areas of dirty drinking water. Moreover, contaminated water reportedly kills more people each year than wars do.

To combat the problem, **charity: water** has funded more than 6,000 water projects since its inception in 2006. These water restoration projects supply clean, safe drinking water to 2.5 million people in 19 countries.

Contributions to water restoration efforts make a measurable impact. According to **charity: water**, the cost of a water project is \$5,000 on average, and, when completed, it can supply a community of 250 people with clean and safe water. Giving one person access to clean, safe drinking water typically costs \$20.

Another Christian organization that is working to combat the global water crisis is **Gospel for Asia**, which is distributing BioSand water filters and digging Jesus Wells in areas lacking clean water.

“Gospel for Asia is demonstrating Christ’s love tangibly by providing clean water to communities and people who desperately need it,” says Daniel Punnose, vice president of Gospel for Asia.

BioSand water filters use concrete and sand to remove impurities in order to purify water. Jesus Wells provide fresh water sources for villages, even allowing people who are considered “untouchable” to obtain clean water.

Compassion International also announced this week that construction on a water well in Okolili, Tanzania, is underway. In a charitable act spawned from a visit to Tanzania to see her sponsored child, Peter Beaton, fashion designer Darcy Creech has been raising the funds for this water well project through the sale of Hydrex Philanthropic watches.

The purpose of World Water Day, which is held annually on the same date in March, is to focus the public’s attention on the importance of fresh water. This year’s theme globally is “Water and Food Security,” emphasizing that food safety depends on clean water, whether for growing crops, washing fruits and vegetables or using it to cook.

Studies show that the availability of clean water is transformative for a community, especially in some of the poorest countries in Africa. Waterborne illnesses decrease, and proper sanitary practices and good hygiene practices are increasingly adopted to reduce the spread of communicable diseases. Clean, safe water is also considered a mainspring for empowering women, who often take leadership positions for the first time to oversee renewed, fresh water resources in villages.

Finally, Mars Hill Bible Church responded to the need for clean water in Rwanda and formed the organization 20 Liters, bringing awareness to the issue of the scarcity of clean water around the world. 20 Liters was created to expand awareness

and involvement with water issues to the global arena.