

# Water ministry provides showers of blessings globally, TBM board learns

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DALLAS—Providing sources of pure drinking water represents a rapidly growing avenue for ministry in developing countries, the [Texas Baptist Men](#) executive board learned at their Feb. 20-21 meeting.

“By providing the physical water the people already know they need, we are able to introduce them to the Living Water,” said Harold Patterson from [First Baptist Church in Winnsboro](#), vice president for the TBM water ministry.



Harold and Kathy Patterson—founders of Northeast Texas Disaster Response—developed a low-cost portable rig capable of drilling a 100-foot well. (PHOTO/David

Clanton, *CommonCall*)TBM continues to distribute simple water purification systems—a gravity drip system using ceramic filters and readily available plastic buckets. TBM has shipped thousands of the water filters to more than 70 countries and trained local people to use them.

In recent months, Patterson reported, TBM also has become involved in two additional aspects of water ministry—well-drilling and training in health, hygiene and sanitation to eliminate the spread of water-borne diseases and prevent contamination of water sources.

Drawing on more than 35 years of experience as a mechanic, Patterson designed and built a well-drilling rig for less than \$2,000 using a two-person posthole digger and a six-horsepower engine.

Patterson and his wife, Kathy, together with Phil Davenport from [First Baptist Church in Garland](#), drilled three wells in Eku, Nigeria. Working in partnership with [Walking in Love Ministries](#), they also trained local Christians to operate the drilling rig they left in Eku.

“After that, the chiefs’ council there approved 14 more sites for wells. Each one will provide water for about 2,000 people,” Patterson reported.

### **New well in the Himalayas**

After five failed attempts, the water ministry also successfully drilled a well for a town in the Himalayas of Manipur, India. The rig—previously believed to have a maximum drilling depth of 100 feet—drilled through 70 feet of hard shale before reaching water at 120 feet. The well will provide a water source for Leishiphung Christian Hospital.

As the water ministry continues to develop, participants learn how to improve processes to make them more cost-effective and efficient, Patterson noted. In the future, he hopes to build low-cost solar-powered well pumps that will be able to operate in remote areas that lack electricity.

In other reports, the board learned TBM disaster relief volunteers prepared more than 43,800 meals in 2014, but only about 1,000 were served during a natural disaster.

Although Texas escaped any major hurricanes and widespread tornadoes last year, volunteers still served in multiple venues—including ministry to unaccompanied immigrant children along the Texas/Mexico border, state disaster relief director Terry Henderson said.

TBM disaster relief workers made portable shower units available in a variety of settings, providing access to 4,449 showers during disasters and 5,335 in situations other than disasters.

### **TBM Responded to 18 disasters**

TBM volunteers responded to 18 disasters in 2014—15 in Texas and three outside the state.

Trained TBM workers provided childcare for 2,448 children, and they washed and dried 2,300 loads of laundry, he said.

They distributed 123 Bibles and presented the gospel message or offered spiritual counsel in 740 instances, and they recorded 65 professions of faith in Christ, Henderson said.

The board also learned TBM builders devoted 33,000 volunteer hours to 45 building projects at churches, encampments and ministries last year, and 2,885 boys and young men participated in 24 Royal Ambassador/Challengers camps last year, where 229 made professions of faith or recorded other spiritual commitments.