

# Access to clean water promotes peacemaking

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Dee Dee Wint, leader of Texas Baptist Men's international water ministry, believes providing access to clean water promotes peacemaking, and it offers a tangible expression of God's love.

Four out of 10 people in Kenya lack access to clean water for drinking and basic sanitation, Wint noted. In the last three years, TBM has been responsible for drilling five wells in a particularly hard-hit area of northern Kenya.

"They were telling us there was a lot of tension and fighting in the communities. People were fighting over food. Their animals were dying because they couldn't get enough water to survive," Wint said.

"But after the wells were in place, there was a relaxing of the tension. People are getting along better, and they are healthier."

Significantly, people who benefit from the wells TBM provides also learn how to experience peace with God through the Living Water of Jesus Christ, Wint noted.

A recent [Gospel for Asia report](#) on the global water crisis called water "a resource that is becoming more precious than gold," and it cited changing weather patterns and increased demand due to population growth as complicating factors.

The report quoted Shaz Memon, a British entrepreneur and founder of the Wells on Wheels charity, as saying water scarcity is the "invisible" hand behind many humanitarian crises. In a Dec. 29, 2020, commentary, [Memon](#)

[pointed to water scarcity](#) as one of the root causes of conflicts in Yemen, Nigeria and Syria.

## World Water Day observed March 22

More than 744 million people—some credible sources say a lot more—lack access to safe drinking water. And a [United Nations report](#) estimates global demand for water could increase 30 percent by 2050.

The UN designated March 22 as World Water Day to focus on the global need for clean water.



A TBM water ministry team works with Ugandan nationals and Sudanese refugees to drill a desperately needed water well in a refugee camp. (Photo / Tim Wint)

Wint and the TBM water ministry concentrate on that need year-round—drilling wells, teaching hygiene classes and distributing filters for simple water purification systems.

She notes TBM has focused in recent years on training local Christians in drilling techniques and pump maintenance and teaching them how to teach

basic hygiene to others. That approach [enabled the water ministry to continue](#) even when the COVID-19 pandemic made international travel by Texas-based teams impossible.

In Peru, TBM began working with local Christians five years ago to train them how to drill wells using a rig well-suited to remote locations and to maintain the water pumps.

Since then, indigenous Christians have continued to drill wells deep in the Amazon rainforest, where people previously relied on polluted surface water populated by tadpoles and mosquito larvae.

“The goal is sustainability—not just doing things for people, but teaching them how to do things for themselves,” Wint said.

## **Saving lives, saving souls during pandemic**



Dee Dee Wint, vice president of the Texas Baptist Men water ministry, shows women from a village in Burkina Faso how they can fill containers with pure water, made possible by a well and pump

secured by TBM, with a grant from national Woman's Missionary Union. (Photo / Tim Wint)

Wint believes the instruction TBM provided to Christians in northern Ghana saved lives during the worst part of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We taught health and hygiene classes in northern Ghana right before the pandemic broke out," she said. "We taught the importance of handwashing to prevent the spread of germs."

In an area where villagers practiced open defecation, the TBM teams taught them the importance of using latrines set up at a distance from water sources.

"The people told us they had no idea about germs," she said. "They told us, 'Nobody else ever cared about us enough to tell us these things. It was the Christians who told us.'"

Today, there are churches in each of the 11 villages where people have access to clean water from wells TBM provided.

In an October 2020 report, the Christians in Ghana explained they led "clean hands, clean hearts" presentations in villages to teach hygiene and present the gospel during the peak of the pandemic.

"The physical dimension addresses personal hygiene and physical precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus, whereas the spiritual dimension focuses on the spiritual condition of the heart and how to keep it pure," the report stated.