



life-changing
partnerships



IN PARTNERSHIP

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Carrying water, part of daily life for women in rural Zimbabwe

Judge Softly

Judge Softly is a poem written by Mary T. Lathrap in 1895 that addresses our capacity to jump to conclusions about others. The repeated theme is articulated in this stanza:

*Remember to walk a mile in his
moccasins*

*and remember the lessons of
humanity taught to you by your
elders.*

*We will be known forever by the
tracks we leave*

*in other people's lives, our
kindnesses and generosity.*

Jesus models this 'judge softly' approach. He walked in our shoes. He needed water in the middle of the day. The writer to the Hebrews summed it up: "We don't have a priest who is out of touch with our reality. He's been through weakness and testing, experienced it all – all but the sin." (Hebrews 4:15 MSG)

When we hear about the vulnerability of communities in Australia and internationally to

disaster, dispossession of land rights or entrenched poverty, let's stay strong in compassion and empathy, and resist the journey to judgement.

A pathway of compassion includes being generous, and a deep appreciation of the many opportunities we have. It is not often that we are invited to "walk in the shoes of another."

Were we to step in the shoes of a rural woman in Zimbabwe, we would be spending three or four hours a day collecting water (which may not be safe). It may be a five or six kilometre walk each way. The return journey includes carrying a 20-litre bucket of water on our head! Each day there are two or three trips for water. A family of four or five rely on 40 to 60 litres of water a day for their drinking, cooking and washing needs, as well as caring for their garden and animals! When a new bore is installed and 200 families have access to water within a few hundred metres of their homes

there is much rejoicing. One elderly woman said, "I am so happy – I will wash myself three times today!"

How we take what we have for granted! We have taps where we want them and an average Melbourne family uses 620 litres (31 trips carrying a 20-litre bucket) a day!

In September, let's all drink water for a month. Please join me! There will be no tea, coffee, soft drink, juice or other drinks – just water! What will happen? We will forsake our various drinks and discover water. Water will move from the background to the foreground in our daily routines. A daily decision will be to say, "No coffee, thanks – just water." For one month we will support people for whom safe water is a gift, not something taken for granted. For one month we will help provide people with access to safe water – 'judging softly' in action!

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

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Now in its third year, the Justice Conference in 2017 will explore Jesus' command to love thy neighbour. Join us in Melbourne on October 27-28. For more information check out the conference website www.thejusticeconference.com.au



Welcome to the Team!

Colin Battersby has joined the GMP team in Western Australia. He will be conducting a four-month research and consultancy project for us in strategic engagement of churches in WA. This will support the work of GMP and Indigenous Ministries. Welcome to the team, Colin!



A Word From Boniface Mpofu

Boniface making a visit to report on a borehole

I experience joy when I see the joy of other people when water comes out of their community borehole for the first time! This means that there will be great changes for them, as their quality of life will be enhanced, including many of the things we take for granted. At Showers of Blessing, not only do we care about installing boreholes, we also care about maintaining

them. Periodically we make visits to our bores just to check on the developments around them. We get feedback from the community on how the bore has assisted them, and we write reports on how their lives have been improved. We make sure the maintenance side of the bores is working ok, that the committee that has been set up to maintain the bore continues in

operation, and everything is going according to plan. We look forward to drilling more boreholes in other areas of Zimbabwe, as the need for safe water is huge. Safe Water September is a big part in helping to make this happen. Thank you!

*Boniface Mpofu,
Zimbabwe*



Safe Water and Schools

There are the obvious health benefits of providing people with safe water. However there are a lot of social and economic benefits too. When a water source is close by, people can ensure the health of their animals and crops, but they can also use the water to help construct buildings such as schools, shops and toilets! Here is a testimony from the school principal in Rupemba, Zimbabwe.

schoolteachers and children at the school experienced periodic diarrhoea from drinking water from the Ngezi River. Before 2014, about 75% of the pupils had bilharzia, and were treated repeatedly because the problem recurred as they continued to use water from the river. At one point, health authorities wanted to close the school due to the health risks. This situation changed when Showers of Blessing supported the construction of a borehole next to the school some time in 2014. The teachers and pupils have since been getting safe and clean borehole water for domestic use. Consequently,



the proportion of children with bilharzia has become insignificant and the incidence of diarrhoea has reduced considerably among adults and children. In addition, the school's access to potable water has eliminated the risk of the school being shut down. In fact, it has prompted one organisation to introduce a child feeding scheme."

"My school, Rupemba Primary School, which has an enrolment of over 260 children and eight teachers, is built next to the Ngezi River in Zvishavane District. The



Safe Water September Launch in Queensland

This year we held our very first Queensland Safe Water September Launch night! It was a night full of enthusiastic youth, who were passionate and eager to listen to what was being said! We had just under 100 youth attend, passionately worshipping the name of Jesus and being challenged by our guest speaker, Demi Youngman, founder of Project Mulisani. After the main service, there were many kids keen to sign up and to take our Safe Water September postcards to their

friends at school. We then finished the night with dinner, games and time to hang out and keep the conversation going! Overall it was such a great night! The Holy Spirit was at work in many hearts, as eyes were opened to the reality of what it means to be without safe water.

Kirsten Gray,
QLD



SPOTLIGHT

Making Safe Water Happen: the Step-by-Step Process of Installing a Borehole in Rural Zimbabwe

If you've ever taken the Safe Water September challenge or donated to someone who has, you may have wondered about the water projects you're helping fund. With the help of our Zimbabwean partner, Showers of Blessing, we'll walk you through the process of how boreholes come to be, from identifying communities in need of safe water, through to drilling and installing wells.

First, a few words about our model: we work on a partnerships basis. That means that neither embody, nor our parent organisation, Global Mission Partners, has direct staff in Zimbabwe. Instead, we partner closely with a local organisation called Showers of Blessing, headed up by our friend Boniface. Showers of Blessing is a ministry of Churches of Christ based in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and operates in the rural communities in that region.

The safe water Showers of Blessing provides is accessed through boreholes. Boreholes are narrow holes that reach the aquifer, which is a layer of porous rock (like gravel) deep underground that holds water. You've probably heard of the 'water table': this is the name given to the

top of an aquifer. Inside the hole, a pipe and pump are installed, which filter water out of the rock and draw it up to the surface.

We asked Showers of Blessing to share their step-by-step process with us, showing how they build boreholes alongside local communities.

1. Choosing and approving a site in need of safe water

The business of providing safe water can be political, with officials and community leaders petitioning NGOs to come to their village. This is not a bad thing, but Showers of Blessing doesn't pursue water projects on the requests of leaders alone. Instead, they visit communities personally, asking locals about how they access water. Boniface usually undertakes these visits, where he tries to ascertain things like how far the nearest available water source is, how many people rely on it, whether the community is settled or nomadic, and whether any other government or NGO groups plan to provide water access soon. Because it's important to integrate with local governance structures and not just do their own

thing, Showers of Blessing interacts with the local council and chief to gain approval and endorsement for the project.

2. Consulting with the community

Once a village is approved for a water project, Showers of Blessing works with the head of the village – commonly the chief – to run a community meeting for all in the village to have input into where the potential borehole should be located. This is important so that people have the opportunity to advocate for their own needs, and communally decide on a site that benefits everyone. The site must be on neutral land, and not on the village chief's or local church's property, for example, so that everyone has fair and equal access to water.

3. Surveying the land

After the community has agreed on a general site for the borehole, a hydrological surveyor comes in and identifies a specific prospective water point. Community members assist in the surveyor's work and install a marker peg on the spot where the borehole is to be drilled.



The community also protects this site until the borehole is drilled.

4. Clearing the site

Before a borehole can be drilled, the rig (which is on a large truck) needs to be able to access the site. Showers of Blessing works in rural areas, so sometimes the proposed water points are in the middle of the bush. The community is tasked with clearing a road for the drilling rig, which is usually supervised by the chief. This part of the process can take a few months to complete. Roads can be environmentally destructive, so communities are encouraged to take a longer route if it will preserve trees and wildlife.

5. Drilling the borehole

Showers of Blessing contract a drilling company to come and drill the borehole. On the drill day, Boniface comes to supervise and members of the community gather around to watch. The rig drills down 40 to 80 metres into the aquifer. If the



drilling is unsuccessful and the site fails to yield water, then Boniface informs the community of the outcome, and the surveying process is repeated and another attempt made. If the drilling is successful, then the borehole is sealed off to prevent contamination of the aquifer until the rest of the well is installed.

6. Installing the well

Using materials and plans provided by Showers of Blessing, community members construct a concrete apron and soak-pit around the borehole, as well as a fence. The community forms a committee responsible for the borehole's future upkeep, and Showers of Blessing shows people how to maintain the bore. Often the borehole is officially opened in a commissioning ceremony attended by local leaders and, of course, Boniface.

One final note:

You might notice that we mention "community members" a lot when



talking about how a borehole is drilled. It might even seem odd that Showers of Blessing is entrusted to build boreholes, yet they seem to outsource much of the work to locals. In international development, establishing community 'buy-in' for a project is crucial. Projects where the community has a participatory role in planning, implementing, and monitoring a solution – like a well – have been found to be more highly valued, better maintained and, at an ethical level, more robust than simply coming into a village and handing over a solution that doesn't suit the community's needs or wants.

We believe that partnering with community members leads to sustainable, well-used and well-maintained boreholes.

April Holmes,
embody Relationships Manager
VIC/TAS

160 Boreholes Provide 100,000 People with Safe Water!

Our partners in Zimbabwe, Showers of Blessing, have drilled over 160 boreholes in the last 10 years. Each of those boreholes service 500-1,000 people! Showers of Blessing have helped to provide safe water to more than 100,000 people! Donate today to the Safe Water September challenge to help Showers of Blessing impact even more lives www.safewaterseptember.org.au





India's Hosanna Gynan Sampada Residential School helped their neighbours repair their roofs after a freak storm. COCOA provided the materials for the project.

Changing the World Without Leaving Home: Environmentally Friendly Consumption

A Greenpeace activist knocked on my door a long time ago and berated me that I needed to do something about saving the planet. I berated him back that, to change the world, we needed to change the hearts of people to be reconciled to God. I was right, of course, though not particularly gracious. He wasn't totally wrong either. Someone helpfully joined the dots between faith in Jesus and care for the planet when they said, "Don't call it the environment.,. It's God's creation." The one we love and who loves us owns this place (Psalm 24:1) and has given us the responsibility of looking after it (Gen 1:28). It is alive, and has a part in God's ultimate purposes (Rom 8:22).

The Global Picture

A friend has been going to the same beach for holidays for many years. He says he can see the beach shrinking by looking at his holiday photos. Sloppy care of God's creation affects us all, but it affects the poor the most. Sloppy care of God's creation means that our Pacific neighbours have lost – and are losing – land because of consumption and pollution taking place far away from them. Reducing the risk of climate-provoked disasters is now a consideration in every COCOA project, and church agencies have just won a government grant to develop strategies across the Pacific, including for COCOA partners. Their contribution to climate change is minimal but they are bearing the maximum impact.

In terms of over-consumption, again the poor suffer most. For example, potentially rich copper deposits have just been found in Mongolia. The consequence for local people who herd camels, however, is that water, feed and essential routes are disrupted and many have lost their herds. The poor always get the most vulnerable locations, too. The Bandarban Hostel in Bangladesh run by the Bandarban Hills Churches of Christ flooded again this year, an abrupt reminder of this.

Here is a list of opportunities to change the way you live in order to take better care of God's creation. Each item means a change in lifestyle, which is hard to do, so pick one to get started and slowly add changes so you don't get overwhelmed.

Buy Local. The distance food has travelled to get to you is a good indicator of its environmental impact and its nutritional value. Particularly for fresh fruit and vegetables, less distance means a better choice for the environment and for your health.

Grow or Make Your Own. You can really get the distance from paddock to plate down by using the paddock in your backyard. It's a great opportunity to make good use of your food scraps and other compostable material too, and as an old farmer told me, it is good for your soul to know and feel how food is produced.

Buy Less Processed. Processing and packaging of food tends to add things that aren't great to eat and are a problem to throw away. If you can choose a less processed option, your stomach and God's creation will feel better.

Buy Less Meat. Meat takes a lot of resources to produce and so becomes a way of the rich using more than their fair share of resources. Try a meat-free meal each week and then each day to cut down gradually.

Buy Organic. Organic food and other products avoid chemicals that are not good for the creation, or for you.

Buy Green Power and Go Solar. Buying green power means you will be minimising the impact on creation of your electricity use. If you put solar panels on your roof, with rising energy prices, you can make money as well!

Consume Less. In the end, unless we use less of the resources that God has given us all, there won't be enough to go around. Remember this is good for your relationship with God as well as with creation and others on the planet. The love of stuff is still the most likely thing to get between you and God (Matt 6:24).

Colin Scott,
COCO A Director



Watering the garden

Gardening with a Water Pump

The Rupemba community is a beneficiary of the Showers of Blessing small project fund. After visiting the garden project, which had a membership of 37 women, I realised the hardships that the women were going through to water their garden. The women had to walk an average of four kilometres to the garden, in the African heat, and had to fetch water from the nearby Ngezi River 200 metres away, and carry to the garden a 20-litre bucket of water on their heads. This process is repeated no less than 30 times per day, three times a week. This

task is difficult for the women given the fact that, culturally, rural women in Zimbabwe are tasked to provide water for their family's household use and meal preparation. Showers of Blessing provided the women with a pump and cement to build a tank, which has made their task a lot easier! The water is now pumped into the garden! There is no need to walk long distances with buckets of river water on their heads. This development has attracted more women to join the garden project – now 50 women can provide fresh food for their children. The reduction

in the workload means an increase in the vegetable varieties, and the women can sell vegetables to others in the community, increasing household income levels. Showers of Blessing have also provided boreholes near their homes for safe drinking water and which they also use for household purposes. This has decreased their walking distances from five to two kilometres to access water.

Boniface Mpofu,
Zimbabwe



Thomas with shovel, building his new home with bricks he made using water from the borehole

The Impact of 10 Boreholes

Showers of Blessing have seen many people celebrate after the drilling of a well. This has become one of the projects that has most touched the hearts and minds of the Zimbabwean people. Approximately 1,720 households comprising nearly 14,000 people have benefited from the installation of 10 boreholes this year. At least 60% of these beneficiaries were women. A total of 46 young people were trained on borehole maintenance during

the course of the installations, and 18,000 cattle use water from the 10 boreholes. The number of local shops increased from two to 11, providing income and small business opportunities and reducing long walks to access basic facilities. Approximately 75% of women are in borehole committees this year. Boreholes provide safe drinking water and a reliable source for watering gardens, and 72% of women are now involved

in nutritional garden committees. Access to water also empowers people to make bricks and construct better and bigger houses, and build toilets. In one Rupemba village, five of the 29 households can now use the bore water to keep broilers (chickens raised for meat). Donate today to the Safe Water September challenge to help Showers of Blessing impact even more lives.

www.safewaterseptember.org.au



Waving the Aussie flag! Paul Cameron, Executive Officer of Churches of Christ Vic/Tas attending the ICON5 Church Planting Conference in Salatiga, Java, with the crew from one2one Church of Christ. Pictured are Patti Dainton, Dan Bradbury, Mark Dainton and Tim Walter.

ICON5 Church Planting Conference Indonesia

We are very thankful that ICON5 has blessed all of us with inspiring stories, knowledge, and testimonies. There were about 275 attendants gathered from all over Indonesia, and some friends from the US, the Philippines and Australia. The theme was "Be Strong." Here are three impressions I got from that theme:

Be Strong in Unity. Church planters work in diverse contexts. We need opportunities to meet one another, to connect, talk, and share with each other so we can develop strong relationships. We are part of one

body of Christ, and we each function differently, but are all needed to make the body of Christ alive.

Be Strong in Family. Many ministers love to be busy with their ministry, but they forget to minister to their family. The result is that many children hate to go to church, or hate Christianity because ministry commitment takes their father away. Family is essential as the first priority of our ministry before we minister to others. We should love God, our family and others.

Be Strong in Love. Only love can help us to do everything easily without any burden. The love of God has strengthened our life and ministry when difficulties come. With agape love, we can find the grace of God that is always there for us.

It is good to listen to one another and share testimonies, to see how God is working among church planters all over Indonesia.

Hery Susanto,
Indonesia

Indigenous Leadership Training Workshop, Perth

IMA West leaders held an Indigenous Leadership Training Workshop for 20 people. Participants came from Port Hedland, Esperance, Norseman, Bunbury and Moorditj Keila in Perth. Stories told from each of the different areas encouraged the people in the room. Each local church representative shared their dreams and visions, along with their reflections on the strengths, weaknesses and hindrances of their ministry. It was useful in giving the group an overall picture for strategic planning and the discussion of future directions. Highlights of the meeting included James Shultz telling the

Norseman story, and Lenny and Lorraine Wallam sharing in song. We felt the Lord's presence the whole time. The group also had the privilege of visiting five Churches of Christ in Perth. These churches were City Church, Serpentine, Rockingham, Nollamara and Kingsley. There was a greater unity between those attending, more than ever before, and a genuine concern and appreciation of each other's work.

Pray for Norseman, Esperance and Port Hedland

Norseman and Esperance churches need help to train their leadership teams. Pray with us as to how, what



and who to put in place to develop an effective training package. Port Hedland needs to focus on developing their team with structural planning. Time is required, just to sit with them and let them figure out their direction in moving forward. Please also pray for this process.

Remy Sese,
IMA Coordinator West



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