

What does water mean to you?

Did you have to visit the bathroom when you woke up this morning? Did you stop a few times during today and make yourself a cup of tea or coffee? Did you know that one sixth of the world's population does not enjoy this luxury?

Over one billion people do not have access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion have nowhere safe and hygienic to go to the toilet.

The charity WaterAid has a vision of a world in which everyone has access to safe water and sanitation facilities. But there is still a lot to do. The daily reality for many in the developing world is that they wake before dawn to embark on a walk to their nearest watering hole, which can sometimes be several miles away, to collect water for their family. Once they reach their destination they often queue for hours with other women and children to collect a bucket of dirty water.

Clean drinking water is essential to life and a basic human right. Without access to safe water and sanitation people in the developing world are caught in a cycle of ill health and poverty.

As a consequence a child dies every 15 seconds from easily preventable water-related diseases.

The power of water is far reaching. Teme Rata lives in Ethiopia and is a mother of six. Her life was dominated by the need for clean water.

"We used to use springs for drinking, for our cattle and for irrigation," explains Teme. "We used to get so sick from the water. There were many, many worms. I always used to fear for my children when they had to drink the water. I was worried it would put their lives at risk."

Three years ago WaterAid and its partner Prognyst began working with Teme's community and now they enjoy the benefits of clean water, minimal sickness and a chance to work themselves out of poverty growing and selling vegetables.

It costs WaterAid just £15 to provide somebody like Teme with a lasting supply of safe water, sanitation and hygiene education.

WaterAid are experts in implementing long term, sustainable projects that will benefit communities in Africa and Asia for years to come. It is committed to helping communities work themselves out of poverty. WaterAid is also engaging with international decision-makers to ensure that the voices of the world's poor are listened to and acted upon. WaterAid is part of the 2005 Make Poverty History coalition calling for more and better aid, trade justice and debt relief for developing countries.

Visit: www.wateraid.org

It is difficult to see Jesus when you are in a hurry.

Joel Horne