

Water for Life

Living Water
INTERNATIONAL

*Celebrating a Decade
of Operations in Kenya*

Message from Chairman of Living Water International - Kenya



Rev Prof Godfrey M. Nguru

Iwould first of all like to congratulate Living Water International on this very important occasion when we celebrate 10 years of operations in Kenya. During this period the organisation has strived to reach men and women with the good news of salvation, through providing them with safe drinking water for them-

selves and their communities. No wonder the theme for the celebration is "water for life." The mission of Living Water is derived from the story in the Gospel of John (Jn 4) where Christ meets the Samaritan woman and asks for water. She does not give Christ water and Verse 10 of this passage Christ tells the woman: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." It is this living water that the organisation has endeavoured to give to the people of this country and particularly the poor and disadvantaged. To this end Living Water International has drilled boreholes in hospitals, orphanages, schools, poor communities and even for individuals throughout the country.

Our hope and prayer is that in the next 10 years we shall spread the work to cover more communities in this country and also move out to the neighbouring countries so that people can receive clean water as they listen to the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are calling all our friends and supporters both local and from overseas to join us in this effort. We are extremely thankful to Living Water International, USA, who have supported us from the time LWI-Kenya was founded. Without their faithful support, we would not have accomplished as much as we have. We trust our partnership will grow from strength to strength for the good of the people in the country and to the glory of God.

Quenching World's Spiritual Thirst

By **PATRICK NGUGI**

About a decade ago, John K. Gichane, then a financial manager of a Nairobi based company, saw a man crying in desperation. The crying man was an American Evangelist whose labour in drilling a borehole for a needy community had come to naught. The evangelist's passionate devotion to the provision of water to the pastoralists to the point of shedding tears haunted Gichane for sometime that he decided to leave his well paying and comfortable job to join the newly found Living Water International, Kenya (LWI-K).

LWI-K, is a Christian, non-governmental organization that provides clean drinking water to communities by drilling and rehabilitating boreholes. LWI-K carries out evangelistic activities at all drilling sites to provide the "living water" of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

For the Kenyan organization, it all started in the early 1990s when two American businessmen-evangelists from Houston, Texas came to Kenya through Mombasa, with the aim of providing drinking water to needy communities as they spread the gospel. But the two Americans - Garry Evans and Harry Westmoreland - did not have the right equipment for the local conditions and the drilling machine they had could only do 50 feet below the surface. "It was a very frustrating experience for them," says Mr Gichane.

At around the same time the two who had been on a mission by their organization, Living Water International also underwent untold difficulties to have their organization registered in Kenya, and it was only in 1992 when it was finally registered as an NGO and issued with a contractors' license to drill boreholes.

It was around this time that Mr Gichane while attending a prayer meeting, met Mr Mike Harris who was then incharge of the of the NGO and was at that time drilling a borehole in Kajiado.

"As a good Kenyan I agreed to accompany him to see their project," he says. But the dig was a sight to behold, he says because the whole pro-



John K. Gichane
Managing Director
Living Water International-Kenya

ject was too dusty and one could barely tell the difference between the white Americans and the locals who were working at the site. They were all covered with dust, he said. After some more digging, Mr Harris gave up the attempt, "and with tears in his eyes, he announced that this was a dry well," says Gichane. "In fact the only water I could see around were the tears in his eyes," he added.

The digging had gone up to 580 feet and they had not struck any water. "It was not common to see many crying and this moved me so much. I could not understand the man's passion. He asked me to join their organisation but I was reluctant, and I did not like what I was seeing," he says.

At that time he had a comfortable job as a finance manager of another private firm and could not think of giving up that job, he said.

"But those tears moved me for a long time. Later on, Mr Harris came and informed me that he had been offered a job as a Vice President of another corporation back home, and he requested me to take over his job at Living Water, but I was still very reluctant. It was then he invited me to go and meet the US based Living Water International board, which was then composed of Gary Loveless, Malcom Morris, Harry Westmoreland, David K. Phillips, Lelan Callaway, Gary Evans, Larry Laird and Mike Harris. "These were all reputable businessmen in Houston, who were also dedicated members of the Living Water

International Board. "After seeing how committed they were for our people and though I had fears that I did not know anything about water drilling, I decided I was going to share their vision with them. That was the beginning of a long journey," he said.

His employer could not release him immediately and offered him a lot of benefits, but his mind was made up, and left to join Living Water

The Mission of LWI-Kenya

The mission of LWI-Kenya is to meet the needs of the Kenyan people by drilling and rehabilitating boreholes to provide clean and safe drinking water, providing training in issues of health, water and sanitation and creating awareness on HIV/AIDS. In the process of achieving this mission, LWI-Kenya demonstrates the love of God by sharing the living water, which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all Kenyan people.

International-Kenya where he heard to learn the new job in a new environment.

In order to make is work easier, he hired specialists from the Ministry of Water who were able to master the American equipment without much instructions. Since his joining LWI-K, they have drilled about 300 boreholes all over the country. The positive impact of LWI-K has gone beyond provision of water. The extension benefits has been the health improvements in many of the areas where boreholes have been sunk.

For example, a slum in Kangemi area near Nairobi, has less water related diseases in the area according to medical personnel, because residents are able to get clean water. In other areas like Ngong, many youths have been able to get gainful employment by working as water vendors. Schools and similar institutions have also been able to become financial stable by sharing their water with the communities at a minimal cost. Living Water International does not make profit in its activities, and charges minimal amount when drilling the boreholes, and donors are usually sought to meet the cost of the boreholes if the needy institutions can not meet the cost. When a donor is available, but there are no urgent applicants, then the organisation gives the donation of a borehole to other needy cases, starting with hospitals, children homes or orphanages, schools and colleges, churches or NGOs. "We are not a church but we work closely with churches particularly when giving the word of God at the water drilling sites. When we are not drilling at night we show Christian films," he said. In institutions such as hospitals the organisation usually hire an in-house chaplain to continue giving the patients the word of God after the drilling has been completed. Apart from teaching the Gospel, the NGO also gives health teachings where water recipients are taught how to use water hygienically and also how to keep HIV Aids at bay.

How It All Started

Living Water International (LWI) was founded in 1990 by a group of committed Christians in the United States of America (USA) whose vision was to improve the health and livelihoods of communities in developing countries by implementing water systems that provide clean drinking water. LWI now works in 16 countries and has expanded its operations to include provision of medical supplies by sponsoring mobile medical units. In Africa, LWI has established offices in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Ghana. LWI maintains non-governmental organization (NGO) status in its countries of operation.

In Kenya, LWI was established in 1992 with a purpose to serve the local people by drilling and rehabilitating boreholes to provide clean and safe drinking water, provide training in health, water and sanitation and create awareness on HIV/AIDS. In the same year, LWI-Kenya was licensed by the Government of Kenya (No. DB400/103) to drill boreholes throughout the country and was granted NGO status in March 1993. LWI-Kenya began the first operations in borehole drilling and rehabilitation in August 1994.



Water and Irrigation Minister Hon. Martha Karua commissions a borehole at Pumwani Maternity Hospital. Looking on is MD, LWI-K Mr. John Gichane (left) and Unicef representative, Dr. Iyabo Olusaumi. The borehole was sponsored by UNICEF in partnership with LWI-K. The borehole was drilled by LWI-K who also provide a chaplain.

Our Activities

The thrust of LWI-Kenya's existence is to serve communities through our people-oriented activities which include, borehole drilling and

rehabilitation; training on borehole operation and maintenance, training on issues of health, water and sanitation, and creating awareness on HIV/AIDS.

Our Target Groups

LWI-Kenya has the local community as the basis of its operation. Our target groups are: hospitals, children's home, schools and colleges, churches and church-related facilities, community water projects and/or self-help groups, irrespective of their religious or political affiliations.

Collaboration with Government

LWI-Kenya works in cooperation with the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. We seek approval from the Ministry prior to borehole implementation and submit drilling reports to them as required. We also work together to in various capacities to enhance better provision of services by the water sector in Kenya.

Beneficiaries of LWI-KENYA Implemented Projects

The beneficiaries of LWI-Kenya's projects are hospitals, children's homes, schools and colleges, churches and church-related facilities, community water projects and/or self-help groups. We receive an average of five requests each week to drill a borehole, and accept requests to drill boreholes from any community that falls within our target groups.

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