

Are These Our neighbours?

People who are not aware that pure clean WATER is a limited resource under attack

O that someone would give me water to drink

2 Samuel 23 15

The necessities of life are water, bread and clothing

Sirach 29 21

Background

In most habitable parts of the world fresh water has, since time began, been regarded as a renewable resource.

With advances in the study of the earth's surface and other related topics, we now realize that the world's water supply is constant. Fresh water is, in fact, abundant but is a finite circulating resource (1% of world's water). Yet the amount of available water and its occurrence is variable from place to place and from time to time partly because of weather and also changing climate patterns.

With the increased population and its developed life style, certain factors have emerged. Water use globally has increased six fold in the last century, more than twice the rate of population growth.

In addition, water has become an active agent in many industrial operations. To give two examples, the petroleum industry pumps water into its wells as a cheap and effective way of extracting oil. Water is also used extensively by industries extracting ores from open mines.

Recently, the designation of water as a marketable commodity rather than a human need is a new concept defined by the World Trade Organization. Canada agrees with the idea and voted for the idea that water is a commodity not a human need. Water can now be traded like oil. In the view of some "it has become a rationed commodity that may be taken by force."

Problems

First and foremost, a developed life style as it may occur in different parts of the world means increased use of water for personal use. More emphasis on cleanliness often means daily showers. More leisure time often means pleasure pursuits such as golf that require constant watering of greens. More developed market garden produce and even extensive agriculture as in cereal production requires irrigation. Changing eating habits such as eating more meat increases the need of water for cattle.

Yet at the same time between one and two billion people in the world still have no access to safe drinking water, and over two billion lack proper sanitation.

If fresh water is contaminated at one point in its circulation through our ecosystem it will remain contaminated and return the contaminator to us at some point.

Sources of contamination include soil erosion, agricultural chemical run off, manure from factory farms, industrial, oil and mining operations, automobiles, plus huge volumes of sewage chemicals and garbage from urban areas.

Definitions

salt water: found in the oceans of the world comprises 99% of world's water.

fresh water: found in most free flowing rivers and in most lakes is drinkable and necessary for life.

Desalination: taking salt out of ocean water, to make it suitable for drinking.



Catechism

“Man’s dominion over inanimate and other living beings is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation” 2415

Irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth, such as air and water, if high rates of consumption and pollution were extended to the whole of mankind.

***Justice in the World
in the World Bishops Synod 1971***

“We’ve got to reduce the amount of water we devote to growing food. The world is simple running out of water”

***Anders Berntell,
Director of International Water Institute.***

References

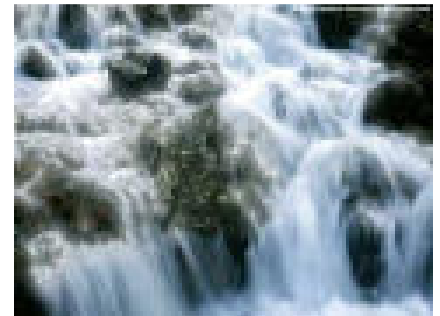
Social Encyclical: Justice in the World Bishops’ Synod 1971 7 –20
Canadian Catholic Bishops for Development and Peace present campaigns on WATER
Water, Pollution and society, David Krantz and Brad Kifferstein epa.gov/owow/nps/qanhtml
Herbicide rain falls on Southern Alberta, Carol Harrington, The Canadian Press Feb 26.99
Water, Water...Nowhere Maude Barlow, Globe and Mail, May 9 2000
Climate Ecology and Human Health, Paul R. Epstein, Consequences Vol 3 #2 1997
Other Resources: Council of Canadians,

Speaker Resource

Local representatives of the Council of Canadians,
Saskatchewan Environmental Society,
Green Party,
Proponents of and activists against Factory Farming.

Questions

1. What can we or should we do to change the government’s plan in defining water as a tradable commodity?
2. What plans should we be making to establish the prices and conditions under which we sell Canadian water?
3. How can we convince our neighbours to be conservative in the use of water.
4. What can we learn about modern irrigation systems in other parts of the world? (Hydrology and Agronomics)
5. How intrusive should government be in inspecting and safeguarding water systems (Walkerton and North Battleford)



Actions

1. Explore methods being used in garden and lawn cultivation without daily watering?
2. Invest in water and energy efficient household machines?
3. Be economical in the use of such machines.
4. Plan holidays and visits to places with pristine ecology so as to learn an appreciation of creation.
5. Conserve rain water for garden use.
6. Appreciate the beauty of and agitate for non irrigated leisure space.
7. Agitate against the turning of water into a marketable commodity.
8. Investigate the future of farming - hydrology and agronomics.