Broken Bread

Compassion, Peace and Justice Newsletter, Presbytery of Des Moines
Volume 34 · Number 2 Spring 2016

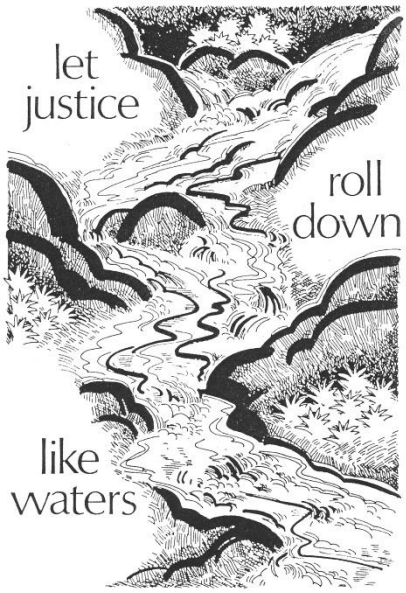
You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst. By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. Psalm 104:10-13

WATER IS ALL AROUND US

From outer space, we can see clearly that Godôs earth is a water planetô a blue planet. Throughout the Bible, water plays a significant role in helping us understand the nature of God, Godôs purposes in the world, and our relationship with God. One need only think of the crossing of the Red Sea, Jesusôbaptism in the Jordan River, the woman at the well, and Jesus describing himself as living water to gain an understanding of the importance of water in our faith. The Bible includes more than 500 references to the word water and countless more on water related subjects like rivers, rain, seas, floods, and storms.

We have been blessed with the gift of water and can reflect on the various ways that God uses water in our spiritual and faith-filled lives. Rather than taking this gift for granted, we must use it with care and loveô the same love that was shown to us when this water was given to us as a part of creation.

from Water, Holy Water, Creation Justice Ministries, www.creationjustice.org.



A THIRST FOR JUSTICE

Bryce Wiebe, PHP Post, Spring 2015, Presbyterian Hunger Program

"…[Jesus] cried out, "let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:37-38

Access to clean, safe drinking water is one of the most effective ways to curb poverty, and 750 million people on the planet lack access to clean water. For this reason, international aid organizations and faith-based groups have long prioritized digging wells and creating functioning water systems as a way to bring communities out of poverty. While gaining access to safe water is a problem for many of the worldôs poorest, there are threats to preserving access, even after it has been obtained.

Due to the perceived inefficiencies of municipal water systems, and with promises of expanded access, the World Bank has pushed public-private partnerships as the solution. Private-sector know-how is supposed to result in increased infrastructure investment and savings from better management. The promises, though, have been unmet where it has been tried. Nagpur, India, a city the World Bank uses to promote its partnership model, has yet to see any follow

through on the promised solutions to problems of quality, regularity and efficiency. What they have seen is an increase to the cost of water and delays in the infrastructure projects. The poorest citizens receive water for 30 minutes, every other day.

While governments have the responsibility of ensuring access to clean water for all its citizens, private corporations have a profit motive that takes precedence. The World Bank, since it takes an investment stake in the partnerships it promotes, is also motivated by money, and not by the desire to extend the reach and efficiency of the water system. Without a shared goal, any vision of ñpartnershipò is surrendered. Once the system is privatized, citizens and governments no longer have the ability to control the water they need to survive.

Even in the United States, where 80% of water systems are operated as a public enterprise, large water corporations, Veolia and Suez, lobby municipalities with the same promises of efficiency and private investment in infrastructure. The results have been the same in the U.S. as they have been in the developing world. Rate hikes happen while promised infrastructure investments never do.

For this reason, Presbyterian Hunger Program partner, Corporate Accountability International has been integral in organizing citizens to resist corporate control of water and protect pubic control of water systems. Shining a light on the contracts, and using stories from cities where these partnerships have been employed, has proven successful in preventing private water companies from taking control of public water in cities like St. Louis and Baltimore.

All Godôs children should have safe water to drink. When we work and contribute to projects that build wells and water systems for the worldôs poorest, we live out our Christian calling. But we must also remain vigilant, so that, even where water access has been secured, access to water is seen as the human right that it is, and not delivered based on where it is most profitable for a few. As we follow the one who promises living water, we will see that all can access the clean, affordable, and publicly controlled water they need to live.

Bryce Wiebe serves as the Manager of Special Offerings, PC(USA). At the time this article was written Bryce was Associate for Enough for Everyone, Presbyterian Hunger Program.

WATERSHED BASICS

from iowadnr.gov

A watershed is the area of land that drains into a lake or stream. Water traveling over the surface or through groundwater may pick up contaminants like sediment, chemicals and waste and deposit them in a body of water.

We all live in a watershed. Watersheds can be small - like the area that drains into the creek behind your house. Or, watersheds can be large- think of all the land, streams and rivers that drain into the Mississippi River!

The watershed diagram above shows how water runs downhill. Making changes on the land keeps pollutants from rural and urban areas from washing into our water.

WATERSHED POLLUTION

The major water quality problem in Iowa is nonpoint source pollution, and it has landed a number of streams and lakes on Iowa's impaired waters list.

Nonpoint source pollution happens when rainfall, snowmelt or irrigation water runs over land or through the ground and picks up pollutants and deposits them into streams, lakes or groundwater. Those pollutants include excess soil, bacteria and nutrients (from farm fertilizers and manure).

Keeping these pollutants out of our water is important for many reasons. People depend on clean water for drinking water and recreation like swimming, boating and fishing. Aquatic

life, such as fish, depend on clean water to survive.

Nonpoint source pollution can come from practically any outdoor area that comes into contact with running water, unlike point source pollution, which can be traced back to a specific location or "point," such as an industrial facility, wastewater treatment plant, etc.

The area that nonpoint source pollution comes from is the watershed. To truly improve Iowa's water quality, we need to clean up watersheds to keep sediment, nutrients and bacteria from washing into streams and lakes.

COMMON POLLUTANTS

The most common nonpoint pollutants are soil (sediment) and nutrients picked up by runoff as it flows over land to surface waters. These pollutants may come from agricultural land and other open spaces, urban areas, construction sites, roads, parking lots and other areas. Other common pollutants include pesticides, pathogens (bacteria and viruses), salts, oil and grease.

In Iowa, sediment is the leading nonpoint source pollutant. Most sediment in Iowa comes from agricultural practices, such as cropland tillage and livestock in pastures, woodlands and feedlots. High levels of eroded sediment also come from construction sites, streambanks and lake shorelines.

Nutrients, especially nitrogen and phosphorus, are other main nonpoint pollutants in Iowa. Nutrients can come from fertilizers (both on agricultural land and on residential lawns, golf courses, etc.) and from organic sources such as manure and human sewage.

Nonpoint source pollution is responsible for sediment that fills in lakes and streams, covers fish habitat, and reduces visibility in the water. It is also often responsible for destroyed fish and wildlife habitat, unsafe drinking water, fish kills, and reduced aesthetic and recreational value of waterbodies. Bacteria from manure or human sewage can cause health problems. Excessive nutrients in water from either chemical fertilizer or organic matter (including manure) can cause algae blooms in lakes, sometimes making lakes smelly and boating difficult. High levels of nutrients in waterbodies can also cause fish kills, by decreasing dissolved oxygen in lakes and streams. Excessive agricultural or lawn chemicals can also cause the water to be unfit for drinking, or require additional and costly treatment.

Solutions for curbing nonpoint pollution

Because nonpoint source pollution is widespread across the state, there is no quick fix to the problem. Improving our streams and lakes requires the help of all Iowans, both urban and rural.

The main solution is prevention. That means keeping excess sediment, nutrients, bacteria and other pollutants out of our water. Because the largest problems come from agricultural areas, an important solution is using conservation practices. Common conservation practices include wetlands, ponds, terraces and buffers. These practices reduce the amount of pollutants reaching a lake or stream.

While agriculture is the largest source of nonpoint pollution in Iowa, urban areas can also work to improve our water. Some urban solutions include managing lawn fertilizers, keeping pollutants out of storm drains and keeping excess soil from construction sites out of streams and lakes.

Links to more information can be found on the Iowa DNR website.

MARION MEDICAL MISSION SHALLOW WELL PROGRAM

Rev. Suzanne Gorhau, TE at First United Presbyterian Church, Atlantic, IA

I first heard about Marion Medical Mission (MMM) at a presbytery meeting when I was associate pastor of a church in Illinois. MMM is based in Marion, Illinois, and it's a part of the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois. At first it was interesting to hear about MMM. Then I remember thinking, "Do we have to hear about this group at EVERY presbytery meeting?" And then, God nudged me on the

shoulder, and whispered, ñI want you to go to Africa.ò

I first went in 2001, several weeks after 9/11. Some of the team members wondered if we should be flying to a foreign country two weeks after a major terrorist attack. But in the end, everyone decided to go. We had a job to do. I went back in 2002 and 2003, because a member of the Board of Directors, and then went back more recently in 2013 and 2015.

The main job of the volunteers (about 20 people on two teams) is to drive the trucks to the well sites. I must admit, my first year, I didnôt drive very well. Seriously, a 30 minute stick-shift driving lesson was not enough. But last year, the African field officer I worked with called me ñthe bulldozer,ò meaning I could drive anywhere. Iôm quite proud of that. We drive 4-wheel drive trucks in backcountry Africa on the opposite side of the road. We work 10 hour days, six days a week, for three weeks. Itôs exhausting, exhilarating work.

Why do I go? Because clean water is a basic necessity of life and I believe every person should have access to it. Clean water makes a life and death difference in peopleôs lives. At one of the well sites, the village headman told us they had been drinking water from a stream, which was contaminated by the urine and feces of animals. Their children were always getting stomach aches. When they dug the hole for the new well (the villagers themselves did the hole, make bricks, and gather sand and stone for their well), they started drinking water from the open hole. Their children stopped getting stomach aches. Then when the MMM builder came (we have trained builders who build the wells), they covered the hole with cement, leaving only a small hole where the pipe and pump would go. The villages couldnôt drink from it until we came to install the pipe and pump a week water. During that week, their children started getting stomach aches again. The villagers knew what difference clean water would make for the health of their children.

Why do I go? Because 100% of the money people give for Africa goes to Africa and because MMM has the highest level of integrity of any organization Iôve been a part of. My friend Linda used to handle the donations. Once she got a check for $7.50 for a program she hadnôt heard of. She spent hours tracking down the donor and then returned the money because we didnôt handle that program.

Why do I go? Because itôs incredible to be a very small part of a program that is as well-known and respected as MMM is. We asked a new Malawian field officer, who had been hired right out of college, how he had heard about MMM. He looked at us with a quizzical look on his face and said, ñEverybody knows about MMM.ò At well site after well site we heard, ñOther organizations promised things, but yours is the first one to follow through on your promise.ò

Why do I go? Because MMM does so much with so little. Just $400 can make a life or death difference to a whole village of people for years to come.

Why do I go? Because at each well site (I helped install 130 wells in 2015), I get to experience pure joy and gratitude. Since I live in a country where we tend to take things for granted, I need that reminder of how much I have to be thankful for and how to dance and sing with joy at what God has done for us.

Why do I go? Because I want to be part of what God is doing. And this is all God. Nothing MMM does is possible without God.

I love traveling to Malawi, driving to the well sites and celebrating with the people. But I also love telling the story back here. Iôve done presentations for a kindergarten class, a

junior high music class, a high school geography class, VBS, service groups, church groups, and worship. (Iôm available to share about MMM with any group that wants to hear!) I love teaching young people that there are those who live differently than we do. And I love inviting others to be a part of this incredible thing God is doing in the world.

WATER TANKS TO EL SALVADOR

Delbert and Lana Westphalen, members of First United Presbyterian Church, Atlantic, IA

For several years the Atlantic First United Presbyterian Church has been collecting coins one Sunday each month for a project in El Salvador. We were raising money for the purchase of 200-gallon plastic water tanks for families in several *cantones* around Berlín, El Salvador.

In August of 2015, eight members of our congregation, including Pastor Suzanne Gorhau, Phil and Kerri Barrett, Gaylord Schelling, Jane Deter, Dave Best and Delbert and Lana Westphalen, visited the communities. We met with Rev. Katherine Pater, Presbytery of Des Moinesô Mission Co-Worker in El Salvador. After landing at the San Salvador airport, we were given a tour of the capitol, learning about the violent history of the country. We proceeded to Berlín the next day.

We arrived at the Pastoral House, where we met the rest of the ñcrewò Pastoral Team members Blanca, Balmore, Cecilia, Jesus, Margarita and Idalia. We were in a strange new country, but we felt somewhat at home when we saw a phone book from Des Moines. We soon settled into a routine in our new home.

We traveled to two *cantones*. The first one was Cantón Colón, where we met with the *directiva* to learn about their community and to receive thank yous for the donation of the water tanks. We also got to tour their village and watched them grind corn. The next day we visited El Rescate, a *cantón* of 16 families. Their *cantón* had been hit with an earthquake which destroyed all of the buildings and infra-structure. It was a coffee plantation. The families have only what God gives them, sunlight and rain. These proud people are prospering and they are replanting the coffee trees plus orange trees, tomatoes and other plants.

One elderly gentleman, probably in his 60s, told us that when he received his water tank, it was the only gift anyone had given him in his life. He was so proud of that tank that he had kept the shrink wrap on it to protect it. Every one of the families was very thankful. It was so easy to make friends with themð they are great people. We are very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the ministry that is helping our partners in El Salvador.

NOTE:
The water tank project started with a Lenten study several years ago. Former pastor, Rev. Holly Smith, led a study on water issues. After the study, the congregation wanted to do something to provide clean water, and decided on El Salvador because of the relationship our Presbytery has with the people of Berlin.
TE Suzanne Gorhau, First United Presbyterian Church, Atlantic

AND FROM OUR SISTER PARISH:
Due to the 2015 drought, water tanks like the ones that FUPC Atlantic purchased are more important than ever. To learn more about this situation and the work of Our Sister Parish, consult Rev. Katherine Pater's blog:
womanbetweenworlds.wordpress.com
or "like" the Our Sister Parish facebook page!

TO EMPOWER WOMEN, GIVE THEM BETTER ACCESS TO WATER

Bethany Caruso, Department of Environmental Health, Emory University. Originally published on TheConversation.com/us, March 22, 2016.

Imagine going through your day without ready access to clean water for drinking, cooking, washing or bathing.

Around the world, 663 million people face that challenge every day. They get their water from sources that are considered unsafe because they are vulnerable to contamination, such as rivers, streams, ponds and unprotected wells. And the task of providing water for households falls disproportionately to women and girls.

Water, a human right, is critical for human survival and development. A sufficient supply of biologically and chemically safe water is necessary for drinking and personal hygiene to prevent diarrheal diseases, trachoma, intestinal worm infections, stunted growth among children and numerous other deleterious outcomes from chemical contaminants like arsenic and lead.

I have carried out research in India, Bolivia and Kenya on the water and sanitation challenges that women and girls confront and how these experiences influence their lives. In my field work I have seen adolescent girls, pregnant women and mothers with small children carrying water. Through interviews, I have learned of the hardships they face when carrying out this obligatory task.

An insufficient supply of safe and accessible water poses extra risks and challenges for women and girls. Without recognizing the uneven burden of water work that women bear, well-intentioned programs to bring water to paces in need will continue to fail to meet their goals.

HEAVY LOADS

So, what is it like for women who live in places where sufficient and safe water is not readily accessible?

First, collecting water takes time. Simply to get water for drinking, bathing, cooking and other household needs, millions of women and girls spend hours every day traveling to water sources, waiting in line and carrying heavy loadsð often several times a day. In a study of 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, UNICEF estimated that women there spent 16 million hours collecting water each day.

When children or other family members get sick from consuming poor quality water, which can happen even if the water is initially clean when collected, women spend their time providing care. These responsibilities represent lost opportunities for womenŝ employment, education, leisure or sleep.

Collecting water also requires tremendous physical exertion. Water is heavy. The United Nations recommends 20-50 liters of water per person per day for drinking, cooking and washing. That amounts to hauling between 44 and 110 pounds of water daily for use by each household member. And in many places, water sources are far from homes. In Asia and Africa, women walk an average of 3.7 miles per day collecting water. Carrying such loads over long distances can result in strained backs, shoulders and necks, and other injuries if women have to walk over uneven and steep terrain or on busy roads. The burden is even heavier for women who are pregnant or are also carrying small children.

Even when a household or village has access to a safe water source close to home, residents may not use it if they believe the water is inferior in some way. As one woman told my research team in India:

Tube well water quality is not good…water is saline. Cooking is not good due to this water. Not good for drinking either. People are getting water from that neighboring village…for cooking we get water from the river.

In this community, the neighboring village was at least a kilometer away.

Fetching water can be very dangerous for women and girls. They can face conflict at water points and the risk of physical or sexual assault. Many of these dangers also arise when women do not have access to safe, clean and private toilets or latrines for urinating, defecating and managing menstruation.

Now imagine that you have managed to get water, but only a limited supply. How will you allocate it? Women need water for hydration, regular hand-washing, washing their bodies, and cleaning clothes and materials when they are menstruating in order to prevent urogenital infection.

But in areas where water is scarce, women and girls may sacrifice so that other family members can use water. In a study that assessed how water insecurity affected rural women in Ethiopia, 27.8% of women surveyed reduced the amount of water they used for bathing, 12.7% went to bed thirsty, and 3.7% went an entire day without drinking water. One woman described many challenges, including the possibility that no water would be available when she finally reached a source; the struggle to complete domestic tasks, such as washing clothes and cooking, in the time she had left after fetching water; and worries that not completing this work would lead to arguments with family members.

When conditions such as drought make water scarce, women have to travel farther to collect it and make more frequent trips, expending more time and energy. Water scarcity has been shown to increase womenôs stress in Bolivia, Brazil, Ethiopia and Mexico.

And global demand for water is increasing. The United Nations forecasts that if current water use patterns do not change, world demand will exceed supply by 40% by 2030. In such a scenario, it is hard to imagine that womenôs and girlsô experiences will improve without intentional efforts.

A FOCUS ON WOMENôS NEEDS

When communities initiate programs to improve access to water, it is critical to ask women about their needs and experiences. Although women and girls play key roles in obtaining and managing water globally, they are rarely offered roles in water improvement programs or on local water committees. They need to be included as a right and as a practical matter. Numerous water projects in developing countries have failed because they did not include women.

And the inclusion of women should not be ornamental. A study in northern Kenya found that although women served on local water management committees, conflict with men at water points persisted because the women often were not invited to meetings or were not allowed to speak.

We also need broader strategies to reduce gender disparities in water access. First we need to collect more data on womenôs water burden and how it affects their health, well-being and personal development. Second, women must be involved in creating and managing targeted programs to mitigate these risks. Third, these programs should be evaluated to determine whether they are truly improving womenôs lives. And finally, social messaging affirming the idea that water work belongs only to women must be abandoned.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called empowerment of the worldôs women ña global imperative.ò To attain that goal, we must reduce the weight of water on womenôs shoulders.

BABIES IN THE RIVER

Once upon a time, there was a small village on the edge of a river. Life in the village was busy. There were people growing food and people teaching the children to make blankets and people making meals.

One day a villager took a break from harvesting food and

noticed a baby floating down the river toward the village. She couldnôt believe her eyes! She heard crying in the distance and looked downstream to see that two babies had already floated by the village. She looked around at the other villagers working nearby. ñDoes anyone else see that baby?ò she asked.

One villager heard the woman, but continued working. ñYes!ò yelled a man who had been making soup.

ñOh, this is terrible!ò A woman who had been building a campfire shouted, ñLook, there are even more upstream!ò Indeed, there were three more babies coming around the bend.

ñHow long have these babies been floating by?ò asked another villager. No one knew for sure, but some people thought they might have seen something in the river earlier. They were busy at the time and did not have time to investigate.

They quickly organized themselves to rescue the babies. Watchtowers were built on both sides of the shore and swimmers were coordinated to maintain shifts of rescue teams that maintained 24-hour surveillance of the river. Zip-lines with baskets attached were stretched across the river to get even more babies to safety quickly.

The number of babies floating down the river only seemed to increase. The villagers built orphanages and they taught even more children to make blankets and they increased the amount of food they grew to keep the babies housed, warm and fed. Life in the village carried on.

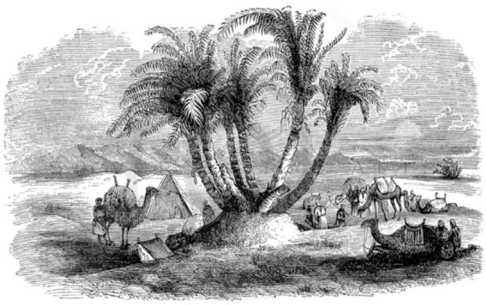
Then one day at a meeting of the Village Council, a villager asked, ñBut where are all these babies coming from?ò

ñNo one knows,ò said another villager. ñBut I say we organize a team to go upstream and find whoôs throwing these babies in the river.ò

Not everyone was in agreement. ñBut we need people to help us pull the babies out of the river,ò said one villager. ñThatôs right!ò said another villager. ñAnd who will be here to cook for them and look after them if a bunch of people go upstream?ò

The Council chose to let the village decide. If you were a villager, what would your vote be? Do you send a team upstream?

GRAINS OF TRUTH



The greatest crime
in the desert
is to find water
and be silent about it.

AFRICAN PROVERB (Ghana)

Do unto those downstream
as you would have those upstream
do unto you.

Wendell Berry