

WATER STEWARDSHIP

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

Stewards of God's Creation

In Gen. 1:28 God the Creator entrusts Adam and Eve, with the responsibility of managing His created things. They are commanded to "subdue" the earth and "have dominion" over living things. The O.T. word for "subdue" is "kabash" which means "to tread down, knead, stamp, press, make to serve by force if necessary.". The word implies that God's creations may sometimes not do the bidding of humankind gladly and willingly. An exertion of strength may be necessary. Hard soil filled with rocks resisted the plows of the pioneers. The O.T. Hebrew word for "have dominion" is "rada" which means "to rule, govern, manage." "You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet." (Ps. 8:6) As Christian stewards we have been entrusted to manage the earth, life and natural resources responsibly which includes water.

Good Water

Water is necessary for life. It's death for un-watered roses. Bodily dehydration kills. Approximately 70% of the human body consists of water. It does many necessary things - removes toxins; cushions joints; transports oxygen and nutrition to the cells; reduces infections; regulates body temperature; assists proper bowel and kidney functions; etc.; etc. One catch though. The water should be pure, and uncontaminated to do the job. It's recommended to drink 8 glasses per day.

Bad Water

Ocean water covers approximately 70% of the earth's surface. Since it's salty, it's undrinkable. Freshwater nourishes human life. If polluted, tainted with diseases and parasites, it can produce illness and death. It's alarming that 95% of the world's cities still dump raw sewage into water supplies. According to the World Bank, as many as a billion lack clean water. The United Nations has declared 2005-2015 the "Water of Life Decade". In the late 1950's the Black River flowing through Lorain, Ohio, into Lake Erie became white with soap suds on Wash Day Monday. The lake fish population decreased drastically.. In the sixties it was called the "Dead Lake". Soap phosphates,

fertilizer and other toxic run-offs were the culprits. When legally banned, the lake revived to become the "Walleye Capital of the World". I remember my father going to a spring on the top of a mountain to fill gallon jugs with pure water. He believed the Slovak saying: "Dobra Voda; Dobre Zdravie" (Good Water; Good Health).

Things We Can Do

As Christian stewards of water, we can support the social, economic and political efforts of those promoting the proper management of water. Recently Cleveland Metroparks in Cleveland, Ohio, erected a "Watershed Stewardship Center" in a newly created "West Creek Park" costing about \$11 million. Manager Gayle Albers said: "Wetlands and green space are the kidneys of the watershed system". Synod's Lutheran World Relief & Human Care has clean water projects in Africa, China and Cambodia. For information or to contribute call 1-888-930-4438.

Stewards of Spiritual Water

There are approximately 722 references to water in the Bible. The first mention is in Gen. 1:1 referring to the Spirit of God hovering over the waters. The last reference is in Rev. 21:17: "...whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life." Jesus, says: "Whoever drinks the water I give him, will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14) We properly drink the water of Jesus when we believe His uncontaminated words, unpolluted with erring human opinion. Daily rejoice in the water of Baptism which washed away your sins! (Acts 22:16)

Christ is a Fountain-Shower

**A clear, crystal Water-Flower,
Bursting with life to quench and console
Every thirsting soul.
Christ's Word, like a giant bell,
Tolling unbound, rings loud to quell
All false sound.**

(Excerpt from the poem, "Truth", by T. Soltis)

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