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First Steps to Shrinking My Water Footprint

Shiney Varghese

I live in the United States where I have a 24 hour running water supply. I take it for granted that I will have running water whenever I need it—for brushing my teeth or washing my hair, for drinking, cooking or cleaning. I often forget what a luxury it is!

Before coming to the U.S., I lived in a small town in western India called Rajkot. My apartment complex was surrounded by a still developing concrete jungle and promised a regular water supply, which meant that running water was available for an hour each in the morning and evening. I was living by myself, and I would collect enough water in the morning hours to meet my personal needs of the day. I ate my food out often and got my clothes washed outside.

For my neighboring families—with at least four to five members—it was a struggle to meet their water needs. They would often have to resort to water supplied through tankers from neighboring villages—never mind if those villagers were sell-

ing water to the city because it was more profitable than raising crops, or even if it was lowering the water table so low that people without mechanical pumps could

watering our lawns and filling our back yard pools. The average U.S. resident uses 151 gallons a day, compared to less than 15 gallons a day in most African countries.¹

I realize that my daily water use—for drinking, cleaning, cooking and washing—is only a small part of the water I use. Most of the water I use is invisible to me—it is in the food I eat, in the soda I drink and the clothes I wear. It is in the making of the gas I put in my car, in the generation of the electricity I use to light



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Woman gathering water in Bangladesh.

no longer get enough water to meet their basic needs. The impact of urban water use in Rajkot on surrounding rural areas was clearly visible.

Invisible Water

However, the connection between my water use in the U.S. and the global water crisis is not

so clear. I live in Minnesota by the Mississippi River. Our public water system provides me with excellent water at a very

reasonable rate. The same clean water is used for washing our car, my home, and in the production of my computer and car. With the exception of my summer vegetables, most of these things are not made or grown in Minnesota, and thus most of the invisible water I use is not Minnesota water. It could be from California, Florida, Australia, or South Africa.

Global Connections

There isn't an easy way to see the connection between my consumption and the water problems that have been hitting headlines. It would be ideal if a specific product or commodity had a label indicating the location of production and/or processing, along with the

My consumption may even be directly affecting water scarce regions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

reasonable rate. The same clean water is used for washing our car,

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Stephen Gasteyer is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI

Water Conflict and Resolution

Stephen Gasteyer

“Our experiences tell us that environmental stress, due to lack of water, may lead to conflict, and would be greater in poor nations.” United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki Moon, January 24, 2008.

Water conflict is the result of groups of people or institutions believing that they are unfairly being denied adequate water resources to meet felt needs or wants. The risk of growing water conflict has increased as population and development have put ever greater pressure on water resources. As Secretary General Ban Ki Moon stated at the 2008 World Economic Forum: “As the global economy grows, so will its thirst. Many more conflicts lie just over the horizon.”

WATER HOT SPOTS TO WATCH

- ◆ Jordan & Litani Rivers (Israel)
- ◆ Nile River (Egypt/Sudan/Ethiopia)
- ◆ Tigris & Euphrates Rivers (Iraq/Syria)
- ◆ Ganges River (India)
- ◆ Carvery River (India)

—Source: Marq de Villiers

Water is, of course, the very essence of life on earth. Without it, it is estimated that we could live no more than three days. Indeed, anyone who has attempted a day or more of fast-

ing during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan understands that as humans we are weakened by prolonged periods without water.

The paradox is that, while our earth is a blue planet, made up mostly of water, 99 percent of that water is salt water, unusable in its natural state for human hydration. People are dependent on fresh water to sustain life—as drinking water, in sanitation, and in economic or productive processes.

Hydrologic Flows

Conflicts over water use tend to be concentrated over water basins. Water flows in natural basins by gravity. Those who live upstream control the flow of water. This can be the basis for water conflicts. For instance, the Rio Grande River is shared by the United States and Mexico. The headwaters of the river are in Colorado and flow downstream through New Mexico and Texas. Because water is siphoned off to support agriculture, industrial and urban development, only rarely does a significant amount of that water reach Mexico, where irrigated farming communities have long suffered drought conditions.

Water Scarcity

Water conflict is generally thought of as the result of biophysical, or natural, scarcity. When there is not enough to go around, certain actors will take measures to ensure that they get theirs. But scarcity is not only biophysical. Scarcity may, in fact, have environmental conditions, social constructions and perceptions.

Environmental conditions involve low annual precipitation, decreasing precipitation over time, diminishing availability of resources, and high variability of resources. Situations of drought involve rainfall below the recorded average. This may persist over multiple years. In places like Africa, climatologists talk of 20 year drought cycles. Indeed, processes of climate change and global warming may have the effect of decreasing rainfall over time.

Social constructions of scarcity involve regulations that can limit

access to water resources. For instance, Palestinians have limits on allowable depth of wells placed on them from the Israeli authorities. This impacts both the Palestinian agricultural production and community development potential.

As the global economy grows, so will its thirst.

While Israel claims to offset this with domestic water supplied by Israel’s national water carrier, this source is restricted in the driest part of the year and Palestinians complain that they are asked to pay more than Israeli consumers for the same water.¹

Cultural presumptions and perceptions may also influence the perception of scarcity. For years, the governments of Las Vegas and Phoenix, did little to constrain water use. Businesses flaunted use of water (think of the famous fountains of Las Vegas) and residences had lawns and swimming pools. While there was little natural water in the area, these were certainly not situations of scarcity, indeed these cities became symbols of the misuse of water in the southwestern U.S.²

Technology & Water Allocation

Technology and technological development plays a major role in water conflicts. The ability to construct large dams that hold back and divert water for use by upstream users is precisely the cause of disgruntlement by those downstream. The proposed GAP project in Turkey nearly led to war on several occasions with Iraq,

which worried that the project would restrict water to the Nile and Euphrates.

Technology may also play a role in resolving water conflict. Most frequently, proposals are put forward to increase supply. One example would be the proposed Red-Dead Canal, which would pump sea water into the Dead Sea while generating hydroelectric power for use in desalination. As is often the case, this project does not address the underlying cause of the conflict and may have serious unintended consequences.

Values and Water Use

A critical and often underappreciated aspect of water conflict is that of values. Values may be taken in both its forms: monetary and cultural. Both of these aspects are critical.

Tony Allen argues that the Middle East water conflicts could be solved if the parties recognized the relative value of activities.³ For Israel, he argues, there is little merit in continuing to produce and trade “virtual water” through irrigated agriculture. The value of the water is worth more than products such as citrus, tomatoes, rice, and cotton. The same is true of many of the other conflicts.

The other values that are important are those that respect water as a critical part of the web of life. There are increasing movements to better conserve water. Who lives downstream? What other human or animal communities might utilize this resource? What might we do to preserve and protect this resource for present and future generations? These values will be critical to overcom-

ing water conflict.

As a United Nations Development Program conference on Water Values and Rights stated, there are increasing calls to: “develop a new water mentality by which water use is prioritized as vested human rights and is managed in an economical and ecological sustainable manner instead of being handled as solely a political issue and commercial commodity.”⁴ ~

Read the full text of this article online at www.ipjc.org/journal.

1. Abu Eid, A., “Water as a Human Right: The Palestinian Occupied Territories as an Example” (2007)
2. Postel, Sandra, *The Last Oasis* (Earthscan: 1992) and Reisman, Marc, *Cadillac Desert* (Penguin Books: 1993)
3. Allen, Tony, *The Middle East Water Question* (I.B. Tauris: 2002)
4. UNDP, *Water: Values and Rights* (2005)

“Footprint” from pg 1

water footprint, so that we would know not only the extent of impact but also where the impact is felt.

It is possible that to support the production of my cell phone and my children’s toys, Chinese farmers were denied agricultural water or poor Korean villagers were denied drinking water. I do not know whether in the process of printing colorful patterns on my shirt, water pollution increased in Bangladesh, or whether in the process of growing cotton for my shirt, water tables went down in India. My consumption may even be directly affecting water scarce regions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Water for Thought

Sometime ago, I came across

an excellent resource, the *Water Footprint Network*. Their website (www.waterfootprint.org) explains the concept of a “water footprint” to help calculate “virtual water”—the water embedded in the many traded commodities and products that countries import or export, and that I consume. Unfortunately our knowledge is still in too preliminary a stage for it to provide the water footprint for complex industrial products such as synthetic clothes, plastics, or electronic equipment. Also, these calculations are still not one hundred percent accurate. But it is a very good first step, and gives plenty of water for thought.

I have been looking for ideas to reduce my water footprint: old style canning and/or freezing of

summer vegetables, reducing the meat and other animal based food items in my diet, shifting to local and/or fair-traded products that are sustainably produced, reducing the amount of processed food I buy and the food I waste, switching to carrying a stainless steel water container, using bio-degradable and less polluting cleaning products, using public transport and buying less! There is a start for me! ~

¹ UNDP: “Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and global water crisis” (February 2009)

WATER FOOTPRINTS

Product	Footprint
1 plastic bottle	1.5 gallons
1 cup of tea	8 gallons
1 cup of coffee	37 gallons
1 lb of soybeans	216 gallons
1 lb of chicken	468 gallons
1 lb of cheese	600 gallons
1 lb of beef	1,861 gallons
1 automobile	32,000 gallons

Sources: h2oconserve.org, waterfootprint.org

The Push Toward Privatization of Water

Richard McIntyre

Two-thirds of the world's population—billions of people—is expected to run short of fresh drinking water by 2025. Meanwhile, there is a movement towards the privatization of water for profit.

The World Bank and similar institutions have made loans to developing nations for water service on the condition that they be privately—not publicly—owned and operated. This has opened the door for companies to build inferior water systems and then charge far more than people making mere dollars a day could ever hope to pay.

This contrasts with the road to private control of water in developed nations. Much of our nation's water and sewer system is outdated and in need of upgrades, but many

communities are strapped for cash and unable to make improvements. Instead, multinational water companies, such as RWE, Suez and Veolia, have approached local officials with claims that they can manage the systems more efficiently than the public sector.

Unfortunately, communities all over the world have witnessed the empty promises of economic efficiency

from privatization. In 2005, the government of Tanzania canceled its 10-year contract with UK-based Biwater after two years of poor management and unmet obligations left people without water and the government short about \$3.25 million. In early 2008, an international tribunal ruled that the company must pay almost \$8 million in damages and fees to the state water utility in Dar es Salaam.

Halfway around the world in Ecuador, the Inter-American Development Bank loaned \$40 million to the government to prepare for International Water Services, a subsidiary of Bechtel, to operate the water and sewer system in the country's largest city, Guayaquil. The local subsidiary, Interagua, dismissed all the workers from the previously owned public utility. The company partially bowed to public pressure by rehiring 20 percent of them the following year.

The phenomenon—and problems—of water privatization is not limited to the developing world. The City of Atlanta gave United Water a 20-year, \$428 million contract in 1999 to operate and manage Atlanta's water and sewer

system. The company overstated the amount of money it could save the city and underestimated the work needed to maintain and operate the system. In over its head, the company cut costs by letting go almost 400 employees. It raised sewer rates an average of 12 percent every year it had the contract. Atlanta terminated the contract in January 2003.

Farther south, New Orleans was fortunate in that it only flirted with water privatization. The city dropped such plans in 2004 after five years and \$5.7 million worth of study. The 20-year, \$1.5 billion contract would have been the largest ever awarded in the United States.

These stories illustrate that whether communities sit in the middle of Africa or the United States, the promises of economic efficiency from privatization come with their own problems and challenges. Fortunately, people across the world increasingly understand this and are standing up in defense of affordable access to clean and safe water for everyone. ~

Richard McIntyre is the water policy director for Food & Water Watch.

SELLING THE RAIN

"Let me say this before rain becomes a utility that they can plan and distribute for money. By 'they' I mean the people who cannot understand that rain is a festival, who do not appreciate its gratuity, who think that what has no price has no value, that what cannot be sold is not real, so that the only way to make something actual is to place it on the market. The time will come when they will sell you even your rain."

—Thomas Merton,
Rain and the Rhinoceros,
1964

... *water privatization is not limited to the developing world.*

WATER BY NUMBERS

- ◆ Each person needs **5 to 10 gallons** of safe freshwater a day
- ◆ More than 1 in 6 people worldwide—**894 million**—do not have access to safe freshwater
- ◆ Globally, diarrhea is the leading cause of illness and death—**88%** of diarrheal deaths are due to lack of sanitation and safe water
- ◆ Freshwater resources make up **2.5%** of the total volume of water on Earth—of that less than 1% is usable by humans
- ◆ By 2025, **1.8 million people** will be living with absolute water scarcity, and **2/3 of the world population** could be under stress conditions

Think Outside the Bottle

Patti Lynn

Traditionally, water has been regarded by many as a common good to be shared by all. But in the face of the growing global water crisis, some of the world's most powerful corporations are privatizing our public water systems, transforming access to an essential resource into simply another opportunity to profit.

Here in the United States, corporations are privatizing our water, bottling it and selling it back to us at prices hundreds, even thousands of times what tap water costs. Corporations are poised to capitalize on concerns about water safety and water scarcity. In fact, bottled water corporations have continued to bottle water for profit during drought conditions both in the United States and abroad.

The bottled water industry's environmental footprint is no less significant. The production and manufacturing of the bottled water for the U.S. market consumes the equivalent of well over 17 million barrels of oil each year—enough fuel to run more than 1 million cars for the same time period. This leaves out the energy consumed by shipping that same water across county, state, and even continental divides. The process also generates more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide per year. To visualize these energy costs of the lifecycle of a bottle of water, imagine filling up a quarter of each bottle with oil. What's

more, our oceans and cities are filling up with discarded plastic waste.

Bottled water corporations spend tens of millions of dollars each year to convince us that what comes out of the bottle is different than what flows from the tap. But tap water is much more highly

regulated than bottled water and has more independent oversight by state and federal environmental authorities.

Corporate Accountability

International's *Think Outside the Bottle* campaign is a national effort to support public water systems and encourage consumers and governments to choose tap over bottled water.

Ask

Our members are calling on Coke, Pepsi, and Nestlé to:

- ◆ Reveal the sources and sites of the water used for bottling;
- ◆ Publicly report breaches in bottled water quality comparable to reports by public water systems; and
- ◆ Stop threatening local control of water when siting and operating bottled water plants.

Pledge

The campaign is partnering with prominent restaurants, uni-

versities, faith groups, and tens of thousands of people across North America to make a pledge to use tap water over bottled water and to support strong public water systems.

Resolve

The campaign has worked with leading national mayors to pass a resolution encouraging all cities to phase out taxpayer spending on bottled water and instead invest in strong public water systems. Our public water infrastructure stands to get an infusion of much needed dollars as part of the national economic stimulus package recently signed into law. Building upon our success with mayors, our members and organizers nationwide are calling on their governors to stop bottled water spending and prioritize public water systems.

In the same way that water has been parceled out among bottlers, it can be reclaimed by communities and officials. With continued involvement in these efforts, we can protect our democratic control of this basic human right. When we “think outside the bottle” we help make sure water systems remain under public control and continue to serve and strengthen our communities for generations to come. ~



Patti Lynn is campaign manager for Corporate Accountability's *Think Outside the Bottle* Campaign.

The production and manufacturing of the bottled water for the U.S. market consumes the equivalent of well over 17 million barrels of oil each year...





Sr. Rose Bernadette Gallagher, M.M. is a staff member of the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns.

A Female Responsibility

Rose Bernadette Gallagher, M.M.

Women's lives all around the world are closely connected to water. Women and girls are responsible for collecting water for cooking, cleaning, health and hygiene, and if they have access to land, growing food.

In rural areas, women walk long distances to fetch water, often spending 4 to 5 hours per day carrying heavy containers and suffering acute physical problems. In Nanyangachor, Sudan, the nearest hospital is fifteen hours away by road in dry weather; during the rainy season roads are impassable, resulting in many deaths of women and children. In arid and drought-prone areas

the challenge is compounded, while in urban areas, women and girls can spend hours waiting in line to collect intermittent water supplies at standpipes. The inordinate burden of fetching water inhibits women's involvement in other activities such as education,

income generation, cultural and political involvement, rest and recreation.

Pollution and lack of access to clean water proliferate the cycle of poverty, water born diseases and gender inequities. The World Health Organization estimates

that 80 percent of all sickness in the world is attributable to unsafe water and sanitation. The correlation between water and sanitation is evident as maintenance of family health is mostly viewed as a female responsibility.

Extensive degradation of ecosystems, polluted water, contamination of ground water and aquifers, over-consumption of water

As the environment deteriorates, women's livelihoods become increasingly vulnerable.

in rich countries and by the rich in poor countries, as well as the impact of extreme poverty, have all contributed to an environmental catastrophe in the world's water supply. In their roles as caregivers and managers of households and natural resources, women are most affected by the current global water crisis. Women use vegetation and forests for medicinal plants, food and fuel, as well as for income generation, but these ecosystems rely on a healthy water supply. As the environment deteriorates, women's livelihoods become increasingly vulnerable.

"We the women are responsible for feeding our families. The bush has now become a desert shrub in my area and there is nowhere to go to fetch wood. One day, unable to find enough wood, I used some branches to cook. Since the wood was not enough, I cut my plastic bassinette in pieces to fuel the fire... Then I took the wooden bench where I was seated and cut it to feed the fire..." (Satou Diouf, Gadiag, Senegal)

Water and the Millennium Development Goals

The *Water for Life Decade* (2005-2015) recognizes the central role that women play in providing, managing and safeguarding water, and as the main role models within the family when it comes to sanitation and hygiene. It is crucial to ensure the full participation and equal involvement of women and to approach water and sanitation issues from a gender perspective. The benefits and costs of water use can accrue equitably to all

groups, and the creativity, energy and knowledge of both women and men can contribute to making water systems work better. Improvements in access to safe water and sanitation that involve both women and men will lead to multiple benefits in other areas, such as reducing poverty, enabling girls to get an education, and reducing child and maternal mortality. ~

Recommendations

- ◆ Involve women and men equally in decision-making
- ◆ Pay attention to the privacy and security needs of women and girls with regard to the location and design of sanitation facilities
- ◆ Improve access to water for all
- ◆ Accord women equitable access to land and other resources
- ◆ Focus water and sanitation education and training programs on women and men equally

© WaterAid/Marco Betti



Woman gathering water in Tanzania

Story of Hope: The Bakhita Women's Project

The widows of Kaloma—a small town in the Southern Province of Zambia—began their journey to water independence through the simple act of knitting. With the help of a local group of the Sisters of the Presentation, the women formed a knitting club which they named “Bakhita Women,” after one of the first female African Saints, Josephine Bakhita.

In addition to providing for their own families, many of the women cared for children who had been orphaned in the HIV pandemic. “First of all, we discovered the healing power of sharing stories,” said Presentation Sister Numba Mukeya. “This is how the knitting activity started, as the women shared their stories and helped one another to solve their problems, they knitted.” With the profits from their knitting club, they decided to join their efforts in another venture—farming. They planted maize on four hectares of leased land. Over time, the women were able to meet the basic needs of more than thirty local families.

Eventually they purchased a small farm on which they planted maize, fruit and vegetables. They also planned to build a bore well for irrigation. “But they were advised by the agricultural officer not to put a bore well in that area,” said Presentation Sister Prema Antony, “as it would not have water in the dry months when they most needed it.” Instead, they decided to build a dam to harness rain water and provide a year-round water source.

The women began by digging the

core trench for the dam themselves. They emptied the river bed located on the property line and collected the sand to make bricks. Most of

the manual work was done by the women. They needed to rent machinery to finish building the dam, but before they could raise enough money,

the rainy season began. The heavy rains washed away the core trench the women had dug. “But they did not give up hope,” according to Antony. The next year, they raised the necessary funding to complete the dam project.

Today, the rainwater harnessed by the dam is used by the Bakhita Women for their orchards, vegetable gardens, maize planting, fish farming, and livestock. They also

allow neighboring villagers—who previously had to walk up to five kilometers to find water—to use the water for drinking, household and agricultural purposes. The group owns seven cattle—two of which are used for plowing, the rest for milking. The women are also learning how to raise pigs and goats and have introduced fish into the dam. Fruit trees—mangoes, pawpaw, citrus, avocado, custard apples and guavas—have been planted on the property and some have started bearing fruit.

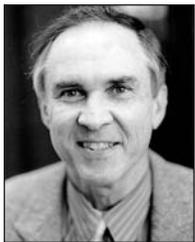
The dam provides a steady source of water and allows for year round production on the farm. “The group has become self reliant and gained dignity as they take pride and ownership of their project, the work of their hands,” said Antony. “The women can plan for the future as they do not have to totally depend on the rain.” ~

The women can plan for the future as they do not have to totally depend on the rain.



THIS STRAW SAVES LIVES

On any given day, more than 6,000 people—mostly children—die as a result of drinking contaminated water. The makers of the LifeStraw wanted to design a water filter that could be used easily in challenging physical environments, even by children. The LifeStraw turns contaminated water into safe drinking water, just by drinking through the straw. Each straw costs just a few dollars and can provide a year's worth of safe drinking water. The Rotary Club of Fort Lauderdale, Florida makes it easy to donate a LifeStraw to a family in Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi or Ghana. Visit lifestraw.123yourweb.com.



Dr. Gary Chamberlain is Professor of Christian Ethics at Seattle University. His most recent book, *Troubled Waters: Religion, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis*, was published in 2008.

Water's Sacred Meanings

Gary Chamberlain

rarely in analyses and conversations about water are cultural, and in particular religious, dimensions brought to light. Yet for billions of the globe's peoples, their fundamental conceptions about the natural world and water are influenced to some degree by religious considerations, whether those are feelings of disdain, indifferent, respect or even love.

Indigenous Peoples

Among indigenous peoples, water has a sacred quality. For the Kogi of northern Colombia, water is *Aluna*, the primordial "stuff" of the universe. Whether for the Kogi or the Salish of the Northwest, the Cree of Eastern Canada, or the Australian aboriginals and the Ashanti of Africa, water is the birthplace of all peoples and of the earth itself.

Hinduism

For Hindus, water is one of the five interdependent, sacred elements of the world—earth,

waters absorb the moral dirt of worshippers. Hindu texts support keeping the waters clean and pure.

Buddhism

Beliefs in the interconnectedness of all things, reincarnation, and the pervasive presence of suffering lead Buddhists to a special mindfulness in relation to the natural world, to water. Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh states: "We should deal with nature the way we deal with ourselves! We should not harm ourselves; we should not harm nature." Water itself is "a good friend, a bodhisattva [Buddha-like person who steps aside from entering nirvana to help others], which nourishes the many thousands of species."

Confucianism

Confucian thought is concerned with proper human behavior and the exercise of virtue in relation to the natural world. The great Confucian scholar Mencius (371-288 bce) sees the law of water and the law of morality as connected; a good ruler would bring order to the world *and* to the water: "The tendency of human nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards."

Taoism

In Taoism one achieves harmony through "actionless action," and the Tao is often viewed as water which does not resist but flows gracefully, eventually bringing changes through its effortless flow. Humans accomplish harmony through the "flow" of their actions in harmony with the rest of nature.

Judaism

In Judaism, God is the source of spiritual drink, nourishment; at the same time, God is the origin of the physical waters that nurture God's people. The exodus story relates the many times Moses used water for deliverance. Rituals emphasize water's power for purification, such as hand washing at the *seder* supper. Water cleanses humanity, bringing humans closer to God.

Christianity

Water figures prominently in the life of Jesus, from his baptism, to his many references to "living waters," culminating in the water that flowed from his side at the crucifixion. Water is powerfully symbolic as an instrument of God's powers of healing, purifying, and cleansing. The "holy" water blessed during the Easter ceremonies becomes the water of purification, used throughout the year at rituals and ceremonies, such as baptism.

Islam

According to the Qur'an, "Allah has created from water every living creature." Water is a symbol of Paradise, a reminder of Allah's gift in a harsh, desert climate. Wells are especially venerated because of water's scarcity. Muslim laws view water as a communal resource. A hierarchy exists among uses: first, the right of thirst, i.e., no one can be denied drinking water since life is involved; then needs of bathing, cleaning, and cooking; next livestock; and lastly irrigation of crops. The very purpose of water is to revive the earth and all upon it. ~



A Hindu ritual involving water.

air, fire, water, and space. The sacred status of rivers implies their place in purifying souls: bathing in the sea, river, stream, or pond grants salvation. The

Ritual & Reflection: The Woman at the Well

Gather a small group for communal contemplation and reflection on the theme of water.

Set Up: Arrange chairs for participants around a small ritual table. Put on the table a cloth, candle, and small bowl of water.

Song: Select a song of your choice, such as *Come to the Water* or *Up from the Waters*.

Reader: Ananda, the favorite disciple of the Buddha, having been sent on a mission, passed by a well near a village, and seeing Pakati, a girl of the Mata nga caste, he asked her for water to drink. Pakati said: "O Brahman, I am too humble and mean to give thee water to drink, do not ask any service of me lest thy holiness be contaminated, for I am of low caste." And Ananda replied: "I ask not for caste but for water;" and the Matanga's girl's heart leaped joyfully and she gave Ananda to drink.

—Gospel of Buddha 76: 1-3

Facilitator: Let's take a few moments of quiet to reflect on the reading. Imagine that you are the woman, the favorite disciple, or the water itself. What does this feel like? Who asks *you* for water? Or, perhaps you were expecting to hear a different story of the woman at the well. What does this tell you about the human story? After the quiet, I will begin.

Sharing:

One thing that struck you in the story of Ananda or
One insight about water and the human story

Response Prayer:

The time will come when they will sell you even your rain.
—Thomas Merton

Response: *When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. (Isaiah 41:17)*

Sometimes I go without food so that my grandchildren have water. **R.**

—Hawa Amadu, Ghanaian grandmother.

Entire peoples have been reduced to destitution and are suffering because they lack drinking water. **R.**

—Pope John Paul II

Facilitator: Let us close by sharing the gift of water. I invite you to take the bowl, put your hands in the water and let the water bless you. Then, pass the water to the person sitting next to you as you say to them, "May your heart leap joyfully at the gift of water." I will begin.

(Adapted from *Peace & Justice Matters*, Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, 2004)

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WORLD WATER DAY

Peace building is the theme of the 2009 World Water Day—March 22. Visit www.unwater.org to learn more about the theme, "Shared Water: Shared Responsibility."

Resources

Websites

H2O Conserve
www.h2oconserve.org
Calculate your personal water footprint

IPJC Water Resource Page
www.ipjc.org/links/water.htm
Links to resources and action ideas

Water Use it Wisely
www.wateruseitwisely.com
Water Saving tips and links to your local conservation agency

Water Wars Pulitzer Gateway
www.waterwars.pulitzergateway.org
Online portal connecting students and journalists on the ground in East Africa.

Books

Barlow, Maude. *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*. New Press, 2008.

Lohan, Tara. *Water Consciousness*. AlterNet Books, 2008.

Pearce, Fred. *When the Rivers Run Dry: Water—The Defining Crisis of the Twenty-first Century*. Beacon Press, 2007.

DVDs

Flow: How Did a Handful of Corporations Steal Our Water?, Oscilloscope Pictures, 2008.

Running Dry, Chronicles Group, 2005.

The American Southwest: Are We Running Dry, Chronicles Group, 2008.

Thirst, Bullfrog Films, 2004.



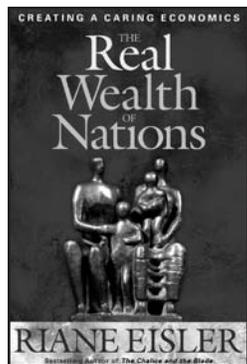
Parenting for Peace and Justice

The first IPJC Parenting for Peace and Justice Group is still going strong. For the first two years we followed the PPJ program and met to share dinner, parenting support, our faith, and to build community. We are now in our fourth year. The topics we choose are often related to the 5 themes of the original program—peace, simple living, global awareness, the environment, and diversity—and

come out of our shared need for insight and support. For the past two summers we have gone camping and hiking together to get to know each other in a more personal way. One of the greatest joys has been to watch our kids grow up together. We are a community of support as we strive to live out the values of peace and justice as parents, and we are a community of faith and fun as well. It is truly great to have other parents to call for help who we know shares similar values.

Call today to start a Parenting for Peace & Justice young adult group in your Parish





Just Us Reading

Our Spring young adult Justice Book Group begins **March 25**.

We will be reading *The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics* by Riane Eisler, one of the plenary speakers at the Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation.

Her book asks—how can we create a new economic system that works for businesses, families and the planet?

Join us to read and discuss the book, create community, share ritual and spirituality, and act for justice.

NWCRI asks: "Who Should Be First?"

Who should have the right to scarce water supplies first, farmers trying to grow crops for their survival, or a multinational corporation? By 2025 industry will account for most of the projected increase in water use. Concerned about water scarcity, shareholders are asking corporations to create comprehensive policies that articulate the company's respect for and commitment to the Human Right to Water.

These policies would include that the corporation will:

- ◆ Abide by national laws that give priority to water for personal and domestic uses
- ◆ Ensure efficient use of water so as not to undermine local populations' access to safe-drinking water
- ◆ Provide for environmentally responsible waste disposal
- ◆ Take into account the right to water and involve the community when making decisions about facility-setting
- ◆ Work with government and other stakeholders to ensure that priority is given to water for personal and domestic uses

2009 shareholder resolutions include:

Intel Corporation which uses vast quantities of water in its semiconductor manufacturing process and operates in water-scarce areas like Israel and the American Southwest.

PepsiCo whose main ingredient in its beverages is water; in 2003 PepsiCo's water-use license was revoked in Pudussery, India due to claims that its bottling plants were depleting groundwater.

NWCRI is among a coalition of faith-based shareholders in dialogue with **Coca-Cola** regarding its operations in water-scarce of India. Our meetings are focusing on the Human Right to Water.

1 Institute for Human Rights and Business, www.institutehrb.org

Catholic Advocacy Day

IPJC organized 120 appointments in 40 of the 49 Districts in Washington.



Participants from the 46th District caucus prior to meeting with their legislators.

peace & justice center

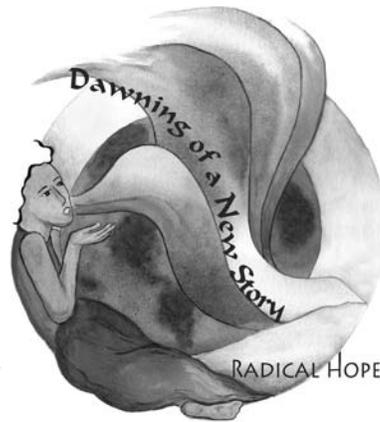
Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation IV

DAWNING OF A NEW STORY: RADICAL HOPE

MAY 1-2, 2009—BELLEVUE, WA

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Six Session Process
for Faith Communities

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ALL OF
CREATION

Working to End Human Trafficking

The seeds that were planted in our Fall Human Trafficking Events have started to sprout. Together we can make a difference and stop the demand for human trafficking!



- Bus Ad Campaign launched on 180 Seattle area buses. Contact IPJC for information on starting a bus ad campaign in your City.
- Silent Prayer Vigils on the first Sunday of every month at 1:30pm in Westlake Park, Seattle. Contact IPJC for a "tool kit" to start a monthly vigil in your community.
- School & Parish presentations
- Web Resources

1. Universe Story
2. Global Warming
3. Water
4. Social, Economic, Environmental Interdependence
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Creative Responses to the Water Crisis

Kids Play—Water Pumps

Imagine a playground that not only provides hours of good clean fun...it also provides safe clean water for the local community. The PlayPump water system—a child’s merry-go-round attached to a water pump, storage tank and tap—makes this dream a reality. As the children spin round and round, they draw clean water from underground. To date, the non-profit PlayPumps International has installed more than 1,000

PlayPumps in sub-Saharan Africa. “Where we used to get water is a long way from our place,” said Trifina Ngwenya of Acornhoek, South Africa. “PlayPump water is better. It is clean and fresh.” www.playpumps.org



© PlayPumps International

Native Plants

Native plants need less water, chemicals and pesticides to survive in your yard than exotic species from other locales. Verde Native Plant Nursery is a non-profit in Portland, Oregon that promotes native plants, while also increasing opportunities for low-income people in the “green economy.” Verde works with Hacienda CDC, an affordable housing provider, to provide job training to their residents in the training greenhouse. The plants are used on Hacienda CDC properties as well as other wetland restoration and stormwater management projects. Visit www.plantnative.org to learn about native plants.

Shower Challenge

How long is your shower in the morning? The average American takes an 8 minute shower—using 20 gallons of water. Reducing your shower by just one minute could save up to 1,826 gallons a year. A group of young people in Brooklyn, New York—calling themselves the “Brooklyn Green Team”—challenged 160 of their friends to a “5 Minute Shower Challenge” last summer. “Not everyone makes it all the way through without ever cheating,” according to Green Team member Amanda Gentile, “but they are more aware and hopefully carry those behaviors forward.” Contact your local water utility for other water saving tips and for free or discounted low flow shower heads.

Rainy Day Brush-Off

The average American roof sheds more than 700 gallons of water per one inch of rain. Some people are beginning to use rain barrels to collect rooftop runoff to water plants, lawns and gardens. In Knox County, Tennessee, local artists



and water conservation officials have teamed up for their 2nd annual “Rainy Day Brush-off” to promote the use of rain barrels. More than 60 artists and several student groups have created original works of art on 55-gallon rain barrels. The barrels will be auctioned off on eBay starting May 16th. Proceeds support community education and conservation efforts.

www.waterqualityforum.org ~

A Matter of Spirit is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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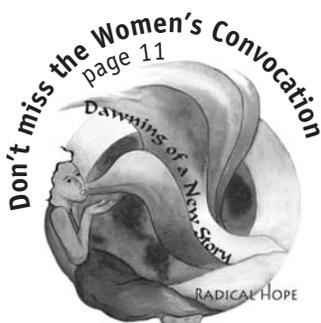
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