

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK
Sustainable Agriculture
Water and Land

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**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

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INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

Study 1 is about Sustainable Agriculture. It is divided into two parts: water and land.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) has an integrative approach to development. It is the policy of CLWR to work in partnership with communities and local authorities to develop projects that have long-term effects and ones that are sustainable. In this study you will have the opportunity to explore one such project in more detail. The study will allow you to reflect on themes theologically; as well, it will raise challenges and themes affecting the developing and the developed world relating to water and the sustainability of a clean, safe source of water for all people. You will also be invited to explore how you are instruments of God's healing, caring and sharing and how you can share your gifts.

The video, *Water* (available from CLWR), adds a visual perspective to this study.

Objectives

To explore:

- God as Source of Life
- Jesus as "living water"
- Water as source of life

To explore the relationship between humans and their water supply.

- What water means to a community and its people
- Health, sanitation
- Food source
- Consumption and the availability of a sustainable, safe water source for the world
- Caretaking of the resource (misuse of resource)

To explore what it means to be faithful to the Gospel.

- living as an instrument of God's healing, caring and sharing by participating in the work of CLWR and by sharing our gifts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Study 1, *Sustainable Agriculture – Water*, can be used as a one-session study or as a series. This can be determined by the intended use of the material and the time available.

The material is divided into three parts:

- Water - Section 1: God in Christ as source of life; water as source of life (theological reflections);
- Water - Section 2: Nurturing and caring for the gift of life: water (addressing the challenges and related themes);
- Water - Section 3: Instruments of healing, caring and sharing (Soil and Water Conservation Project—How can we share the gift?)

Each of these sections contains general information, stories, liturgy, questions and experiential opportunities.

The exercises and questions are flexible. Depending on how much time or how many sessions you have allotted to this study, your group may wish to use all or a few of the exercises; your group may wish to discuss all or a few of the questions. Explore the areas in each section that are of interest and that hold meaning for you and your group.

If your group uses this resource as a one-time experience, it would be important for the facilitator to be familiar with the entire study and choose something from each section to work with. In this way the whole picture receives attention. It would be helpful to conclude with the video.

This study can also be used as a three-session study with each session focusing on one of the segments. A more in-depth study of this important topic would be facilitated with this approach. The third or last session could conclude with the showing of the video since it captures in visual form what has been addressed throughout the study.

CLWR hopes that this study touches your hearts and offers you a deeper connection to God and to Jesus as the “Source of Life” and the “Living Water.” We hope that it challenges you to think about and explore the significance of educating yourselves around this theme. How can we work together to create a safe, clean and sustainable water source? How do we contribute to the problem? How does the developing world contribute to the problem? Lastly, we hope it motivates and inspires you to identify your gifts and resources and how you might share them as instruments of God’s healing and compassion.

Sustainable Agriculture

Water

God has entrusted us to care for the earth. Thus, in order to be faithful to this mandate, we are challenged to live in a relationship with creation that is sustainable for all and which respects and preserves life.

PRAYER/CONFESSION

Leader: God, we thank you for your boundless love. We thank you for sending Christ to be our redeemer and healer.

People: You call us in love and hold us in your forgiving embrace.

Leader: We confess that our hearts are often cold and without gratitude.

People: Do we fail to do your will? Are our hands passive or occupied with many things to do?

Leader: How have we separated ourselves from you?

People: Do our lips utter destructive messages, instead of speaking your words of love?

Leader: Gracious God, you promise to always walk with us. Heal us now we pray.

People: May your word and your table be a place for us to gather hope, strength and courage, so that we may be agents of your love.

All: We pray this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

WATER - SECTION 1

God in Christ as Source of Life. Water as Source of life.

Theological Reflections

“You are the Source of Life.”

These words are alive; they are powerful words. Allow yourselves for a few moments to live with these words. Allow yourselves to experience them, not just with your head, but also with your heart.

“You are the Source of Life.”

These words are used in scripture to describe God. How do you feel when you hear these words? Where do you look for and connect to the “Source of Life”? Are you able to receive life from this Source? If so, in what way?

As I pondered these questions, a picture emerged in my mind. A few years ago on a trip to Bolivia, we visited a small village which, with the help of CLWR, for the first time in its history received access to fresh drinking water. They actually had a water tap right in their own yards! Such an astounding change in their lives! Now they would have time and energy to devote to their crafts, earn more income and educate their children. Prior to this, for hundreds of years the people in the village—often women and children—had to spend almost three quarters of every day simply to collect enough water for their families’ daily needs. It was a daunting task that required traveling four hours by foot to a small creek bed. Once there, they would spend another two hours filling their containers from the small trickle of water that was in the creek. Then they faced another four-hour, steep climb back to their village. This was a huge part of their daily routine.

During the hot summer months, it was not uncommon for the creek bed to dry up completely. This meant traveling an even longer distance to another creek to collect precious water.

On the particular day that we visited the village, some of the women were busy bathing their children and others were washing clothes. One could see the joy in their grinning faces as they lived out the gratitude they felt within for this precious gift of water in their very own yard. Suddenly, one of the men—a mischievous farmer—initiated a water fight! It didn’t take long for everyone to join in. Soon water was flying everywhere. The shouts of joy and the resounding laughter came from deep within. The women forgot their task of washing clothes; even the children laughed and joined in. It was a laughing, squealing, uproarious scene with life-giving water flying through the air! Even we visitors were not spared! As I was sprinkled with water, I thought of the waters of Baptism.

Read 1 Peter 3:21a

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience.

In Holy Baptism, we are liberated from sin and death by being joined to the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. In the waters of Baptism, we are reborn children of God. By the gift of Baptism and the Holy Spirit, we are also made members of the church—the body of Christ. Baptism opens to us the way of everlasting life.

Questions

When was the last time you connected to the precious gift of your Baptism? What does it mean for your daily life that you are baptized? What does it mean for you that in the waters of Baptism you are reborn a child of God? What does it mean to be made a member of the church—the body of Christ?

Sing or read together “Water has Held Us”

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*Water has held us, moved by creation.
Out of the dark chaos, broke forth the Light.
Up from the deluge, showing God’s promise,
Has come a rainbow, gladdening sight.*

*Water has saved us, as the sea parted
For Israel’s children, walled on each side.
This love has led us, helped us in trouble;
On far horizon, God’s cloud our guide.*

*Water has cleansed us, bathed with forgiveness.
Has, with clear blessing, washed sin away.
Jordan’s strong currents, God’s Own announcing,
Made a beginning, baptismal day.*

*Water has touched us, fresh on our foreheads,
Showing an inward, Spiritual grace.
Into God’s family, we have been welcomed
As sons and daughters, we take our place.*

With the gift of water, God nourishes and sustains all living things. Jesus himself made water a sign of the Kingdom, a sign of cleansing and rebirth, a sign of new life together with him.

In the Old Testament, God meets the need of the people for water (see Exodus 17:6). Today we share the same need for clean, safe water. God wants to quench our thirst (God as “Source of Life”, Jesus as “living water”). God’s love is revealed as we work to share this gift with all the peoples of the earth.

Read John 4:10-11, 13-14

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?" ... Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

Jesus offered the Samaritan woman a new life in him. He is the living water and thus offers us life. We are invited to come to him and receive his gift of life into our hearts.

Questions

How is Jesus "living water" for you? How does this "living water" nourish you? How does this "living water" flow through you to touch others?

Look up Isaiah 55:10-11**Questions**

How does God's word grow in you? How is it watered and nurtured?

Look up Isaiah 58:11**Questions**

If you open up your heart to God and others, will you be nourished and watered? Or is it possible that you will be barren and empty because others might try to use you or hurt you?

Sometimes it is difficult for us to trust that new growth will come as we become involved. The risk might seem too high or the investment too steep. As we confront our fears and vulnerabilities, do we believe that God is providing and watering our inner gardens?

Look up Psalm 23:1-3**Questions**

Are you open to receive God's restoration for your soul? Will you allow God to lead you beside the still waters? Do the waters of life flow within you? What are the signs in your life of growth, hope, nurturing, new life?

Prayer

God, you are the Source of Life. Allow us to open our hearts to you so that we may be filled with your living water. May this water feed us, nourish us and restore us to a right relationship with you through Jesus Christ. May this water encourage us to care for the gifts we have been given and to share our resources with others. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

WATER - SECTION 2

Nurturing and caring for the gift of life: Water

Addressing the challenges and related themes

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. . . . The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Genesis 2:8,15

Prayer

Lord God, keep us on the path that leads us to you. May we have the courage to heal our hearts through your forgiving love. Then we can be instruments of healing in the world. Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20). In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Water is life-giving, the source of life. It can also be life-threatening. When people drink or use polluted water, e-coli bacteria and diseases such as cholera, dysentery, polio, infectious hepatitis and typhoid can kill. (An estimated 5 million infants die every year from intestinal diseases before they reach the age of one! Eighty percent of all disease in the world is caused by inadequate sanitation or water.)

In Canada, more and more of the water supply is becoming polluted. Chemicals need to be added to make it safe. Research also suggests a link between certain types of cancer and chlorine (Dr. Roger Rogers, The Centre for Integrated Healing).

Having access to clean, safe water is as critical to the North as it is to the South. Both are responsible for polluting the existing supply. (In the North, we tend to take the plentiful supply of water for granted and waste it more readily. In the South, the same water source is often used for drinking as is used for the bathing/toiletry needs which pollute the water source; as well, the laws are not so stringent in the South as they are in the North in relation to industrial pollution. Big companies often contaminate water supplies.)

Seventy percent of the human body weight consists of water. Therefore, experts claim that people should drink an average of two to two and a half litres of water a day to stay healthy. In many countries water is rationed, because it is not as plentiful. Around the world, droughts occur yearly, leaving the people very vulnerable.

It has been predicted that in the next fifty years there will be a scarcity of clean, safe water on the planet. Some believe that within five years there will be a water shortage in Canada. The water supply is not endless.

Scripture challenges us to tend the resources we have been entrusted with. Water is an essential one, since all life would cease without it. Access to an adequate, clean, fresh water supply is one of the greatest needs in the world today.

We all know the value of water for nurturing healthy bodies, for growing food crops, and yet often we in the North take it for granted because we perceive it as being plentiful.

One just has to live through a drought once to learn the value of water and how vulnerable we become if we do not have access to it.

Story: “Surviving the Drought in Ethiopia” by Sophia Mwangi (reprinted with permission)

September 1999

When Orike Chilo cooks dinner for her children she knows they will be sick from eating it. The only food she has is weeds gathered from the bushes just outside her village. Orike lives in the region of Konso, southern Ethiopia, and is one of five million people facing the threat of famine because of a severe drought and food shortage.

Her kitchen is a tiny, smoke-filled hut and the look of despair on her face is obvious as she stoops beside her ‘stove’ stirring the stringy, red leaves in the pot. The same despair is being felt by millions throughout Ethiopia. Lack of rain over the last three years has meant no harvest. The people of Konso are now dependent on food aid.

Konso is a dry, hilly region, famous for its terraced hillsides. Over generations the Konso people have developed traditional methods of conserving water by terracing. However, because of the harsh weather, even their traditional methods have buckled under the pressure.

Harvest time in Konso should have been a time of weddings, celebrations and parties. Instead the Konso people were clearing the land of the dead sorghum and maize stalks. They depend on two rains for their harvest. The main rainfall is between February and April and contributes to 70 percent of the harvest. The second rainfall is in August contributing to only 30 per cent. The harvest is in October.

Since the late 1940s, famine caused by drought has hit Konso every 10 years. Since the 60s the time-span has lessened. Now the trend is worsening, with famine occurring every two to three years. According to Kussia Bekele, MP for the Southern Nationalities and Special Wereda, of which Konso is a part, “The situation now is very dreadful. Immediate action needs to be taken, otherwise, a lot of people will die or migrate. People are eating wild fruits. This is the first time in my lifetime that I have seen people cutting trees and trying to sell the wood. It will end up in erosion, but this is their only coping mechanism.”

The international community and donor agencies have responded to the need and pledged 246,918 tons of grain. However, Ethiopia needs at least 600,000 tons until the next harvest in June 2000. The food aid therefore needs to be continuous to avoid a major catastrophe.

Ameray Mengiste, project coordinator of Farm Africa, says, “Some of the strongest family members have migrated to other areas to seek seasonal employment, so in this way they are coping. Recently, a little food aid has arrived in the area and people are mixing the grain with the roots and weeds which they are collecting from the bush. They are surviving that way. If the donors respond quickly then we can save lives and protect the sale of assets in this area.”

Chakalato Kasa is an elderly man whose children have already migrated from their home village, Foro. He remembers the famine of 1984-85. “We lived through it with food assistance and the little food I harvested, but this drought is totally different. It is heavy and difficult for my family. Most of them have left for Kenya to look for work.”

But there is some good news in Konso and other famine-prone regions in Ethiopia, according to Gemaida Gara, head of the Kongo Drought Committee. “People here are not dying as a result of starvation or food shortage because we were aware of the situation earlier and reported the situation to various organizations. The response this time is better than the 84-85 time. The regional council was more organized than 10 years ago and because of this we received some grain to help save lives, even though it is not the quantity we requested.”

Although the people of Konso believe this drought is much worse than the drought of 1984-85, Ethiopians have seen the warning signs early enough to avert a major full-blown famine. The existence of food reserves, reminiscent of Biblical times (Genesis 41: 33-36), played a major role. The onus is now on the international community to honour their pledges and keep the aid flowing.

Questions

What is your response to this story? (When one suffers from a lack of fresh, safe water, one recognizes what a precious resource it is—food source, sanitation, health, hygiene.)

Do you ever think about running short on safe water in your area?

How much water do you consume in a day? How much water do you think one adult in a village in Ethiopia consumes in a day?

How difficult is it to get your daily water supply? What challenges might people in a small village in Ethiopia have in obtaining enough water for the day (e.g., length of distance to travel, weight of the water, method of carrying water)?

Other areas are plagued by floods in the rainy season, which makes it difficult for the farmers to produce enough for their survival. In the dry season there is not enough water from the river for the community, and in the wet season the excess water floods away the farms.

Story: “Being able to have 3 meals a day” by Beruk Kabtamu, (Lutheran World Federation/Division for World Services–Ethiopia, Annual Report, 1998)

Following is the case study of Girre Mumin, Beneficiary Farmer of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY)/Lutheran World Federation (LWF-ET)/Soil and Water Conservation Project (SWCP).

Introduction

As one travels east from Dire Dawa on an all-weather road leading to Djibouti, about 60kms from Dire Dawa, there is a small town just before crossing a seasonal but big river called Harmukale. At the point which the road crosses the river, the river reaches about 100m in width. Ethiopian Roads Authority is currently building a bridge of that length to cross the river.

The Harmukale River seems quite friendly and hospitable as you drive across it—but that hospitality will only last until the rainy season comes in the area or up in the hills. Try to cross it then, and the river will be happy of having your company to go with it wherever it is destined to. Usually at such a rainy season, crossing trucks cannot help but wait for the river to subside.

It is against such a river that the farmers in Harmukale Kebele had to struggle to ensure their families' survival. Life was so difficult for farmers for they could not produce enough to ensure their own survival. During the dry season, there is not enough water from the river, and during the rainy season there is too much water flooding away their farms! After years of struggle, they had to give up crop production and become pastoralists to rely on livestock rearing. It was at this juncture the EECMY/LWF-ET came to the rescue and started development activity through the Soil and Water Conservation Project.

Background

Harmukale Kebele is found in Somali National Regional State, Shinile Zone, Denbel woreda. Girre Mumin's father came to Harmukale 30 years ago and owned 4 hectares of land. Girre, being the eldest of 5 brothers in the family, had to take the family responsibility as his father became old.

“We used to try to traditionally divert the river using local materials like logs, mud and stones, and digging canals,” Girre recalled. “At dry season, when we badly need water, even if there is a good flow of water from the river, the water we were able to divert was not enough, because we could not divert it properly either because the materials to divert the river leak or the water infiltrates throughout the canal. When that reaches our farm, it could not even enable grass to grow, let alone crops. When the rain comes, neither diversion materials nor canals can survive the Harmukale River flood. The first flow that comes through the canal before damaging it usually flooded the entire crop we managed to grow with just a few drops of rain. Such incidences every year made our effort to grow crops futile. We used to plant sorghum and maize, and it is only few years we were successful in getting a harvest.

“After so much unsuccessful struggle, we lost hope in crop production and entirely shifted to livestock rearing, mostly goats. Since this could not support all the family, I used to smuggle contraband items with my brothers. Since this is illegal, we did not pursue it long.”

Girre remembered that there was a time when it was a luxury to provide two meals per day for the family. Milk kept the family surviving and a little sorghum purchased from the sale of goats. Goats and cattle did well for many years because of the availability of water and grazing attributed to the presence of the Harmukale River. But this has, Girre recollected, attracted returnees from Somalia and people from the relatively dry areas to settle in the Harmukale area around 1991-92. This went beyond the capacity of the grazing land to carry the sudden influx of all the livestock. The livestock started to die of drought every year. Life became miserable again. The family members increased and everyone is looking at him for survival!

Lutheran?—Who are they?

“All the elders and breadwinners of families in the area gathered to look for solutions when the problem became worse. We decided to look for outside help, and we applied for the Shinile Zone Administration. The administrators told us that they are making arrangements to meet and discuss the issue with ‘Lutherans.’ We did not know who or what that was. We never knew then that it was the inexhaustible solution for our survival that God has sent us.

“We met the officials of the organization at their Dire Dawa office. We took them to Harmukale Kebele. We had frequent discussions on many issues, such as how to divert the river, how we can participate or contribute, how the water could be managed, what other services are required, how such a project would affect us and the downstream users, amongst many other issues.”

In 1996, the baseline and the technical surveys were completed by the Dire Dawa Soil and Water Conservation Project Team. Agreement was signed between the EECMY/LWF-ET and the Somali Regional State at Jijiga.

Ato Yideg, the Eastern Ethiopia SWCP Area Manager, explained that, “The Harmukale River Diversion work was the most costly, time-taking and difficult project—more than any other SWCP sites in the east. The diversion weir had to be firmly and deeply installed and a diversion weir of 150 metres wide and 3 metres deep in cement concrete had to be constructed. There was the problem of diverting the river at the time of rain away from the construction site—which was of course a difficult task. Whatever we dug for the construction can be filled by sand overnight. Sometimes, the flood became too powerful for the concrete to resist; a further, deeper structure had to be constructed.”

Girre remembered how they participated during the construction of the diversion weir and the canals to enable them to survive until the completion of the project—and they start to produce. “Since we know that the project is exerting all the effort and going through such difficulty to improve our life, we have given all the support to our capacity.”

Questions

What is your reaction to this story? Have you ever lived through a flood? What might be some of the causes of flooding and drought?

Statistics indicate that we in the North, who make up approximately 20% of the world's population, consume almost 80% of the world's resources.

Both the North and the South are guilty of misusing the earth's resources. Both need to work together to assure a safe and adequate water supply for all children and those of future generations.

Some points to consider

How often do you water your lawn / wash your car / take a shower or bath / let the tap run / flush the toilet? How many litres of water do you think you use?

Have you ever wondered why we flush our toilets, take baths, wash our cars, water the lawns with drinking water?

What kind of stress might this be putting on the environment?

Where do all the chemicals that we put on our land end up?

Have you ever wondered how acid rain might be affecting the food you eat? How does our lifestyle contribute to this problem?

Having a safe and adequate water supply is intimately connected to the health of our food supply (flood, drought, water-borne diseases).

How can we become better custodians of this most precious resource so as to avoid a disaster in the future?

How can we help countries striving to secure safe water supplies for their communities?

After years of drought and flooding, how can we support countries striving to reclaim the land and grow food?

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water. . . . they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 35:6b-7a,10b

Picture water gushing out of a new community tap; it is a joyful sight both for village children and adults.

Reflection

The following reflection is an opportunity to experience the significance of the gift of water. Excerpted from *May I Have This Dance?* by Joyce Rupp. Copyright © 1992 by Ave Maria Press, P.O. Box 428, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA. Used with permission of the publisher.

... image yourself as a garden in early spring ... you are the earth, untilled ... your surface has been hardened by the cold winter winds that have pelted you with ice and snow ... see the hard surface ... feel the hard surface ... you are worn out from the harvest, empty ... you feel barren, brown, dry ... brittle stalks and stems of flowers and vegetables have been left behind ... you feel lifeless, dull, fruitless ... you wait for your hard, barren surface to be turned over ... and now the tiller comes ... with its sharp edges ... it pushes through your soil, digs into it ... uproots the stems and stalks ... the tiller forces its way through the wintered crust ...

... finally, all is completed ... you are ready ... you are turned over ...

... you are open to life, to light ... you can feel the sunlight ... the warm wind blowing ... yet you are dry ... you thirst for rain to bathe you with refreshment ... you wait ... you want life ... you long for water ...

... now you feel a change in the air ... you feel the approach of a rainstorm ... you hear the wind rising ... you hear the thunder ... its rumbling draws nearer ... the crack of lightning fills the sky around you ... now the air becomes very still ... suddenly you feel the first splat of a falling raindrop ... then another, and another ...

... the raindrops fall and tumble upon you ... they splash and dance and dribble down through all the openings of your soil ... they fall faster and faster ... a steady pace now ... they trickle in rivulets ... they sink into all the readied spaces ...

... you feel the watering ... you feel newness ... you are washed and rinsed and filled with life ... you feel ready for seeding ... you are energized ... alive ...

Having access to a clean, safe water supply is as critical to the North as it is to the South. God has entrusted the care of the earth to each one of us. Without water there is no life nor is growth possible. We have been asked to tend the garden we live in.

WATER - SECTION 3

Instruments of Healing, Caring and Sharing

Soil and Water Conservation Project in Ethiopia. How can we share our gifts?

Life is a journey with others. We share our lives, our hopes, our fears and our experiences. We welcome others to share our lives. We learn from each other. We cry and laugh with one another. We affirm God's presence on the journey.

This journey invites us to explore our resources and to refresh our dreams together. What people, what situations in the world call us to growth? On this road we all have our times of sorrow and challenges, and at the same time we hear God's magnificent assurance: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9) Although we will be challenged to risk reaching out and sharing our resources, we trust that there are enough for all; we trust there is enough strength within us to move us forward to care and to share.

Exercise

Draw a road map of your life for the next three years. What gifts do you have to share so that the world can move to a place of greater wholeness? Sketch them in on your map.

Read Esther 4 and 5

Question

What choices have you made recently that support the rights and dignity of others?

Read Mark 1 32-39

Question

How did the touch of compassion from Jesus allow for healing?

Prayer

“Where your treasure is . . .”

O Lord, some of us have mites

and some of us have millions

and most of us fall somewhere in between.

We know it’s our responsibility to give from what we’ve been given,

and Jesus made it very clear that it was not the size of the gift, but the size of the giver’s heart that matters.

You, O Lord, know our treasures and our hearts.

Pray our hearts swell to the occasion!

Amen

“Star Giving” from *Searching for Shalom* by Ann Weems. © 1991 Ann Barr Weems. Used by permission of Westminster John Knox Press.

Story

(A friend shared this story with me. I invite you to ponder it as well)

A certain rich man, a disciple, approached the rabbi requesting to learn about how one becomes rightly related to God. The rabbi took the rich man before a window. “Look out this window. What do you see?”

“I see the world,” the rich man replied.

“What is it like?” the rabbi queried.

“I see people—a single mother working two jobs in order to feed her tiny children, a man struggling with depression, a teenager confused and frightened about the future and many others who have great need,” the rich man replied.

The rabbi then instructed the rich man to turn around and face a mirror in the room. “What do you see?” “A mirror,” was the response.

“What does it show?” “I see only myself,” the rich man answered.

The rabbi concluded, “There are two kinds of windows we look through. When the window is clear, we see the world with all its suffering and needs. When silver is added to the window, we see only ourselves. If you are to be rightly related to God, you must not let your vision of the world be obstructed by the wealth you possess.”

Questions

What is your response to this story? How do you share your resources and gifts with others? (Refer to your road map.)

What do you see when you look through the window?

Read Matthew 25: 35-40

Questions

What motivates your helping of others? What impact does this have on your life?

We are instruments of God's healing and caring. At times we may feel inadequate or unworthy. God's breath, God's love working through us can do amazing things. Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) is an instrument of God's healing, caring and sharing in the world. You, as members of the Lutheran community supporting the work of this agency, are instruments of God's love. You are part of a community that explores what it means to live in a relationship with God in Christ and with creation that respects and preserves life. It is through your treasures of time, prayer, money and sharing the story that God's love touches others. Lives can be changed, making the earth a more sustainable place, thus securing the future for all children.

The intention of this section is to draw your attention to areas in the world where CLWR is working as a result of your contributions and prayers, exploring and addressing the challenge of creating and maintaining a safe, clean, sustainable water supply. We know that water is essential to life. If our sisters and brothers do not have access to clean water, they are being denied the gifts of God's creation. As we care for each other, God works through us.

Working through CLWR to support projects in the developing world is not enough. The entire global community has to wrestle with this dilemma and have the courage to implement the necessary changes in our lifestyles.

Soil and Water Conservation and Community Development Projects - Ethiopia

(Adapted from Country Profile: produced by CLWR)

Ethiopia is located in the "Horn of Africa." The total land area is 1,221,900 km with a total population of approximately 55 million. The Lutheran World Federation-Department for World Service (LWF-DWS)-Ethiopia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) have been working in Ethiopia since the 1960s. This helped to alleviate the situation during the two major famines of the 1970s and 1980s. Over its long history in Ethiopia the work has gradually changed from one of relief, to rehabilitation, to development.

Project Description

87% of the Ethiopian population is rural, and agriculture is the backbone of the Ethiopian economy. By and large Ethiopian farmers depend on rain-fed agriculture. For the past few decades the belg (small) and krent (big) rains have been erratic, precipitating drought and mass famines. In order to mitigate Ethiopian farms' dependence on the unreliable rain-fed agriculture, LWF/DWS–Ethiopia/EECMY have been implementing soil and water conservation projects through the irrigation and diversion of Ethiopia's perennial rivers and streams and through the construction of micro earth dams which allow the collection and preservation of excess water during the rainy season for use during the lean months of the dry season. In the past, they tried to divert the available brooks in their own way. To divert the river to their farms, they stuffed logs, leaves, mud and stones into the river bank. This took much time and labour. Often the weir constructed in this manner was washed away by the first flood from the hillside catchment. Population pressure with an annual growth of 3% has also greatly contributed to the devastation of Ethiopia's environment over a relatively short time. Soil and water conservation is one of the ways that LWF/DWS–Ethiopia/EECMY is striving to restore it.

The approach is participatory and the communities are encouraged to identify their needs and to find solutions themselves to problems that affect them directly.

Household food security and community capacity building are the main objectives of the community development project. Community development is the newest component of the work in Ethiopia and compliments the proven success of the soil and water conservation schemes.

The Soil and Water Conservation Project (SWCP)—established in 1985—is being implemented at a number of sites in Ethiopia by a Lutheran Federation office in Addis Ababa. The SWCP has four area coordination offices in four directions of the country, located at Shashemene (south), Jimma (west), Dire Dawa (east) and Weldiya (north).

In 1995, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) accepted a proposal from CLWR to provide three-year funding for the Soil and Water Conservation Project.

Attention has also been given to preventative health education and awareness building. This objective was included because of the direct relationship of water from the new water structures and the problems of water-borne, water-contact and vector-borne diseases.

Water-borne diseases include cholera, typhoid, polio, dysentery. They are prevented by cleaning contaminated water, improving sanitation and halting the use of impure water sources. Water-contact diseases include leprosy, hookworm, roundworm, skin/eye diseases, scabies. They are prevented by improving hygiene, increasing the water supply as well as establishing easier accessibility to this water supply. Vector-borne diseases include yellow fever, malaria, river blindness. They are prevented by destroying insect breeding types and improving management of surface water.

Also, training has been given in sanitation and hygiene as there is a direct link between disease and unsanitary conditions.

Some attention has been given to the spraying of agro-chemicals on farm crops. Poisoning of the individual and surrounding environment may result. The water quality may also deteriorate due to chemical pollution.

Some major outputs of the SWCP

- 24 river diversions and 5 small-scale dams have been constructed;
- 9 nature springs have been protected to improve quality of village water points;
- Thousands of farmers have been formally and informally trained in basic soil and water conservation;
- More than one million fruit trees have been planted in catchment areas, with more than a quarter of them on farmers' own land;
- More than 300 kilometres of checkdams and bunds have been built to protect vulnerable catchment areas;
- Food-for-work has provided income to well over 900,000 poor, food-insecure individuals.

Outcomes

- Almost 19,000 small-holder farm families are directly benefiting from about 8,000 hectares of land irrigated by appropriate technology;
- Reliable water supply and new crop varieties including vegetables and fruits are increasing household income;
- Production of traditional crops has dramatically increased because of dependable water;
- Maintenance of irrigation infrastructure is 100% voluntary and organized by village-level water communities.

“It is estimated that Lutheran World Federation is accountable for about 17% of the irrigation work in the country. This was made possible through its Soil and Water Conservation Projects in different parts of the country. At present only 25% of the total population has access to safe water.” (LWF/DWS–Ethiopia Annual Report, 1998)

Improved water and wood access, diets, markets and community resource management capabilities are contributions made by the projects. Attention has also started to focus on a better integration of the environment into the program.

Girre, who lives in one of the completed sites (1998) in Eastern Ethiopia (Harmukale), shares the following: “Since the completion of the project in mid-1998, up to mid-1999, I harvested maize and sorghum 3 times, and this will not only suffice the family, but will be enough to feed the family for the next 9 months. In addition to this, I have planted 120 seeds of banana, about 500 papaya, and a small amount of tomato and onion. I have collected already 1,400 Birr from the sale of onion and tomato.

We have control gates, through which we can control the flow of the river, its amount and which farm it should irrigate. We can produce crops throughout the year, harvesting mostly 3 times a year. We have been trained in irrigation structures maintenance, so we are clearing the canals.

We have no words to thank the project sufficiently enough for what they did for us. We have plenty of milk and food and even surplus to be sold to the market. We will maintain the project and we will make sure that it serves us for many years to come.” (from the LWF/DWS – Ethiopia Annual Report, 1998)

Question

How has a stable, safe water supply affected the lives of the people participating in the Soil and Water Conservation Projects?

View the *Water* Video

Questions

How have you been touched by this study? What significant things did you learn from this study?

What’s Next

Is there any action that you can take to be an instrument of God’s healing, caring and sharing? Could it be possible for your congregation to select a project or an aspect of a project and support it through CLWR?

Facilitating a safe and adequate water supply, together with the local communities, is important. Education is a significant element as well. We in the developed world need to continue to explore with our brothers and sisters in the developing world the connection between unsafe water and disease. We need to educate ourselves about themes related to consumption. We need to reflect upon the root causes of drought and flooding and make the necessary adjustments in our communities and in our personal lives. We need to wrestle with the ultimate question: How do we wisely and respectfully use the world’s fresh, clean water supply so it can be secured for future generations?

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, you, who have touched our soul, we give you thanks.

You have loved us from the first moment of our lives and you have held us in your embrace.

Continue to grace us with your presence.

Help us to recognize and embrace your truth, so that we might labour to restore compassion to the human family and be instruments of your healing for the earth and for each other. May your love be made manifest through our actions. Amen.

Benediction

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

RESOURCES

Teaching Resource for Children

I Was Thirsty... This package for children is available from CLWR for use within the Sunday school.

Teaching Resource for Youth

Living love like Water from a Rock. (A discovery resource for young people on water and development.) This resource is available from CLWR.

Background Resources

- LWF/DWS, Ethiopia Annual Report, 1998.
- EECMY/LWF Department of World Service, Ethiopia Program 9SWCP.CD Impact of German Site in Eastern Ethiopia. Final Report. A Contribution to a Better Integration of the Environment into LWF/DWS–Ethiopia Programme, June 1999. Written by Camilla Madsen.
- Status Report (1995 to 1997) for CIDA’s Multi-year Food Aid Support to the CLWR/LWF–Ethiopia Soil and Water Conservation Project, September 1998.
- CLWR Funding Proposal: A Request for Support for the LWF in Ethiopia Soil and Water Conservation Project, December 1998.

Additional resources available from CLWR. Contact the Coordinator for Communications and Development Education, 204.694.5602 in Winnipeg, and 1.800.661.2597(CLWR) outside of Winnipeg.

APPENDIX

Water issues and themes throughout this World

Prominent issues and themes of water today concern accessibility of fresh, clean water, conservation for future generations, consumption per person and proper water resource management. We encounter these issues every day, even in Canada, where fresh water is abundant and accessible. Although the issues concerning water are similar, the problems these themes cause vary greatly between developed and developing nations. Developed nations are faced with solving the problems caused by their own progress. Developing nations are trying to achieve the lifestyles a rich nation takes for granted. To demonstrate the contrast between developing and developed nations, this section is divided into two parts.

Developing nations

The major themes that affect developing countries are water accessibility and cleanliness. In developing countries 80% of illnesses (typhoid fever, cholera and dysentery) are water related. A shortage of fresh, clean accessible water is common due to inefficiently managed water resources, lack of funding from governments, overpopulation in urban areas and destruction of natural ecosystems, like deforestation. These themes can be divided into six categories to be further elaborated on.

Accessible, clean water is vital to agriculture so that food security will be guaranteed for humans. In countries like Ethiopia, where droughts are common and food production is inadequate, irrigation systems are desperately needed. Less than 8% of Ethiopia's irrigable land is properly irrigated because of high costs, low economic returns and inaccurate data concerning water availability. The Ethiopian government has formed a Ministry partly responsible for water protection, and laws are being formed to protect the essential distribution and irrigation of water.

The fastest growing cities in the world, like Mexico City, have severe problems with equal distribution of drinking water. How can everyone receive an equal and just amount of water, when there is not enough drinkable water available? In rural Mexico they are coping with the problems by communal management. All families have equal access to drinking water as long as they abide by strict cultural obligations. Another example of successful water management is in Lima, Peru. A self-managed settlement was organized to maintain a sustainable community. Improvements on the infrastructure and services of this settlement are achieved through the work of the community members.

As some of the stories in the studies indicated, for many people in the developing world, fetching water can occupy 3/4 of the day, leaving little time for things such as education, recreation and craft-making. Often the load that mainly the women and children carry is heavy, causing a strain on their health.

Another issue concerning large and densely populated cities is the high incidence of water-borne diseases. These water-borne diseases are caused in part by considerable environmental pollution (from agriculture, residential and industrial waste), inadequate sewage disposal and improper sanitation policies. The diseases and pollution are killing the people, animals and entire ecosystems in these countries. Projects have been developed to solve sanitation problems, but few have been successful.

The availability of fresh water in the Amazon is decreasing due to deforestation and increasing the carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere. Deforestation causes a decrease in precipitation, an increased runoff and reoccurrence of floods. When runoff occurs, soil flows into the water, potentially damaging the marine ecosystem and reducing the amount of natural land for the animals. When the soil runs off into our water, the waterways become polluted, creating obstacles for wildlife.

The inefficiency of governments in developing countries causes further problems for people and water management. No coordination between or within ministries, weak enforcement of laws (if any exist at all), lack of funds, inadequate skilled labour and little public interest are a few problems facing governments. War and disagreements between countries can also cause shortages of water. An excellent example is in Israel, where the Israelites are controlling the water flow of a river that the Palestinians need. To ensure sustainability for the future, countries must develop and secure international agreements concerning water management, distribution and treatment.

Developed nations

Developed nations are experiencing similar issues of water management as developing countries. The difficulties caused by the issues are significantly different. We are faced with the difficulties of maintaining our lifestyles while at the same time conserving the environment. In Canada, we have not yet experienced water shortages, but there are predictions of this occurring in less than ten years. Irrigation systems are in place, sewage treatment plants are operating, and conservation is beginning to take hold. We may be on the right track, but we still have a lot to accomplish. The problems facing developed countries is how to sustain our rich lives without depleting our water supply.

One fifth of the fresh fish population has become extinct, endangered or threatened, in recent years. One of the reasons fish are endangered is due to pollution from silt in our waterways. The silt runs into our waterways and alters ecosystems in irreparable ways. Excess of nutrients (caused by residential and industrial pollution), such as phosphorus and nitrogen, is also a contributor to the decrease in the fish population. The excess nutrients cause algae and other vegetation to overload on top of a lake/ river and can block vital light from underwater vegetation and marine animals.

It has been predicted that in fifty years, half the world's population will be affected by serious water shortages. We will still have water, but it will be undrinkable due to pollution. At present, more than 97% of the world's fresh water is polluted. Developed nations are increasing the number of chemicals being used in agriculture to combat resistant strains of pests. These chemicals run off into our water systems. Pollution (grease, acids and oils) is also entering from storm drains into our waterways. As well the consumption of water is increasing in Canada. If we continue to live as we do, perhaps this prediction will come true.

Global warming is changing the patterns of rainfall, which directly affect marine life as well as natural habitats on land. Not only are rainfall patterns changing, but the temperature of the world is increasing, which increases the temperature of water as well. Fish in some areas have stopped laying their eggs when the temperature has only been raised by 1-2%. What will happen if the temperature continues to rise?

Canada is fortunate. Since we have 20% of the world's fresh water (9% is renewable), drinking water is extremely accessible and abundant. Unfortunately, our water supply will slowly deplete. If we do not begin to conserve our supply, we may be affected by water shortages. The USA is already suffering from water shortages; California must purchase water from different states and countries. Canada is working to conserve its waterways for the needs of future generations, while balancing its economic and social systems. We as individuals and communities can all begin to conserve our water. Small steps in reducing the amount of water we use can reduce consumption of water by more than 40%. Approximately 60% of Canada's residential water consumption occurs in the bathroom. Taking shorter showers, purchasing toilets that use less water and replacing old faucets and showerheads with new water conserving ones are simple ways to reduce consumption. To create sustainable water management, people need to begin by working in their communities, as in the communities in Lima and Mexico. Sustainability will be difficult to achieve, but it is within our grasp.

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Sustainable Agriculture

Land

God has entrusted us to care for the earth. Thus, in order to be faithful to this mandate, we are challenged to live in a relationship with creation that is sustainable for all and which respects and preserves life. We are challenged to protect and care for the land in a way that promotes both the welfare of the land and its stewards.



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

Study 1 is about Sustainable Agriculture. It is divided into two parts: water and land.

Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) has an integrative approach to development. It is the policy of CLWR to work in partnership with communities and local authorities to develop projects that have long-term effects and ones that are sustainable. In this study you will have the opportunity to explore one such project in more detail. The study will allow you to reflect on themes theologically, and it will raise challenges and themes affecting the developing and the developed world as they relate to land. You will be invited to explore how we might better protect and care for the land in a way that promotes the welfare of the land for us today, and for future generations. Finally, you will be invited to reflect upon how you might be a faithful steward, an instrument of God's healing and sharing. How can you become involved to secure the food supply and, with that, our health? The video, *Seeds of Hope/The Elusive Dream* (available from CLWR), adds a visual perspective to this study.

Objectives

To explore:

- “And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1
- Jesus as “bread of life.”

To explore the relationship we have with the land that we have been entrusted with.

- Themes around environmental pollution/health risks.
- Hunger/social and personal responsibility.
- Debt crisis.
- Consumption and the availability of a sustainable, safe food supply for the world.
- Caretaking of the resource (misuse of resource).

To explore what it means to be faithful to the Gospel.

- Living as faithful stewards by participating in the work of CLWR and by sharing our gifts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

Study 1, *Sustainable Agriculture – Land*, can be used as a one-session study or as a series. This can be determined by the intended use of the material and the time available.

The material is divided into three parts:

- Land - Section 1: “And God saw that it was good.” Jesus as “bread of life.” (Theological reflections)
- Land - Section 2: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.” Nurturing and caring for the gift of the earth. (Addressing the challenges and related themes)
- Land - Section 3: Being faithful stewards. How can we share and protect the earth? (Training Program to Improve the Llama, Alpaca and Vicuña Breeding and the Related Wool Industry in Bolivia)

Each of these sections contains general information, stories, liturgy, questions and experiential opportunities. The exercises and questions are flexible. Depending on how much time or how many sessions you have allotted to this study, your group may wish to use all or a few of the exercises. Your group may wish to discuss all or a few of the questions. Explore the areas in each section which are of interest and which hold meaning for you and your group.

If your group uses this resource as a one time experience, it would be important for the facilitator to be familiar with the entire study and choose something to work with from each section. In this way the whole picture receives attention. It would be helpful to show the video in the second section as indicated in the material.

This study can also be used as a three-session study, with each session focusing on one of the segments. A more in-depth study of this important topic would be facilitated by this approach.

CLWR hopes that this study touches your hearts and offers you a deeper connection to the beauty of God’s creation and the responsibility we share to be faithful stewards; to explore a relationship with Jesus as the “bread of life.” We hope it will inspire thought as to the significance of educating yourselves around this theme. How can we work together to create a safe, secure and sustainable food supply? How do we contribute to the problem? How does the developing world contribute to the problem? Lastly, we hope it motivates you to identify your gifts and resources and how you might share them as instruments of God’s healing and compassion.

A LITANY OF CREATION AND FAITH

From REACHING FOR RAINBOWS, Resources for Creative Worship, by Ann Weems. © 1980 The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. Used by permission of Westminster John Knox Press.

Leader: In times to come, your children will ask you:

“Why did the Lord our God ask us to obey these laws?”

People: We will tell our children:

Once we were slave people

And now we are free.

Once we were no people

And now we are God’s people.

Leader: On that first morning

God called us.

People: God called us from nothing.

Leader: Out of nothing came being.

People: Out of darkness came light.

Leader: Out of chaos came order.

People: Out of nothing came life.

Leader: On that first morning God called us.

People: This morning God calls us

To be the people of faith in the midst

Of meaninglessness.

Leader: In the midst of meaninglessness

People: God calls us to meaning.

Leader: Out of brokenness

People: God calls us to wholeness.

Leader: Out of divisiveness

People: God calls us to community.

Leader: Out of tears

People: God calls us to laughter.

Leader: Out of self-centeredness

People: God calls us to love one another.

Leader: Out of unfaithfulness

People: God calls us to faith.

Leader: Out of death

People: God calls us to life.

Leader: And we will say to our children:

*People: Come with us and worship God,
Who has created and is creating in our midst.
Come with us and keep covenant.*

*Leader: In times to come
We will tell our children:*

*People: Once we were slaves
But now we are free;
Once we were no people
But now we are God's people.*

*Leader: Out of death to resurrection,
Out of chaos to birth,
Out of unfaithfulness to faith.*

People: Praise God for these wondrous gifts!

Prayer

We give you thanks gracious and loving God, you who have touched our souls. You have loved us from the moment of our birth. You have held us in times of pain and in times of joy. We ask you to continue to grace us with your presence. Help us to recognize our strength and beauty which we hold within. In doing so, may we be encouraged to work to restore compassion to the human family. May we be faithful stewards as we work together to renew the face of the earth. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

LAND - SECTION 1

“And God saw that it was good” Genesis 1
Jesus as the “bread of life”

Theological Reflections

Experience

Have someone in your group read the following Bible passages. Invite the remainder of the group to hear these words with their hearts. Have each member of the group light a candle. Let it be a symbol of one’s heart. As you listen to the words of scripture, hold the candle in your hands and open yourself to the experience of God’s Word.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Genesis 1: 1-2

God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. . . And God saw that it was good. Genesis 1: 10-11,12b

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. Genesis 2: 8-9a

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. Genesis 2: 15

God has given us the earth with fresh air to breathe, clean water to drink and food to eat. God’s plan for us is to live and work together to nurture and tend this beautiful garden and to share the gifts from our Creator.

It is true that the earth can feed all people. However, many are hungry and millions are dying of malnutrition-related diseases and starvation.

After God had finished his work of creation, the Bible states: “And God saw that it was good.” Today at the end of the 20th century, we cannot listen to or read the news without being reminded of the environmental crisis we face. Daily we struggle with questions relating to the safety of the food we eat; the state of the forests; the ability of the land to produce a crop without drastic amounts of chemicals; the price of grain and livestock; the debt crisis to name but just a few.

Scripture challenges us to be caretakers of the land and to become faithful stewards of this wonderful gift that we have been entrusted with. We are encouraged to have reverence for all created things and to responsibly preserve and care for the beauty of the earth.

If we hold to and believe in the abundance of God’s creation, then we have a responsibility to nurture and share it.

Question

What does a “right relationship” with creation mean and look like for you?

Read Isaiah 6: 3 and Psalm 24: 1

*And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." Isaiah 6: 3
The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it. Psalm 24:1*

Question

What most struck you about these passages?

Read 35: 33a, 35: 34 and 2 Chronicles 7: 14

You shall not pollute the land in which you live. Numbers 35: 33a

You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the Israelites. Numbers 35: 34

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7: 14

Questions

How can you link these texts to your lives? If you confess your sins and receive God's forgiveness, what part might you play in helping the healing of the earth?

The earth has been wounded by the greed of the North. Continually it is necessary to hold before us the fact that the earth is God's; that we hold it in trust for future generations. We need to consider seriously how we might live more lightly on the earth, using only what we need and working for a just economic order. Mahatma Gandhi said: "The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not for everyone's greed."

Confession and Forgiveness

Go into the sanctuary or find a quiet place. Take time to experience the Confession and Forgiveness around greed and the lack of commitment to be faithful stewards of God's creation.

Pray in Unison

Confession

From Joe Seremane, South Africa in *Celebrating One World: A Worship Resource on Social Justice* Harper Collins/CAFOD: 1998 copyright: Joe Seremane/Christian Aid 1987. Permission sought.

*You asked for my hands
that I might use them for your purpose.
I gave them for a moment,
then withdrew them, for the work was hard.*

*You asked for my mouth
to speak out against injustice;
I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.*

*You asked for my eyes
to see the pain of poverty;
I closed them, for I did not want to see.*

*You asked for my life
that you might work through me.
I gave a small part, that I might not get "too involved."*

*Lord, forgive me for my calculated efforts
to serve you
only when it is convenient for me to do so,
only in places where it is safe to do so and
only with those who make it easy to do so.*

*O God, forgive me,
renew me,
send me out
as a usable instrument
that I might take seriously
the meaning of your cross.*

Forgiveness

Leader: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we are strengthened in all goodness and held secure by the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Christian theology is rooted in the Hebrew scriptures. We begin with the knowledge that God is the Creator and Source of all things. We acknowledge that God is gracious and generous. Therefore we recognize that abundance and not scarcity is the basic condition of the earth. When shared justly, there is plenty for all people. As we share the resources, we also come to the realization that in reaching out to others in self-giving and by sharing, we become more whole.

In the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as the “bread of life.”

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” John 6: 35

God has a concern for all who are vulnerable in our society. This means that we who have resources have a responsibility towards those who are poor. This goes beyond prayer and worship. As we come to Jesus, we receive the “bread of life.” We are then challenged to share this bread with others both physically and spiritually. It is a sin to ignore the demands of those who are in need. It is an offence to ignore cries for justice. We are asked to open our hearts and our hands to the most vulnerable within our communities and our world. We are asked to question why the discrepancy between those who have enough and more to live on, and those who do not have enough.

“There is no such thing as ‘my’ bread. All bread is ours and it is given to me, to others through me, and to me through others. For not only bread but all things necessary for the sustenance in this life are given on loan to us with others, and because of others and for others and to others through us.” (Meister Eckhart)

“Jesus provides some vivid imagery around daily bread as God's gift in Lk 12:15ff. He tells the parable of a farmer who has just laid plans for the expansion of his farm, feeling that he finally is utterly secure. Yet that very night he dies ... Separated from the hand of God the making and eating of bread leads only into the bondage that all idolatries bring. Received from the hand of God, it sustains life and provides economic ties that bind a community.” (*The Shame of Farm Bankruptcy*: Doctoral Thesis by Cameron Richard Harder, Toronto, 1999, page 295).

Questions

What can you do to make a difference in the world's many hungers? What do you hunger for?

Story

An old rabbi once asked his pupils how they could tell when the night had ended and the day had begun. "Could it be," asked one student, "when you can see an animal in the distance and tell whether it's a sheep or a dog?"

"No" answered the rabbi.

Another asked, "Is it when you can look at a tree in the distance and tell whether it's a fig tree or a peach tree?"

"No" answered the rabbi.

"Then when is it?" the pupils demanded.

"It is when you can look on the face of any woman or man and see that it is your sister or brother. Because if you cannot see this, it is still night." (Tales of the Hasidim)

Question

What is your response to this tale?

Closing Prayer

God, you are the stirring in our hearts. You encourage us to follow you and to be faithful to your instructions to take care of the earth. You urge us not to give up. We face the future, not knowing what the days, weeks and months will bring, or even how we will respond. You, who are the source of all power, deepen our faith to be able to see all of life through your eyes.

Fill us with light. Thank you for the gift of your creation and the assurance that each day you walk with us. Thank you that you come to us in Jesus Christ as the "bread of life." Give us strength to understand, and eyes to see your will for us. May we grow into a deeper understanding of your way for us. As we open ourselves to you, we know that all things are possible in you. Grant us courage to be responsible stewards of your creation and to do your work. Teach us how to walk the earth. God we praise you! Amen.

LAND - SECTION 2

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. Genesis 2:15

Addressing the challenges and related themes

Prayer

Loving God, may your grace come to each one of us. Give us eyes to see, and ears to hear your Word. Give us an open heart that leads to open and willing hands to do your will so that your Spirit might renew the face of the earth. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sustainable agriculture—land. This is a complex and challenging theme—a theme that affects us at a core level. Global warming, genetically modified foods, PCB-laden whales, chemically-laden food—these and other happenings suggest that we as humans have fouled our nest. If the land is robbed of its nutrients and can no longer sustain a crop, we all suffer; if the land and our food supply become so polluted with chemicals, we all become more vulnerable to diseases such as cancer. If farmers do not get a fair price for their goods and eventually are forced off the land, what is the alternative?

The economic policies that govern the world have frequently resulted in unemployment, lowering of wages, reduced access to health care and education, and an increase in poverty both in the South and the North. This section invites a reflection that is both social and personal.

You are invited to explore the themes around sustainable agriculture—land. They affect the entire world community. This study invites you to struggle with this issue and in so doing, find ways in which you can make changes in your life that will enable you to become a better steward of the earth and its resources.

By challenging yourselves to take a closer look, you work towards securing a safer food supply for the future, supporting farmers staying on the land, and reducing chemical toxicity, thus playing a role in the renewal of the land. Each of us can make a difference.

The land is a place where we can meet God in the gifts of the sun, the rain, the growth of a crop and the raising of livestock.

Singing Our Prayer

Help Us Accept Each Other (in *Creation Sings*, words by Fred Kaan. Copyright 1975 by Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL.) permission sought.

*Leader: Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;
teach us as sister, brother each person to embrace.
Be present, Lord among us and bring us to believe
we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.*

*People: Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life
we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people,—for all not just for some,
to love them as we find them or as they may become.*

*Leader: Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved
in living situations to do the truth in love;
to practice your acceptance until we know by heart
the table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.*

*People: Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need,
who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread
we need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on:
renew us with your Spirit; Lord free us, make us one!*

Consider This

- If all people made the same demand on the resources of the earth as do the average North Americans, we would need five planets the size of earth.
- A child born in the industrialized world adds more to the pollution in the world in its lifetime than 30 children born in the developing world.
- Due to our way of living on the earth, the wild creatures are becoming extinct 50-100 times faster than they would naturally die.
- Unfair prices are being paid by global markets for exports from the South. Farmers growing cocoa and coffee can't survive on their earnings. As well the soil is becoming depleted by the continual harvesting of these cash crops.
- For centuries, natural resources such as forest products have been harvested from the South and brought to the North for people to use. After the trees in the surrounding hills have been cut, farmlands are more susceptible to flooding, thus local crops are often ruined.
- In the South, good farmland has been lost in order to grow fresh flowers, peanuts, strawberries for North Americans. Often the farmer has to borrow money to buy fertilizers and pesticides so the crops grow well. After the harvest is complete, little money is left. Farmers who could have grown food on their land, often do not have enough money left to feed their families adequately, while people in the North enjoy what has been grown by the farmers in the South.
- Seventeen of the world's major fisheries have reached or exceeded sustainable limits. In Canada, the economies of 175 fishing communities have been damaged, and another 200 have been seriously affected.

Activity

Think of the World as a Fish Bowl by Anne Saunders.

This piece is taken from the 1999-2000 resource book, "Sharing the Wealth: Educating for Jubilee." This book is a shared publication of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (CEJI) and *Ten Days* for Global Justice. Both are non-profit, ecumenical groups striving to link global justice issues with Canadian communities. CEJI is a three-year cooperative project of 32 Canadian churches and coalitions and their networks across Canada, and is part of the worldwide Jubilee 2000 movement. *Ten Days* for Global Justice is a member of CEJI, and a national inter-church coalition that carries out church and community-based popular education and action through a local network.

For more information, or to order copies:

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Ph 416.463.5312, Ph 1.877.403.8933

Fax 416.463.5569

E-mail tendays@web.net

www.web.net/~tendays

You will need: A fish bowl of water with some stones and plants in the bottom and two or three imitation fish, a measuring cup and some food colouring.

“Have you ever had a pet fish? It can be interesting to watch fish swim around in a fish bowl or an aquarium. Sometimes people put pretty stones and rock tunnels and plants on the bottom for the fish to hide in or to swim around.

I have been thinking about how our world is a bit like a fish bowl. If some people in our world decide to use a whole lot of something like water (remove a large amount of water so that the water level obviously goes down), it affects other things living in the world. If some people decide to eat a certain food or to make furnishings from a particular type of tree (remove the plants), it affects life for the other things living in the world.

If some people live in such a way that they create pollution of the air or the water (add food colouring to the water you removed and pour it back in), it affects life for the other things living in the world. By taking only what we really need and by trying to live so that our actions don't hurt other people, creatures and nature, we hope that everyone will be able to have enough of God's wonderful creation.”

Question

What struck you about this activity?

Sustainable Development - Land

We all need the earth's resources to live. At the same time they are finite, and God has entrusted us to take care of them. Our present action is moving us to the destruction of this garden. In less than 40 years, humans have consumed more of the earth's natural wealth than in the previous 100,000 years combined.

Slowly we are destroying our environment and ourselves. This may be due to neglect or apathy or ignorance. Poverty and environmental destruction go hand-in-hand. Environmental damage limits people's ability to support themselves. In both the South and the North, resources essential for the livelihood of local people are being put into the hands of a few.

Governments are being forced to choose between losing access to investment capital or opening their communities. For example, Southern governments sacrifice communal forests and vast farmlands for a short-lived foreign exchange surplus. Thus poverty can push countries to accelerate the destruction of their environment. Worldwide, 135 million persons are at risk of losing their land to creeping deserts. (What We Can Do - A 10-Point Agenda for Global Action Against Poverty)

Hunger

There is enough food in the world to feed all people. Yet, every day many people know that they will not have enough to eat. That this situation exists, when the earth can produce enough, is unconscionable.

Many reasons can be cited for the causes of hunger. Some are: exhaustion of fisheries, destruction of the environment, global trading system that favours producing food for export, instead of encouraging local self-sufficiency.

During the 70s and 80s, small communal landholders were pushed off their land, as governments consolidated land-holdings to facilitate high-tech, large-scale agriculture.

In addition, local crop varieties capable of withstanding droughts and pests, began to be replaced by privately patented hybrids which are less resistant and non-reproducing. Although they have far greater yields, they require large amounts of commercial fertilizer.

Thus traditional farming and fishing communities have been replaced by unemployment or low-wage jobs. This trend can be observed both in the South and the North.

Both in the North and the South, many farmers and fishers can no longer earn a living by supplying the citizens with food. More and more land is needed to survive. Transnational corporations are able to produce food more cheaply. Often they can do this because they contract small landowners and exploit rural labour in Southern countries.

Even in countries such as Canada, which has an adequate food supply, people go hungry. A survey taken in 1997 showed that 2.5 percent of Canadians were having difficulty in meeting their food requirements.

The people most affected are the poor—small landowners, the people who fish for a living, refugees, indigenous peoples, and women.

The Israelites did as the Lord commanded Moses; they allotted the land. Joshua 14:5

The whole question of land and land ownership is making headlines, especially in Canada. The white people have taken the land from the aboriginal people and they have used the land and its resources for their greed. The current land negotiations and the court challenges, which we read about almost daily in the papers, point out how complex the solution and healing of this issue is.

In many parts of the developing world, transnational corporations have forced local farmers off their land and again used the resources for their greed. Often they have left an environmental mess behind.

In Canada, the debt crisis is forcing many small farmers off the land. As big transnational corporations take over the land, farming huge acres with mass doses of fertilizers and chemicals, we are challenged to think about the safety of our food supply. There is an urgency to establish a more caring relationship with the land and its resources.

In Joshua, we read that the Israelites divided the land the way that God had instructed. At the present moment the land distribution is far from fair and sustainable. Huge transnational corporations are forcing farmers (both in the North and the South) off their land. Sustainable communities that live in harmony with the land need to be explored and developed (see appendix).

We can trace this theme back to the Old Testament.

In 1Kings 21, we read how Elijah cares about Naboth's confiscated land. He pronounces judgement on those powerful ones who have taken the land. In light of Israel's defection from God's vision, the prophet reaffirms that Israel's land is a trust from Yahweh, given to all. The need of the Israelites to have a place on which to grow food to develop community, to anchor identity—a place to call "home"—is recognized by Yahweh. Thus God provides the land, not as their right, but rather as a gift of love.

God enters into a relationship with the Hebrews. Within this covenant is held the belief that land is essential for the existence of a community and that all have a right to have access to the land. As the land was settled, it was divided more or less equitably according to families and tribes as opposed to the military for example.

The Jubilee year laws required that the land be returned to the original families in a fifty-year cycle.

More and more of the land passed into fewer hands. By Solomon's time we read in 1Kings 4: 1-30, that a system of forced labour and heavy taxes was in place.

The result was a new class of landless labourers who received only seasonal employment in the fields which were once their own. They did not receive enough income from this work to buy the food that they used to grow. Debt became a way of life for them. What made the situation even more difficult was the fact that courts had become corrupt, and thus had turned their grievances aside.

For Israel, the land was considered to be source of sustenance and food. The story began with Adam, in Genesis 2, being formed out of the ground. Many farmers express a strong connection to the land. The spring is often a time of great excitement when the first soil is turned over and the smell of the earth is experienced.

Question

What do you feel you can do to make a difference?

Debt Crisis

The following information has been adapted from the thesis *The Shame of Farm Bankruptcy: A Sociological and Theological Investigation of Its Effect on Rural Communities* by Cameron Richard Harder, 1999.

The farm crisis is psychological and personal. The impact it has on relationships in rural communities is devastating. Often the farm community is dependent on the farm economy for its survival. Thus the bankruptcy of a farm, has dramatic spin-offs for the townspeople.

In 1969, approximately 9 percent of the Canadian population lived on the farm; by 1991, it was down to 3.2 percent. This trend can also be noticed in the South. The reasons there are a little different. Most farmers move because they cannot support and feed their families when the land can no longer sustain a crop, due in part to unsustainable farming practices. Often these families move to the urban slum centres, or to the rainforests in hopes of a better existence (see appendix).

Debt has been a historic component of farm management in the North. In the late seventies through the nineties startling new records have been set by farmers for defaulting on their loans (page 67). The bankruptcies follow a pattern of rapidly escalating debt (page 68). During the period from 1982-1987, income fluctuated violently. This is due largely to trade wars initiated during that period. This fluctuation has continued through the 90s as the United States and Europe have regularly applied and withdrawn subsidies. During this period farmerson average have lost money each year. As a result farm bankruptcies have risen dramatically in spite of attempts to prop up farm incomes.

It appears that it was during the seventies that these debt problems were set up. From 1973/1975 on, the debt capacity for most farms was decreasing as interest rates rose dramatically and, on average, farm incomes dropped. The debts became essentially unrepayable.

At that time the political climate favoured size, and lenders were anxious to lend money. The buzzword for the seventies was 'if you stop growing you start dying!' Also the expectation was that land prices would keep going up (pages 70-73).

Responsibility and economic devastation are broadly shared by all of the players in the agricultural economy and farmers have only a limited control of their own economic success (page 59).

What is suggested by this admittedly brief examination of some of the stories and data from a very complex economic period in agriculture is simply this: on an individual basis farmers certainly had full right to say yes or no to a particular loan that was offered. However the business climate which government, lenders and agrologists actively promoted, the aggressive competition for credit that led to the 'pushing' of loans by lenders, and the inappropriate terms offered on many of the loans clearly played a key role in the overall development of the farm debt crisis (page 94).

With numbers as high as they were, this 'squeeze' produced more than a little anxiety. The result was that nervous lenders detached some of their farm loans from the fixed rate given on the notes and charged interest at the new, rapidly escalating rates, interest that was also compounded monthly (page 101).

I am convinced that humans were made to be in loving relationship with each other, with creation and with God, yet the structures of agricultural life are tearing people, families and communities apart. The process which I believe to be necessary to begin rebuilding rural communities is based on what I perceive to be the impetus behind Jesus' ministry and the hope that emerges from his death and resurrection: that is, the reconciliation of all things in God (page 198).

'Most farmers want to look after the soil, want to look after the environment and that, but the system doesn't allow that anymore.' The expansionist policies which led to the oppressive debt loads of the last two decades have induced farmers to extract greater returns (for less input) from their land in order to stay afloat financially (p. 181).

The isolation of those in financial difficulty, the failure to address these matters together, is resulting in the gradual dissolution of rural community (page 197).

Is there any hope for agriculture other than a high-level restructuring of the global economy? I think there is. Self-determination will not likely be handed to our rural communities by the groups who now exercise control. However, every large structure has cracks in it. I am convinced that there are options for resistance and renewal that could make a substantial difference locally if rural people could find the grace and courage to work together (page 303).

Questions

How might we offer support to farmers in financial crisis in Canada? – in developing countries? What challenges are facing farmers in Canada? – in developing countries? Who shares responsibility for the farm debt crisis?

Environmental Concerns

Vast and diverse challenges face the environment. Global warming, destruction of the world's rain forests, chemical pollution, genetically modified foods, destructive farming practices (fertilizers, chemicals, pesticides, tilling practices) are just a few. In the next decades the problems will reach critical proportions unless something is done.

As the human population growth increases, we have to be even more diligent in decreasing the amount of pollution generated; we need to protect the natural habitats and watch our consumption of the natural resources.

Environmental diseases affect us all. They are caused by chemical agents, radiation and physical hazards. Contaminated food, direct contact with toxins, air and water pollution have increased our risk of cancer and other illnesses.

Weakening of the ozone layer is predicted to increase the incidence of skin cancer, as well as damage crops and the marine food web.

Following World War II, an impetus toward increased food production became more pronounced. This involved breeding crops for high yields and developing intense cultivation methods. It was the direct result of a population explosion. During the same time, natural disasters and erratic weather patterns reduced the crop levels throughout the world.

Modern agriculture depends heavily on engineering and technology, and on physical and biological sciences. Although improved grain varieties with higher yields, stronger pest resistance and greater response to fertilizers have contributed to farm efficiency and productivity, they have caused many other long-term problems. They have contributed to the debt crisis both in the South and the North; they have caused grave environmental problems as well as contaminating our food supply with toxins. Soil erosion, soil and groundwater pollution from fertilizers and pesticides and soil depletion are some of the environmental issues facing crop farmers.

Livestock producers face huge challenges as well (see appendix). The questions that we have to ask ourselves are these: How safe is the meat we are eating? What additives, chemicals and hormones are found in the meat? How does this affect our health? These are serious questions that make the news headlines regularly (e.g., mad cow disease).

Organic farming is becoming a popular alternative. It relies on crop rotations and crop residues, animal and green manure, legumes, and biological pest control. Organic farming minimizes the use of synthetically produced pesticides, growth regulators, livestock feed additives and fertilizers. Due to the unavailability and expense of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, organic farming is more widely practised in developing countries. In developed countries it is becoming ever more popular, as a reaction to the current destructive (“factory farming”) conditions.

The question that many critics ask is: Can organic farming support the increasing population with an adequate food supply? There are no easy answers to this question.

Question

What are the land issues in your community?

Personal and social responsibility

“Your morning coffee was probably grown and picked by a farmer with a few hectares of land somewhere in Brazil, Africa, or Central America. But given the way the coffee trade is organized, he probably didn’t get a fair return for his work.” (What We Can Do-A 10-Point Agenda for Global Action Against Poverty, page 40)

All of our tea and coffee is grown in the South. The farmers who grow this crop only receive 10 cents for every dollar that we pay for it. Eighty percent of your dollar goes to companies in North America and Europe who roast and retail the tea and coffee. Small farmers often earn less than their countries' minimum wage, thus challenging their basic survival.

Small coffee farmers must depend on the middle people and take whatever price they provide, because they do not have access to loans which would enable them to harvest and market their own beans.

This comes about because of the practices of transnational corporations who refuse accountability for the environmental and social results of their decisions and actions. Similar practices can also be observed in Canada and the United States.

We share responsibility by tolerating such practices. More than ten years ago, Canadian churches helped set up Bridgehead (an alternative trading organization). Tea and coffee can be purchased through them, thus following Christ’s mandate to treat others as we want to be treated.

Corporations who choose to be accountable, pay attention to the environment, minimizing the destruction and pollution of the land wherever possible. Also, their investment policies treat workers and producers fairly.

On a personal level we are challenged to explore how we mis-use the land that has been entrusted to us. We are invited to wrestle with the difficult questions and come up with solutions. Sometimes the journey may seem overwhelming. The words of Margaret Mead address this: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Question

How might you play a role in changing the world?

Solutions

Representatives from more than 100 governments met in Rome, in 1996, at the World Food Summit. It was agreed that every human being has a right to adequate food that is nutritious and safe.

In order to achieve this, governments will need to develop national policies to support regional systems of food production and distribution. Sustainable methods of agricultural production need to be promoted.

And I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Exodus 3: 8

God wants us to be able to live in a good and spacious land, one that can support life for all—one that is flowing with clean water and is able to sustain healthy crops and livestock production for all peoples. God intends us to live in harmony with the land, to nurture it and to take care of it.

Question

How are we measuring up to this instruction?

View the video

The Elusive Dream/Seeds of Hope to help you in your discussion.

Prayer

Adapted from an unknown source.

Leader: Christ, we need close encounters of your kind. You promised to encounter us when two or three or more gather in your name. As you once encountered the woman at the well who told you her past and her problems and went away affirming you and herself,

People: help us so to encounter you that the guilt over our past will be lifted and we can go away affirming you.

Leader: As you once encountered the tax collector in a tree and then in his home, and through that experience turned him from greed to generosity,

People: help us to so encounter you that our self-centered ways will be turned around until we will want to serve others.

Leader: As you once encountered the paralytic at the pool and by your presence and words helped him rise out of his immobility,

People: help us to encounter you that we will have the fears that immobilize us removed by faith.

Leader: As you once encountered the blind man to give him sight and restore his vision,

People: help us to so encounter you that we will receive insight about ourselves and a new vision for God's world.

Leader: As you once encountered the women at the empty tomb who felt emptied of their hope,

People: help us to so encounter you that we will be filled with faith, hope and joy.

Leader: God, we celebrate your presence in our lives; as we trust in your mercy and grace empower us to be faithful stewards of your creation. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

All: Amen.

LAND - SECTION 3

Being Faithful Stewards (Training Program To Improve The Llama, Alpaca And Vicuna Breeding And The Related Wool Industry In Bolivia)

Call to Worship

from Ten Days for Global Justice; Faith Resource, 1999, page 4, permission sought.

Leader: Gather us, O God, into a community that sets us free,

People: free our minds and hearts from greed; release our hand and voices from the chains of despair or indifference.

Leader: Gather us, O God, into a renewed vision of one community in you:

People: A community which shares its pain and its joys, its gifts and its treasures equally among all.

Leader: Gather us, O God, into a new joy at your wondrous creation,

People: and a deep respect for all the good gifts that you offer us through the earth.

Leader: In this time of gathering in community, hear our prayers, guide our thoughts, and inspire our actions. In Christ's name, we pray.

All: Amen.

In this section you are invited to address ways and means to reverse the current destructive course that we are on.

It is important for us to learn more deeply how to share our resources and let go of indifference and greed. We need to find the courage to speak out against powers and decisions that rob others of the resources they need to live with dignity and with enough. Jesus challenged the system throughout his life. He lived his life in addressing the needs of the poor and the voiceless.

Our earth has been wounded by our greed. As we remember that the earth belongs to God, and that we hold it in trust for future generations, we are challenged to change our actions so as to live more lightly on the earth, using only what we need. In doing so, we celebrate the gifts offered to us in creation and show our gratitude.

God calls us to faithful stewardship.

Question

Do you take the beautiful garden we live in for granted? How?

Being Faithful Stewards

What is possible?

Helping communities restore local control over their resources is a good place to begin. By supporting the work of CLWR you assist in this. When the communities control their resources, they also have an incentive to care for them. Grassroots micro-enterprises, cooperatives and small-scale credit schemes help to create and maintain seed conservation programs, environmental rehabilitation projects and sustainable forestry operations to name just a few.

It is important that governments also assume responsibility. Sometimes the only way they will do this is if citizens keep raising their concerns publically.

In this section CLWR shares with you the following project: Bolivia

Training program to improve the Llama, Alpaca and Vicuña Breeding and the related wool industry, Department of La Paz, Bolivia.

Bolivia

Bolivia is a landlocked country in Latin America bordering on Brazil in the north and east, Peru and Chile in the west, Argentina and Paraguay in the south. It has a total population of 7,888,000, 49% of which is rural. The annual population growth is 2.3%. The land area is 1,098,580km².

The major problem in Bolivia is the poverty and the consequent problems of the indigenous Quechua and Aymara communities in the altiplano, the Andean highland plateau with an altitude of 4,000m, and an average temperature of 2°C.

Project Background

Llama and alpaca rearing is the economic activity of the population which provides meat and wool for the family subsistence and for the market. Producers use traditional knowledge for cattle breeding. The project will benefit one thousand inhabitants (300 families) and will help improve their standard of living.

Project Description

The project's overall aim is to form an interdisciplinary team which includes one veterinarian, one bilingual educationalist, one bilingual expert in extension work and one expert in handicrafts in order to organize the llama, alpaca and vicuña producers of the Hichocollo region and offer veterinary services and training.

The project will maintain traditional Andean technologies while adopting new ones in order to improve pastures, animal health, production, productivity, elaboration of woollen handicrafts and market for the products. The idea is to integrate into the traditional Andean technology several components:

- soil and water conservation
- improvement of pastures
- animal health (veterinary services)
- organization of handicraft production;
- marketing

(adapted from the CLWR Project Profile)

Understanding the Chocorasi Llama Producers: In Partnership with Kechuaymara A Case Study from CLWR's Bilateral Program Work

Profile of Kechuaymara (KA)

Stated Mission

Kechuaymara is an autonomous and independent organization which seeks to be of service to the Indian villages without political party affiliation, to promote equal rights and equal opportunities, to eliminate the extreme gap between the rich and poor, to promote gender equity and equal opportunities for women and men, to promote education which is just, ethical, intellectual and practical, to protect cultural diversity and promote peace and universal brotherhood.

Chocorasi Llama Producers

Background

Profile of Chocarasi Micro Region

- Involves twelve communities located on the semi-arid highlands within the province of Dalence.
- Sandy-lime soils between 4200 and 4600 metres with average temperature of 8 degrees centigrade.
- Women move to man's community upon marriage. The social structure is people of predominantly Aymara origin but all are bilingual.
- Housing is in small "familial" clusters and dispersed.
- Ecological land-management and subsistence economic practices with double land holdings (no titles) and production within two ecosystems: highlands and valleys.
- Regular seasonal migration (June to August) to valleys for animal fodder and to obtain and transport food they cannot produce in highlands.
- Livestock production llama and sheep, some goats and cattle (sheep and goats were introduced by the Spanish and are particularly detrimental to highland environments).
- Food production: tubers (primarily potatoes), barley and quinoa.
- Seven children per family; infant mortality 160 in 1000; chronic malnutrition amongst children is 56% (prov. avg: 38%).
- Sixty percent illiteracy (80% among women).
- Animal mortality rate is 35% (malnutrition and disease).

Total budget: \$266,000. (3 years), CLWR approved September 1998: \$112,500. (3 years)

Project Problem

Colonial oppression and the imposition of environmentally inappropriate production practices and economic development, coupled with the dramatic rise and devastating fall of an equally destructive mining industry, have served to marginalise the residents of the Chocorasi micro region to a point where subsistence livelihoods are barely sustainable.

Chocorasi(as)' choices are either to live a short, hard life on their homelands, move to overcrowded urban slums or migrate to rainforests unable to sustain major populations and resource exploitation over the long-term.

Goal

To enhance the quality of life of Chocorasi villagers through programming which values indigenous traditions and skills, strengthens village-level governance, improves the quality of livestock production and supports the development of viable post-production enterprise.

Key Strategies

- Implementation of a participatory micro regional study, with a special focus on gender roles.
- Male-female team of indigenous, local promoters with significant residence in micro region.
- Training/local extension/infrastructure to enhanced livestock quality and production levels.
- Training/local extension to enhance capacity for viable post-production micro-enterprise.
- Formation of a llama producers association.
- Reforestation, conservation and promotion of forage/fodder appropriate for local ecosystem, including promotion and conservation of indigenous varieties. (The imposition of colonial “ideology” together with mineral extraction has weakened food production practices in the area which were both more ecologically sound and economically viable. These need to be “re-discovered” and given the existing land deterioration, blended with the “best” modern animal husbandry has to offer.)
- Mixed and women-specific workshops on gender equality issues.
- Focus on indigenous, identity, tradition, skills and values.

CLWR Assumptions

Subsistence production and economies which offer a reasonable level of food security, opportunity to stay on the land, and change at a pace which is more in keeping with one’s cultural identity are often more appropriate than the development of surplus production and integration into the dominant capitalist economy.

There are costs to any intervention. While training designed to strengthen local governance and self-confidence may assist with the villages’s ability to understand and handle outside socio-political pressures, it introduces western ways of knowing and doing which can ultimately weaken the knowledge and skills needed for balanced subsistence.

KA’s Key Assumption

It is possible to maintain and/or produce indigenous ways/traditions while simultaneously introducing indigenous peoples to market economies. (segments of the report reprinted with permission)

Questions

Although many of us are not conscious of the fact, we all wear protective gloves, so to speak. Gloves are worn to protect the person serving as well as the one being served or helped (e.g. restaurants, hospitals). In our daily lives we wear them too. They are often very subtle, creating an ever-so-slight barrier between us and the other person. We don’t quite touch or risk. We take precautions to protect ourselves. Jesus often touched the person that he healed.

What are the protective layers that keep you from getting to know and touching another? What would it take for you to remove your protective gloves to get involved? (Idea from Birthings and Blessings II, page 57.)

Stories

“There is wheat and there is corn. We can’t ask wheat to become corn nor corn to become wheat. Each one has its own identity. The problem is that we don’t understand each other but we can still be together—to talk about development and all that can be achieved . . . What I am saying is from my heart. We want to promote unity among indigenous peoples. The objective is equality—that we don’t have more poor than rich . . . We want harmony—improved production and subsistence for a better life. Corruption causes natural disasters [like El Niño]. But we can kill corruption through solid organizations.”

These are the words of Don Clementi, an indigenous leader from the Bolivian highlands who helped to launch a small self-help organization: Fundación Indígena Amauta (FIA) (Amauta Indigenous Foundation). His goal is to assist his people to regain a sustainable way of life lost in the wake of Spanish colonization and more recent industrial development. Once able to live healthy and fulfilling lives in their highland birthplaces, his Quechua-speaking people now barely subsist. More and more young people are forced to move to overcrowded city slums.

I visited with Don Clementi about a year ago during my program monitoring visit in Bolivia. I wanted to learn about his group to see if CLWR might be able to lend a helping hand. At first I didn’t get his point about corruption causing natural disasters. But when I thought about it some more his comment made enormous sense. Thanks to the greed of affluent colonizers and consumption-driven Westerners, trees are chopped down without thought of consequences; inappropriate foragers like sheep and goats (eat up the roots of plants) are introduced; terracing and waru-waru irrigation (raised planting beds surrounded by rain-catchment ditches) are replaced with “modern” technologies causing massive soil erosion, and mining poisons the land for adequate food production. Corruption bred of greed and a thirst for more turns natural events such as heavy rains into natural disasters.

CLWR is now in partnership with Don Clementi and FIA. We have begun with the provision of a small facilitation fund for institutional strengthening work. Beginning in the year 2000 we plan to support sustainable agriculture programming designed to recover lands now parched and angry. We are supporting similar programs in other highland communities and the changes are impressive. Once predominantly beige landscape is turning green. More environmentally friendly animals, such as the llama, are being re-introduced along with veterinary programs which blend the best of traditional and Western practices. Most importantly, a growing number of indigenous people are able to live with dignity off the lands of their ancestral birthplace.

What can you do?

- Support the work of CLWR. By doing so, you are ensuring that agricultural, emergency and development assistance programs implement ecologically sustainable agricultural practices.
- Learn about hunger and what can be done in your community.
- Where possible buy locally grown food. Choose and ask for sustainable goods when making purchases. Ask in your store about the food that you are buying and consuming. For example you could buy organic bananas or fairly traded coffee.
- Buy food produced sustainably with fewer pesticides and herbicides.
- Be watchful on how you take care of your gardens and yards. Do you use toxic chemicals to control weeds and pests? Are there other options?

More and more individuals are concerned about the state of the world, the safety of the food we eat and the plight of the poor. In India, Ethiopia and Kenya, native seeds are being preserved and used in an attempt to return genetic diversity to local food crops. Plant species capable of resisting new diseases and pests, as well as thriving without chemicals or irrigation, were re-introduced.

In Saskatchewan, farmers are exploring new systems of land tenure. Their goal is to achieve sustainable agriculture so that they can provide nutritious and safe food.

In Toronto, a Food-to-Table program brings fresh produce from farmers to low-income neighbourhoods. This cuts the price of the produce and supports the livelihoods of local farmers and producers.

Activity

Find a pitcher and put it in a place where you can see it daily. Take five to ten minutes daily or as often as possible for this activity. Let the pitcher remind you of God's abundant love for you. Experience yourself as a beautiful container or vessel into which God's love is poured. At the end of each day ask yourself how you received and shared this love during the day. How many miracles did you share in? (They don't have to be large: a smile, a helping hand, buying healthy food, composting.)

In this encounter with God in Christ it becomes clear that no one is outside of Christ—that the hurting and healthy are one fellowship embraced by the crucified and risen Christ.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, hear our prayers.

We come to you with our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears.

Awaken us to the needs of the human family and the earth, giving us courage to share our treasures and to walk tenderly on the surface of the earth.

Encourage us to take action on behalf of the human community, being generous in our commitment to live life simply so others may simply live and the earth might continue to support our lives.

Challenge us to put human dignity before greed and profits. May we name the evils that create and uphold poverty, child labour, unemployment and hunger.

Help us to recognize and receive the many miracles that you grace us with. And then with grateful hearts give us the strength to share the gifts with others. May we never take for granted the beauty of our home, and the mandate you have given us to take care of it for future generations. Amen

Benediction

Go into the world with a daring and tender love;

The world is waiting;

And all that you do, do it for love,

And by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus.

Go in peace.

Amen.

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APPENDIX

Land Themes

The Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions led to scientific advances and to overwhelming improvements to technology. These advances have allowed humans to control and alter the earth's resources. Living standards and life spans of humans have risen together with the increase in food supplies and affordability of food. This has increased the demand for resources resulting in more pollution and environmental degradation. This trend has doubled in the last forty years and is expected to double again to 12 billion in the next fifty years. Currently 80% of the population growth is occurring in developing nations who do not have the resources or wealth to accommodate the needs of so many people. The question many people are asking is how the world can sustain itself with the increasing pressures humans are placing on it. Currently land is being degraded and abandoned at accelerating rates, due to the population growth and urban expansion. The diversity of wildlife is also declining as a result of the draining of waterways, over-tillage of soil for agricultural purposes, and urbanization. The use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides pollute the land and endanger human lives. Increasing the agricultural production of food, notably livestock causes desertification, degradation of soil and deforestation.

Developing nations

The goals of developing nations are often to maximize profits and production of goods at the expense of everything. Many of these nations are trying to compete with developed countries economically, as well as striving for a higher standard of living. These goals lead to the degradation of their natural resources (deforestation, mining, modern agricultural practices) and to hunger. The poor are forgotten; their health is often compromised in the search for economic stability. Material well-being of a lucky few has become more important than the lives of the majority.

The practices of many of the governments in the South, are in large part responsible for the overuse of chemicals in agriculture. These practices cause health problems, and can even kill humans when used improperly. Six hundred and three out of four thousand reported cases of pesticide poisoning were fatal in the Philippines during a seven year period. Each year 25 million farmers are affected by pesticide poisoning in developing countries. The pesticides used in these cases are banned in Canada and the US; however, for economic purposes, the product is easily made available and purchased from transnational corporations in the Philippines and by other governments. Most of these chemicals have yet to be banned in poorer nations and are unlikely to become so in the near future. Many of these chemicals, pesticides and fertilizers are being subsidized by governments in order to help the farmers. In contrast, farmers who grow organically receive almost nothing. Many scientists argue that the advances in agriculture such as chemically intensive farming and monoculture, outweigh their detrimental effects to wildlife, nature and humans. These advances include an increase in production and efficiency of harvesting. Productivity within agriculture has tripled since the 1940s. However, the dramatic increase in productivity is beginning to decrease or level off. This has raised questions in regards to a sustainable food supply for future generations.

Large land areas are being degraded and deforested in order to ranch or graze livestock. Soil erosion and desertification are induced by poor management of the land of poverty-stricken farmers and by population pressure to develop urban communities. In Ethiopia, for example, this is destroying the land; food shortages are becoming a serious problem. Urbanization (people moving from rural communities into large cities) has created an increasing demand for livestock; these urbanites are consuming more animal protein in their diet in the forms of milk, cheese, meat and eggs. This increased demand for livestock causes pollution problems from the wastes of the animals. Cows, as an example, release hundreds of millions of tons of CO₂ and millions of tons of methane gas into the atmosphere; all of which contribute to global warming. Livestock utilize one half of the world's land for grazing and shelter; twenty-four percent of the world's arable land is required for the production of cereal to feed them. Thirty-three percent of the world's grain is fed to livestock, while over nine million people are suffering from chronic, persistent hunger. If the North stopped over-consuming meat products, there would be plenty of food to feed the world's population.

Poverty, hunger, and desolation caused by political policies push farmers off their land, thereby generating substantial increases in urbanization. Farmers, moving to the cities in search of happiness and material wealth for their families also add to this increase. Within the last 40 years the urban populations in the South have doubled, and they continue to expand. Many of these families are forced to live in shantytowns; they receive very limited income as street vendors, and they lose their ability to be self-sufficient (ability to produce own food). The abundance of poverty discourages trade within the country because of a lack of profit. Most of the manufactured products are exported to the 'rich' countries in the North. Currently, the natives of Irian Jaya (a colony of Indonesia on the eastern side of the island of New Guinea) are being displaced into the cities by Indonesia's aggressive policy to assimilate the population. Indonesia is extracting massive resources from the island, by means of deforestation and mining, in order to reap the economic profits for itself. The indigenous people have harvested the land in a traditional and sustainable way for thousands of years. Now their homes, villages and entire culture are being destroyed to benefit a government thousands of kilometres away. The Indonesian government does not seem to care about the consequences of its actions, because Irian Jaya is not a traditional Indonesian island. This policy not only threatens the different cultures of indigenous people, it also menaces hundreds of thousands of species in the rainforest.

Transnational corporations are taking advantage of trade agreements like NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs) to open new assembly plants and factories in developing countries, thus gaining the profits of cheap labour. They are also guilty of negligent environmental policies. When international corporations and countries are ranked according to their wealth, over fifty percent of the top 100 are corporations. The transnationals are responsible for 70% of the world trade, indicating the overwhelming power they possess. The power and wealth of these companies allows them to enter a country and use its resources without regard for the future consequences of the environment. They pay unfair wages to workers; sometimes labourers are forced to work twelve hours a day. Child labour is also used. These businesses rarely take responsibility for the damage they inflict, because they can abandon the country as easily as they enter when it no longer serves their needs (all the resources have been utilized, etc.). The large corporations are taking over the land and displacing traditional, locally-based farming communities. The farmers, who are pushed off their land, have great difficulty finding a new income that will enable them to provide for their families.

Current means of clearing land for agricultural purposes in the South, such as the 'slash and burn' techniques, have become unsustainable. Traditional communities were able to support the 'slash and burn' techniques for thousands of years, until the population pressure increased. Now, it is clearly evident that the current population growth has rendered these techniques dangerous to the accelerated destruction of rainforests. Presently more than 25 million hectares of tropical rainforests are destroyed annually. One third of the world's cultivatable land (arable land) could well be rendered useless within the next 20 years. Most of the current arable land is being used for agricultural land, and it is suffering from soil erosion or other human-induced stresses.

Developed nations

Industrialized nations are developing technically advanced agricultural practices. These practices include monoculture (the production of only one crop at a time), irrigation with the use of fertilizers and chemical products to protect crops from pests. Since World War II these practices have improved so drastically that food production has tripled. Conversely, the labour required to produce food has declined so that only 2% of the population is directly involved in agriculture. The urban population of the world has increased from 3% in the early 1800s, to 43% in 1990. British Columbia's urban population reached and surpassed an astonishing 70%. Although many advances have occurred in agriculture and other production, the negative side-effects are now becoming apparent. Physical evidence is beginning to suggest that the modern farming practices developed around the world cannot be sustained much longer. An estimated 2 million hectares of once arable land are now becoming unproductive because of soil degradation (from erosion, compaction, salinisation, depletion of organic matter and nutrients in the soil). Developed nations are beginning to search for solutions that will enable them to sustain a growing population, together with the environment. The focus is beginning to shift towards maintaining a more socially, culturally and ecologically sustainable world; while continuing to maximize profits and production.

Fifty years ago land was considered to be a limitless resource, often used carelessly and then abandoned. These attitudes have contributed to the significant loss of bio-diversity (diversity of organisms) of wildlife in North America (through deforestation, drainage of waterways and commercial development). All of these factors contribute to an increase in flooding, droughts and soil degradation. Animals are losing their habitat and sources of food, forcing them to retreat further into the forests causing competition for food and shelter. This increase will eventually kill organisms which are unable to adapt to their new environment, thus threatening their very survival. The loss of wilderness can irreversibly destroy or disturb an ecosystem. We depend on the wilderness for food, medical support, tranquility, recreation and solitude. Nature helps to filter pollution and maintain the bio-diversity of our planet. The preservation and restoration of the wilderness ecosystems (landscapes) and waterways (streams, rivers) will not only benefit humans; it will also protect wildlife from becoming extinct or endangered. Wildlife management is taking place in Canada and the United States, but the results have been fairly minimal. Since 1964, less than five percent of land in the United States has become federally protected as wilderness.

Developed countries are over-consuming the earth's natural resources at an astonishing rate. The overpopulation of urban areas contributes to over consumption. The greater the number of urbanites, the less self-sufficient a country becomes. The population becomes dependent on consumer services, automobiles, access to convenience foods, imported goods and other factors that make a fast paced, material- driven lifestyle. Indulgent lifestyles explain why developed nations are the largest producers of wastes, and among the largest consumers of water, food and energy.

Genetically engineered food has been hailed as the solution to feeding starving people, killing disease and eliminating the problems of pests. The bio-technological industry of genetic engineering involves inserting viruses, bacteria and genes of one organism into another. Transnational corporations are investing heavily in biotechnology, hoping to be able to secure a sustainable food supply for an increasing population. The Canadian government has approved genetically altered food, such as canola, corn, potatoes and soybeans. Forty-five million acres of US farmland are planted each year with bio-technological crops. These products do not have to be labeled in Canada; thus the consumers do not know what they are eating. In Europe, all genetically engineered food must be labeled. Genetically manipulated foods are being developed without the knowledge of the effects. Many scientists are asking questions related to the safety of generically engineered foods, since it introduces new foreign materials and organisms into a cell that we digest. The short testing period, that has deemed these products safe, further adds to the concerns of some scientists. Without cumulative, long-term testing, it becomes difficult to assess the health risks in consuming genetically engineered food. Other possible risks of these products are decreased nutritional value of the food and the limited accountability on the part of corporations to protect us if unforeseen problems occur. An increase in the amount of pesticides in the environment caused by the genetically engineered food producing its own toxins may also result.

Breeding of animals and food has been occurring for at least thirty years. Breeding involves selecting a specific species or food considered better suited for the environment it must survive in; this speeds up the natural process of mutations. In British Columbia, 95% of all dairy cows are artificially inseminated. With the advances in technology, animals too are beginning to be genetically engineered. The scientists are manipulating genes and crossing over specie barriers to create the perfect animal. Genetic engineering has been applied to animals in order to reduce the fat content in meat products; fish are also manipulated to grow at a faster rate. As stated above, the effects of these manipulations are presently unknown. In the meantime, consumers in Canada are not being informed about the origins of the foods they consume.

In the United States, more than sixty percent of all deaths are diet related. Over- consumption of foods such as poultry, beef, cheese and eggs contribute to poor health. These foods contain excessive amounts of cholesterol, saturated fats and protein, which the body is inadequately equipped to handle. Industrialized countries can consume up to six times the amount of protein required for the body. Thirty percent of the world's total grain production is fed to livestock to meet the North's appetite desires. This amount of grain would supply every man, woman and child with a meal a day. Livestock production massively contributes to desertification and pollution of water. Statistics show that, when one person in North America becomes a vegetarian, one acre of trees and four million litres of water are saved; furthermore, the amount of polluted water produced by that person decreases by one half. It might not be necessary to become vegetarian, but rather to examine the amount of meat needed for a healthy, balanced diet.

Although industrialized countries have an abundance of resources and wealth, they are still faced with problems of hunger and poverty. Canada's need for food banks has doubled in the last ten years. Slightly less than one half of the children going to food banks come from single parent families. Many of these parents are out of work and are struggling with poverty. The future is bleak for these families, because most of their limited income is spent on shelter. It is difficult for families to escape poverty and at the same time improve their well-being.

Possible solutions

Of all human activities, agriculture and the production of goods have the greatest effect on the environment. These effects, along with the substantial growth in population, have raised questions concerning the ability of humans to continue to feed themselves without destroying their environment. Currently, consumers in the North spend more money on the packaging and processing of agricultural foods than on the food itself. The technologies that once were heralded as saving agriculture, are seriously threatening our land. Public concern is growing; time is running out. A conservative estimation claims that in 1990, 3000 plants and over 500 animals were threatened with extinction; the numbers are becoming larger each year. Scientists, economists, ecologists and agriculturists are debating numerous sustainable solutions. Suggestions being developed are diverse (e.g., organic, local farming; managing manure in more efficient ways).

In industrialized countries, such as Canada, scientists are developing and experimenting with sustainable urban communities. A sustainable community involves the conservation of energy, water and land as well as an emphasis on the community, surrounding wildlife and nature. Greenery is the first step in the development of these neighbourhoods. Parks and trees are extremely important in order to promote gardening, to provide a place for solitude and to minimize the use of pavement. Pavement interferes with the landscape because it disrupts the natural drainage system of water. Houses are thinner and taller, reducing the amount of space required; this saves money and allows for easier use of grey water (water that has been treated, and filter re-used) in toilets and showers. These neighbourhoods would emphasize organic farming and purchasing of local foods; walking distances to shopping centres and work or the use of transit. In addition the importance of community would be stressed. Organic farming and consumption of local foods ensures that the energy and nutrients, extracted from the land during production, remain within the community; so depletion of land would be optimized. If these ideas were applied to new and existing neighbourhoods, land use efficiency would increase, while the degradation of the land would decrease. The research suggests that, in the long run, developing these neighbourhoods is economically cheaper in comparison to maintaining non-sustainable, existing communities. Rebuilding the infrastructure in large cities, such as San Francisco, is the only way to sustain our modernized lifestyles. Unfortunately, this takes time because of the amount of infrastructure that must be destroyed and/or replaced. The process is challenging.

The scientific community is beginning to reshape its views of the world. New standards perceive nature as a series of interactions within and without the community or ecosystem itself. These views are more beneficial to the environment. Unlike previous views, they take into consideration the effects of change on the entire ecosystem. Many new practices are being developed to ensure sustainable agriculture and food production for the population. Practices include organic farming and integrated pest management, (IPM). Integrated pest management uses smaller amounts of chemicals on crops, decreasing the destruction of the environment. Educational programs are being organized for schools and within communities. Industrialized countries are restoring and rehabilitating wild lands after industry has left. Sustainable sanitation and water supply systems are being implemented in urban and rural areas. Certain companies are developing environmental management systems. Promoting awareness and establishing community-based relationships, assist in keeping energy and nutrients within the community. One pressing question remains: Will these solutions be capable of supporting the current population growth, while at the same time sustaining the environment?

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