



Season of Creation 2013: Water Justice

Many churches around the world have adopted a Season of Creation, or Creation Time, stretching from 1 September to the Feast of St Francis on 4 October. The Season is a time dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation, and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change.

The theme for this year's Season of Creation is 'Water Justice', corresponding with the United Nations' [International Year of Water Cooperation](#).

In our baptismal liturgies, we thank God for the gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life.

In one of our stories below Morlu Korsor of Namibia reflects, 'Since water is considered as life, it is not a substance to be compromised in any stage of life...' But our global water resources have been compromised.

There is unsustainable extraction from rivers and deep water aquifers. The encroachment of salt water in coastal environments and the subsequent displacement or mixing with fresh water in countries such as Bangladesh adversely affects agriculture, the availability of potable drinking water and human health.

Commodification of water restricts access for vulnerable communities and causes ecological harm in the name of profit.

The impact of global warming on the oceans, the world's most significant carbon sink, leads to both acidification and rising water levels.

The crisis in creation requires that we move away from a way of life in which we see ourselves *apart from* creation in our exploitation of its resources, and fully acknowledge that we are *a part of*

creation, in that its health is our health and its destiny is our destiny.

The following stories describe instances where water – either through the lack of it or too much of it – has affected lives and livelihoods, and where people have responded creatively in order to cope with and alleviate the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

From Michael Roy

The impact of climate change is very prominent in Bangladesh, particularly along the coastal belt. The intensity of cyclones has increased and areas of flooding have expanded. The intrusion of saline water has increased and this has badly impacted on the crop pattern and thereby the livelihoods of the farm-holdings of which majority are poor farmers.

The Church of Bangladesh has taken a very comprehensive initiative to assist

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Bangladesh



Makhon and Manodha taking care of their floating garden

Photo: CBSDP

the sufferers in adapting the changes through various efforts. The efforts include raising awareness of the community to save them from the climate changes; innovating and selecting technologies appropriate to adapt to the changes especially in agriculture; establishing field school to disseminate the knowledge to community people in a more organized manner; taking plantation programmes to mitigate deforestation, and advocacy and networking to seek support nationally and globally for combating the climate crisis more effectively.

The impact of the programme is very significant; around 5,000 poor farm-holdings living along the climate change prone areas have learned through training and workshops the depth of the crisis and their roles to cope with that.

Adapting technologies such as floating gardens, hanging gardens,

salinity tolerant crops and small scale fish culture, bottle water drip crop cultivation have been introduced and resulted in good results.

In the majority of cases the technologies have been adopted by women, who are understood to be the most vulnerable to the crisis, and have increased their capacity and skill to increase production, reduce food insecurity, and earn an increased income from selling the surplus.

Husband and wife Makhon and Manodha from Pathorghata in Gopalganj in the southern part of Bangladesh were trained by the programme in floating gardens. Using their new skills, they built four beds of floating gardens and now cultivate different kinds of vegetables and spices. Manodha, expressed her views:

We now understand the problem of climate changes and know as well how to adapt to the crisis and what

to do to save our land that has been given by God for our living. We have done injustice to it, and made it sick. Now we have a responsibility to make it recover from sickness, if we aspire to live in a safer world.

The church has undertaken the climate change resilience programme through its social development ministry, Church of Bangladesh Social Development Programme (CBSDP), responding to need irrespective of faith.

The programme involves care of nature and care of humankind and is a Christian witness against injustice. 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.' (Genesis 8.22)

Michael Roy is the Asia Facilitator for the Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy.

Northern Namibia: Water and its Impact on Subsistence Rural Farming

by Morlu Korsor, St George Parish, Windhoek, Namibia

Namibia is in the South West of Africa and is one of the most drought-prone countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) with two deserts, Namib and the Kalahari. Rural farmers depend solely on rain water for crops and livestock production.



Cattle in water crisis, Northern Namibia

Photo: CBSDP

Underground water reserves and recycled water are only used by commercial farmers; thus, leaving the major subsistence farmers in Northern Namibia to depend on rain-fed farming.

Water in rain-fed farming

The past rainy season (October 2012 to April 2013) was too dry in Namibia.

The drought left many cultivated Pearl millet (locally known as Mahangu), Maize and Sorghum fields dried, standing without yield due to drought caused by climate change; thus, creating food insecurity, destitution and increased poverty for resource-poor farmers.

In May 2013, the President of Namibia declared a state of emergency.

Several thousands of livestock have already died.

The President called on farmers to sell their livestock to avoid further losses due to lack of natural pasture to graze their animals. He said that farmers should sell their livestock and keep the money for restocking whenever the drought situation improves.

In Namibia, the agricultural sector supports about 70 per cent of the population directly or indirectly through income and employment.

Since water is considered as life, it is not a substance to be compromised in any stage of life, because water is needed in all our daily activities in addition to drinking.

Therefore, the provision of water is cardinal to poverty reduction and food security for the resource-poor who are mostly rural dwellers and subsistence farmers.

Let everyone on earth have and enjoy God's Creation – **Water**.

*Cleared millet field, Okatana,
Northern Namibia, May 2013*

Photo: Morlu Korsor



Flood of the Century brings Devastation to Affluent Western Canadian Province

A combination of heavy rainfall and Rocky Mountain run-off brought disastrous flooding to one of the wealthiest regions in Canada during June of 2013.

Described by many as the flood of the century, or the worst in history, the metropolitan city of Calgary along with countless smaller communities including Canmore and High River witnessed the destruction of homes, businesses, community buildings and transport infrastructure. In High River alone over 150 people were rescued from their rooftops. The downtown area of Calgary was shut down for most of a week.

Four persons have died. Others are seriously injured. Over 100,000 people were displaced from their homes. Even at the time of writing some are still unable to return.

The Bishop of Calgary, the Rt Rev Greg Kerr Wilson wrote in a June 25th pastoral letter 'many of our members have been evacuated. Some have been able to return, others

not, and many are returning to homes significantly damaged by the flooding.'

Bishop Kerr Wilson encouraged individuals and congregations 'to seek ways to reach out to those around them in need.'

Congregations organized in-house clean up crews; some organized fundraising concerts and provided space for food distribution and social gathering. Special concern was expressed for local First Nations who were particularly vulnerable.

'In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus refers to his disciples as "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" (Matthew 5.13-16). In faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ, let us indeed be salt and light to our neighbours and our world in this challenging time', wrote Bishop Kerr Wilson.

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The region is typically arid and both the intensity and duration of the rain storms is unprecedented. While it may not be possible to directly link the weather to climate change, in this - a province which depends heavily on fossil fuel extraction and processing and where tar-sands development and expansion continues unabated - many see the storms as part of a wider North American pattern of increasingly intense weather events.

Damage from flooding is estimated to cost anywhere from 3-5 billion dollars. Many insurers do not cover groundwater flooding so many people have lost homes and livelihood. Albertans are typically resilient and entrepreneurial, hence their ability to host the 101st Calgary Stampede 'come hell or high water.' That said, the impact of such flooding will affect one of Canada's richest provinces for years to come.

More Resources for the Season of Creation 2013

For prayers, worship material, sermon notes and other material, see the downloads and links on the Resources page of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network website:

<http://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources/documents.cfm>



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www.facebook.com/GreenAnglicans

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