

Streams in the Desert

2014 World Day of Prayer • Take Action Guide

The World Day of Prayer Committee of Egypt sheds light on a variety of justice issues in the 2014 worship service and Bible studies. This guide outlines those issues and suggests resources and next steps for taking action. As we join in prayer for the women of the world, let us also join in the work of creating a safe, just and joyful world.

Water Justice

“Streams in the desert” is a nice image, but in many places, water is scarce and the scarcity causes many problems for women. Like the Samaritan woman who went to the well to collect water for her family, women around the world still shoulder most of the work around water. In developing countries, the average woman walks four miles to get water and carries about 44 pounds of water each day.¹ Girls who collect water for their families can miss school because of the time it takes to fetch water. Women and girls walking long distances to water sources are also vulnerable to violent and/or sexual assault. An estimated 2.4 billion people in the world lack adequate sanitation and 1.1 billion people are without access to safe water.² There are 1.6 million deaths per year attributed to dirty water and poor sanitation.³

Here in the United States, 40 percent of our lakes, rivers and streams are too polluted to be safe for aquatic life or swimming. Our national tap water infrastructure faces a troubling \$23 billion annual investment gap.⁴ “Streams in the Desert” is more than just a metaphor—how can we join God in building these streams?

Corporate Accountability International invites you to learn more about water issues both in the United States and internationally, and participate in one of their campaigns: Human Right to Water, Think Outside the Bottle, and Public Water Works! Learn more at www.stopcorporateabuse.org/campaigns/challenge-corporate-control-water.

The National Council of Churches has collected a page of both original and denominational resources dealing with water conservation, water justice, and eco-justice concerns. Resources include a Lenten devotional, worship resources, and a link to calculate your “water footprint.”

<http://nccecojustice.org/water/LearnMore.php>

Girls’ Access to Education

In this year’s worship service, a young Egyptian woman tells us what a difference her access to quality education has made in her life. We know that in many parts of the world, girls do not have the same access to education as boys. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has said that until equality for women is achieved, there is no hope of reaching the Millennium Development Goals, which now have a 2015 deadline. Learn more about how to empower girls, valuing them as equally created in the image of God, through these organizations.

The Girl Effect rocked the internet with its brief, poignant video in 2008 (www.girleffect.org/why-girls). Watch them to understand why investing in girls is so important, and explore their site for ways to get involved: www.girleffect.org.

The United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative is a partnership of organizations committed to narrowing the gender gap in primary and secondary education. It also seeks to ensure that, by 2015, all children complete primary schooling, with girls and boys having equal access to free, quality education. Learn more and get involved through their website: <http://www.ungei.org>.

Multifaith Dialogue

Both the Samaritan woman and the young Egyptian woman portrayed in this year’s worship service found that engaging in dialogue with someone they may not have normally talked to led to unexpected, exciting results. These women call us to explore ecumenical

Streams in the Desert

2014 World Day of Prayer • Take Action Guide

and interfaith relationships in our own lives. Here are some resources to get you started.

Unsure about multifaith dialogue? *Getting to Know Your Neighbor; A Theological Rationale for Interfaith Relationships*, a pamphlet created by the Interfaith Commission of the National Council of Churches, provides a theological foundation (www.nccusa.org/pdfs/neighbors3.pdf). You might also want to check out NCC's pamphlets exploring the identity, missional, moral and theological challenges of interfaith relationships, available at www.nccusa.org/interfaith/developingresources.htm

The Interfaith Toolkit, created and used by members of the United Church of Christ, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is a free, online resource. The toolkit will help you get started, engage and learn about different faiths, and give you models for dialogue and workshops for further study. It is available at www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/interfaith/interfaith-toolkit.

Migration, Poverty, Refugees

Among its current challenges, Egypt faces a growing refugee population and increased poverty among migrant people. Check out the 2014 Bible study called "Refuge in Egypt" to learn more about

Egypt's history as a place of refuge. Resources related to migration and immigration, from WDP 2013, can still be found on our website (www.wdp-usa.org/denominational-online-resources).

Among poor migrant and immigrant women and children, malnutrition or undernutrition is a common problem. WDP USA is a partner with Bread For The World's Women of Faith for the 1,000 Days Campaign. Join the campaign and learn how you can speak up to provide for the proper nutrition for women and children in the first 1,000 days of life from conception to age two.

Learn more at www.bread.org/hunger/maternal-child-nutrition/women-of-faith-for-the-1000.html.

Notes

1. United Nations Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, 2004.
2. World Health Organization-UNICEF, 2004.
3. World Watch; World Health Organization.
4. Corporate Accountability International.