

Water Scarcity

Decreasing Water and Wealth

Martin G. Collins

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If you're like me—which I am sure you are—you're sick and tired of hearing about the financial crisis and the money problems and the horrible decisions that are being made by our government to solve these problems. I noticed that we are not the only ones feeling that way. I receive a newsletter called *Money and Markets* several times a week. The author, Larry Edelson, wrote an article which he titled, "Crisis Beyond Comprehension." I would like to read to you from this article. I think you'll find it very interesting.

No, I'm not talking about the global financial crisis. Nor am I talking about the AIG disaster ... Citibank's failure ... the collapse of GM or Ford. I'm not even referring to the Dow's recent plunge to below 7,000.

Don't get me wrong: I am not minimizing the financial crisis that's affecting people all over the world.

I just don't want anyone to forget about a crisis that's killing 12 million people per year, including *10,000 children per day*.

I'm talking about the worst crisis of all time, the intense and critical shortage of water ... pure fresh water. What I call "blue gold"—a term I coined back in 2004 to describe one of the most precious natural resources of all and to help motivate others to take notice of the growing crisis.

Festering for years, sadly, the world's water crisis is now getting worse by the day. And the global financial and credit crisis is merely one reason why. [The credit crisis is affecting the clean water of the world.]

- Another is the ongoing modernization of major parts of the world, which continues despite the world's financial meltdown. This is increasing demand for water, while at the same time polluting it.
- Yet another is major droughts around the world, including in our own back yard, where 60 percent of the U.S. is officially experiencing a drought. In fact, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency just last weekend due to the state's now three-year running water crisis, its worst on record.

Neither Wall Street nor Washington is doing much about the water crisis. Even the recent infrastructure spending bill has largely ignored it ... allocating only \$6 billion over the next 20 years to water projects. [With the expense of things today, that is a drop in the bucket.]

...

Even before the financial crisis engulfed the world, each and every minute of every day, more than ONE BILLION people don't have access to clean, fresh, potable drinking water.

More than a third of the world's population—about 2 billion people—live in countries where consumption of drinking water exceeds available supplies. In Asia ...

* China's available water supplies are estimated to support 650 million people, only half of its 1.3 billion population. Of China's 660 cities, 400 face serious water shortages.

I am going to go on and on here with statistics from around the world because it is literally breathtaking.

* Thailand and Malaysia: Rivers carry 30 to 100 times more pathogens, heavy metals, and industrial poisons than the government supposedly allows. Water-related diseases are rampant.

* India receives 90 percent of its annual rainfall during the summer monsoons, from June to September. The rest of the year is basically bone-dry, with hardly a drop of rain. It's estimated that India and other countries with similar climates, such as Pakistan, can actually use no more than 20 percent of their annual freshwater resources. [They are only able to use a fifth of what falls from the sky before it is polluted.]

In Karachi, Pakistan, poorly-maintained sewage treatment plants with clogged pipes can barely manage to operate at 15 percent of their design capacity. Most of the sewage leaks out into the soil and contaminates the city's drinking water wells, causing sickness and death.

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In the Middle East—Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia all suffer chronic water shortages, and are forced to import as much as 91 percent of their fresh water needs from other countries.

Which are they concerned about—oil or water? Back in the late '70s and early '80s, *The Plain Truth* magazine of the Worldwide Church of God ran articles talking about the future water crisis, and that it would be probably more critical than the oil crisis, and we are seeing that come to pass.

Dams in Turkey and irrigation in Syria have reduced Iraq's water supply from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers by one third. The problem has been aggravated by poor infrastructure and insurgent terrorism.

In Basra, the poorest people drink green, putrid water from stagnant irrigation canals used by the city's two million people for washing.

Basra is in Iraq, and the United States is over there, supposedly rebuilding the infrastructure, but here is something they don't tell us about.

In Africa, 20 million people in six countries depend on drinking water from Lake Chad, an aquifer that has shrunk 95 percent in the past 38 years. According to the African Development Bank, nearly two-thirds of Africans who live in rural areas lack an adequate water supply.

When I was in Zambia the last time, we stayed in a nice hotel—one that you would enjoy staying in—but when I turned the water on and filled the sink up to shave, it was brown. That was the hotel's "clean" "drinking" water, which gives you an idea.

In Mexico, 90 percent of the land is high and dry, and the per capita water supplies are 3,470 cubic meters, less than half of the world average. Mexico City is sinking at the rate of nine centimeters per year because so much water is being sucked out from under it.

I don't know if you realize this, but Mexico City is actually in an old volcano. The soil in there is almost like jelly, and when there is an earthquake there, it really shakes quite a bit. They are draining the water that is underneath that, and they are sinking as they do.

I feel bad for them; it seems like such a bad way to go, to say the least.

In Lima, Peru, the majority of potable water comes from the melting Andean glaciers which have lost 22 percent of their mass in the last three decades and has already reduced the water supply by 12 percent. What's more, the fast-melting Andean glaciers threaten to deprive 40 million people of water by 2020.

In Europe, more than 90 percent of the rivers have high nitrate concentrations, as much as 200 times more than in unpolluted rivers.

And right here at home—in the United States—groundwater is being used up at a rate 25 percent faster than it is being replenished.

A decade-long drought has parched the western United States, threatening drinking water supplies for major cities and irrigation for food production. U.S. Geological Survey scientists say that the *Western U.S. is experiencing its worst drought in 500 years.*

The only way that I figure that they can come up with that—or one of the ways—they must look at the rings of the trees or something of that sort, because I don't think there were records 500 years ago. But they have been able to figure that out.

The article gives "Six Reasons Why There Is So Little Drinkable Water." I am just going to state the reasons for the sake of time.

1) Demand far outpaces supply

2) Salty Oceans. . . .That means *only about 1 percent of the world's entire water supply is readily accessible* in freshwater lakes, rivers, and in the soil at depths shallow enough to reach affordably. [Most of the world's water is salt, and much of it is polluted, that only leaves 1% of the water on earth that is drinkable.]

3) Irrigation: Almost 70 percent of the available fresh water gets used for irrigation in agriculture.

4) Pollution and Mismanagement

5) Green Technologies Are Actually Making the Water Crisis Worse

6) Government Neglect

I think I'll stop there; it's quite a long article. I just wanted to make a few additional comments.

There is an interesting parallel between the drought affecting the decrease of water and the financial crisis with its decrease in wealth, which I think is somewhat interesting. You do not have to turn there, but the apostle James describes the fading of wealthy life in terms of the temporariness of grass and flowers in James 1:9-11:

James 1:9-11 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

That's interesting because it's happening in our financial crisis today. The rich man is fading away in his pursuits. This earth is having a physical drought of water, and the financial crisis today is also having its monetary drought effect on the wealthy of the world. Eventually all the financial successes of the wealthy of the world will fade away, just as the grass withers and the flower falls while they pursue more wealth.

Both the drought of water and riches are the result of moral and ethical bankruptcy, because if we as a people on earth were living righteous lives, God would supply our needs, and He would supply that water. There is a simple principle in the Parable of the Sower that briefly picks up on the imagery of drought in Luke 8:6. You do not have to turn their for the sake of time, but it says there,

Luke 8:6 Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.

Although this has a primarily spiritual application, it also applies in principle on a physical level to the pursuits of the wealthy. That is, the foundation on which they build their wealth, is very poor and rocky soil and will not support that increase.

One last principle that speaks for itself is in Proverbs 11:25:

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Proverbs 11:25 The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.