

WATER RESOURCES

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**SPIRITUALITY
AND WATER
MANAGEMENT**

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SPIRITUALITY AND WATER MANAGEMENT

Eric J. Fitch ~ Associate Editor
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This issue of *Water Resources IMPACT* is in some ways a departure from previous themes. As practical practicing water resources professionals, previous issues focused on the work of natural and social scientists, biologists, geologists, engineers, attorneys, political scientists and politicians, economists and business persons, etc. This issue diverges by looking at the question of faith and the natural world: especially water resources. An overwhelming majority of the world's peoples, including many who are in the professions listed previously, espouse religious and spiritual beliefs. Many are adherents to particular belief systems that convey duties and obligations with regard to the natural world in general and water resources in particular. This issue explores what several of the world's faiths have to say about those relationships: Divine, human and natural.

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 3 Water and Spirituality ... Eric J. Fitch**
Presents an overview and introduction to the topic of Spirituality and Water Management and addresses the issue of why faith matters in the world of water resources decision making. Puts forward a framework wherein the reader can explore the relationships between the spiritual and the biophysical realms of water in a variety of faith contexts.
- 5 Drops of Faith: Water in Islam ... Francesca de Châtel**
Islam is one of the world's great religions. Continuing on the foundations laid by the other two Abrahamic religions (Judaism and Christianity), Islam was established initially in a region of the world where fresh water is rare and precious. This article examines themes in Islam that deal with water and faith in its ancient and modern contexts.
- 7 Living Waters: A Jewish Reflection ... David Patterson**
From the story of Creation in the Book of Genesis (the first book of the Torah) through Moses striking the rock on God's command and bringing forth water in the desert to modern practices of the Jewish faith, water has held a central place as a sign of God's continuing support of the life He bestowed upon his people. This author examines the deep traditions and beliefs of the Jewish faith and its foundational relationships with water.
- 9 Water and Eco-Spirituality ... Albert J. Fritsch**
By number of adherents, Christianity is the largest faith in the world. Persons professing these beliefs are in positions of authority with regard to the management and use of water resources in nearly every corner of the world. Many of these are likely to be unaware of the deep traditions and teachings of their own faith with regard to water. This author looks at water and spirituality through a perspective that may be able to help bridge these gaps. He is a Catholic Priest, a scientist, and a lifelong social activist who has worked for decades in the areas of environmental stewardship and justice.
- 11 Water, the Giver of Life: A Wiccan Perspective ... Susan Baker**
Wicca has its roots in the nature based faiths of many parts of the world, but especially Europe. Many of those reading this issue had ancestors that practiced these old faiths. Wicca represents a continuation of these faiths where the divine is found in nature itself with the force of life emanating from the world's waters. This author is a Wiccan High Priestess and research scientist who presents some perspectives of this very old, yet very young faith, and on the role of water in beliefs and practices of their adherents.
- 13 The Waters of Tao ... Gary Chamberlain**
The ancient faiths of east Asia hold long and deep traditions and beliefs regarding the sanctity of particular waters, and water as a whole. The focus of Taoism is on the forces of life and balance in both the material realm and in the spiritual life. In this article, one of the preeminent scholars of religion and the environment discusses key Eastern faith traditions and the role of water as part of that Tao of life.

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