

Water

The title of this *Sofia* is *Water*, which is the chief component of human bodies and indispensable for all life on Earth. With climate change there is a risk of water shortage. As John Pearson writes in his *Going Green* column: 'On a global scale water systems have become stressed. Rivers, lakes and aquifers are drying up or becoming too polluted to use. In the UK we are beset by tales of excessive loss through poor maintenance, sewage leaks into watercourses and the like.'

A recent BBC programme reported that Uruguay is suffering its worst drought in 74 years and water shortages are so severe that a state of emergency has been declared; the authorities have started adding sea water to the public drinking water supplies. This has prompted widespread protests, in particular against the plan to build a Google data centre that will use millions of litres of water a day. Critics claim that the government is prioritising water for transnationals and agribusiness at the expense of its own citizens.

In Britain there were strong protests against prime minister Margaret Thatcher's plan to privatise water in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the privatisation went ahead and now our water is dispensed by private companies with a profit motive. Recently there have

been reports of sewage seeping into the tap water.

In this *Sofia*, Edwin Salter writes about water 'Streaming Towards'. Next Tony Windross writes about baptism, saying 'to refuse to baptise a child (or to place such obstacles in the way, that it amounts in practice to the same thing) is bound to seem like a rejection – which of course it is.' In his *Summa* Thomas Aquinas replies to the objection that because baptism is such a noble sacrament why don't we baptise with wine instead of water, by saying that water is better for washing (wine is for drinking!). Dominic Kirkham writes on the significance of the crucifix and how the encounter with the Norse gods changed Christianity and created Christendom.

Below this editorial you will see a notice of SOF Network's annual Day Conference entitled *Faith for Now – Looking Back, Looking Forward* with speakers Anthony Freeman, Tony Windross and Linda Woodhead. There will also be opportunities for discussion. The notice gives details of how to enrol for it. We hope that plenty of people will come and it will be a splendid day.

SOF DAY CONFERENCE

FAITH FOR NOW: LOOKING BACK, FACING FORWARD

Speakers

Anthony Freeman

Member and Anglican Priest, who was dismissed in 1994 following his association with the Network and its thinking

Tony Windross

Member and Anglican priest, writer and popular speaker at Conference for many years

Linda Woodhead

Professor and Head of Theology and Religious Studies at Kings College London one-time student of Don Cupitt

10am-4pm on Saturday 20th July 2024

at St Johns Church, Waterloo Road, London SE1 8TY

Please pay in advance if possible. Cost for the day is £20.

The preferred method of payment is by bank transfer to:

'Sea of Faith', Sort code 30-94-74; a/c 5599260.

Reference: Your name + Conference

Or cheques payable to 'Sea of Faith' should be sent to

Stephen Williams, 157 Russell Road, Birmingham B13 8RR.