Contemporary Comments on the Adult Sabbath School Lesson

**[Title]** Nature as a Source of Health  
**[Text]** Genesis 1:27-2:25; Genesis 3; Jeremiah 10:12-13; Psalm 19:1-7; Matthew 6:25-34; Psalm 104  
**[Use]** March 19.2011

Something went terribly wrong in Japan.

The Northeast region of the main island of Japan has suffered the worst disaster since WWII. The 9.0 magnitude earthquake has been accompanied by hundreds of aftershocks. The power of a tsunami’s 35 ft. wave of Pacific ocean water instantly swallowed people, houses, cars and boats as well as derailed trains. This week the fear of radiation exposure and starvation looms large. Already more than 10,000 people have been confirmed dead with thousands more missing.

Yet the power and force of water that is Victoria Falls in Zambia Africa is one of the seven wonders of the world! One hundred and twenty million gallons of water per minute pour into a narrow chasm more than 330 ft. deep attracting tourists from all over the world.

Something went terribly wrong under the sea in Japan!

Even if we have not been directly affected with this crises, when we look at the pictures of destruction we have seen on television, computers and smart phones we become sad and restless. What can we do to help? What if it were to happen to us? Could particles of radiation hit my country? What does all this mean for earth’s changing environment?

This week our eyes may need to take a break.

Come. Take a virtual tour to Butchart Gardens on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada, or any other botanical garden, arboretum, or animal reserve. Almost immediately we can sense an entirely different set of emotions. We are filled with awe and wonder. Eye candy is everywhere! Stress melts away.¹

An Australian research team found that urban-dwelling individuals who seek out parks and gardens appear to intuitively understand the personal health and well-being benefits arising from contact with nature. Their findings suggest that contact with nature may provide an effective population-wide strategy in prevention of mental ill health. This would have potential application for sub-populations, communities and individuals at higher risk of ill health.²

In another study research scientists in the United Kingdom found that living near parks, woodlands and green space have an impact on health and health-related behavior which counteracts the effects of poverty and inner-city deprivation. The two scientists assessed the entire population of England under the retirement age – a total of 41 million people – and obtained the cause of death for 366,348 people who died between 2001 and 2005 to analyze the links between fatal illnesses and access to green spaces. Their findings suggest that green spaces independently promote physical activity.

Contact (either by presence or visual) with green spaces can be psychologically and physiologically restorative, reducing blood pressure and stress levels and possibly promoting faster healing in patients after surgical intervention.³

As we study our Sabbath School lesson this week, pray for the people of Japan. Let's remember that until Jesus comes again things...
will go terribly wrong. Let's make our churches in our communities "green spaces" for those full of uncertainty and in need of a Savior. We inhabit a fallen, disjointed world, where things are constantly unraveling. Only a vibrant relationship with our Creator can keep us from coming unraveled too.

~ck

1. Buchart Gardens
2. Biofilic
3. Children and Nature

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