

Stewardship preserves, perpetuates resources for future



"Creation of the sense of stewardship in all of society requires complementary private and public leadership capable of meeting present and future needs of society. Public policy affecting land and water use requires action of the government on behalf of all members to society.

To initiate changes in value systems and public policies the need today for such leadership is urgent."

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"Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance." Numbers 26:53;—This does not mean that society must halt the process of urbanization or prevent the gathering of people when they desire to live in cities. Rather, it is a suggestion that we need to exercise judgement about where cities are to grow so that we can keep the fertile land "for an inheritance" to be passed on to generations of the future. If we leave our descendants money and buildings and roads but deprive them of the land they will need to produce food, we give them little of real value.

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"One generation passeth away and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever." Ecclesiastes 1:4) - We cannot leave to unborn generations a heritage of ample food and clothing. We can only commit to their keeping the natural resources with which they, in turn, can supply their own needs. We cannot be wise stewards of the present without considering the future needs of the world population.

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"Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28)—One definition of "subdue" is "bring under cultivation." That has been accomplished over a major part of the earth's surface that is suitable for the production of food and shelter. Now we must deal with a shrinking resource base of soil and water while we contemplate the needs of a still-expanding world population. Under our system of private ownership, the proprietor of land faces a dilemma of conscience in deciding where and when to practice stewardship of soil and water and when to seek immediate profit.