

PEACE

By Theo Colborn, Ph.D.

Of all nature's masterpieces, the newborn, whether fish, bird, mammal, or human, is surely the most exquisite. This wondrous creature is testimony to the peace and harmony that existed in the womb, or the egg, prior to its entering the world. For centuries, humankind considered the womb environment sacred, free of violence and trespass. In that prenatal environment, with unbelievable precision, cells replicate, move about, and form buds and limbs and brains and sensory and reproductive organs, contributing to the most miraculous phenomenon on Earth. From the moment the sperm enters the egg, embryonic development is orchestrated by the endocrine system using chemical messengers called hormones. With symphonic precision and harmony, constantly shifting hormonal blends instruct cells when to divide and where to move. Like the music from a grand organ, the tunes of these hormonal chords direct the formation of tissues and flesh, and even tell tissues when to die back after the tissue is no longer needed. And now, within the past decade, chemists have been able to measure the infinitesimally small concentrations of hormones that conduct development from conception through birth. The endocrine system is so fine-tuned that it depends upon hormones in concentrations as little as a tenth of a trillionth of a gram to control the womb environment, as inconspicuous as one second in 3,169 centuries. The endocrine system also controls reproduction and thus assured the integrity and survival of species since life first evolved on Earth--until humankind unwittingly produced synthetic chemicals that invade the security of the womb and create dissonance rather than harmony.

Peace begins in the womb. The newborn reflects this truth. Order is transferred from cell to tissue, to organs, to organisms, to families, communities, and nations. Unfortunately, when development is violated in the womb by man-made chemicals, the newborn is compromised. For animals in the wild, their survival is threatened. They can disappear without our ever knowing why. For humans, such exposure can lead to reduced intelligence, discontent, failure, and the inability to socially integrate. Man-made chemicals deprive societies of responsible leaders and thinkers. The social and economic impacts are incalculable. Widespread loss of security in the womb can lead to loss of stability at the national and international level.

Humans in their race to space have diverted attention and limited resources away from learning about the workings of the inner world from which life evolves. As we have searched in outer space, we seem to have forgotten the inner space, from which all humankind emerges. The thirst to learn more about the solar system than the system in which we all resided prior to birth, has left humankind vulnerable. The same technology that made space exploration possible and created modern society has led to production of chemicals that invade the womb. In our ignorance we assumed that the womb was inviolable while at the same time we produced more and more synthetic chemicals to improve the quality of our lives. We also assumed that since these man-made products did not rapidly induce cancer, they were safe. We also thought that the lakes, oceans, soil, and atmosphere would assimilate infinite amounts of waste from the new technologies.

Disregard for the environment has been rampant on a global scale. Now as we come to the end of the 20th century, we are suddenly faced with the realization that wherever we have destroyed the environment, we have left behind desperation, hunger, fear, and strife. To this we must add another legacy of the chemical industry, the invasion of the inner environment of all animals on Earth, including humans. From the Arctic to the Antarctic, man-made chemicals are found in all animal tissue. No longer is the offspring secure in the womb. No child born today is free of man-made chemicals. Mothers share these chemicals through their blood with the babies developing in their wombs. There are no cures for a child whose vital physiological, immunological, and neurological systems did not develop normally. When society takes heed and spends more on infrastructures for prevention than on remediation and healing, stability and integrity can be restored in the womb. Nations of the world must unite with a single purpose to restore peace in the inner-world, assuring every newborn the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential.

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