

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION - 1969

---

Environmental pollution is a scourge. It results from our highly industrialized, mechanized society and exploding populations, afflicting areas both urban and rural throughout the world. Its effect on all living things may, if unchecked, end finally in the tragedy of an uninhabitable world.

It has been said that the psalmist anticipated man's present dilemma when he declared, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou has put all things under his feet: sheep and oxen, all of them, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea; whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas." Man has, indeed, acquired to a formidable extent dominion over the earth but this places upon him the grave responsibility to protect and conserve the natural environment for his own and succeeding generations.

In the cities and even in rural areas our atmosphere is blanketed by factory smoke and the exhaust from automobiles and aeroplanes, as well as bombarded by shock waves of noise. Throughout city and countryside the noxious effect of environmental pollution is increasingly being felt. For example:

Insecticides, notably DDT, and other pesticides have penetrated virtually the entire fish and animal populations of the earth. These poisons are killing some plant, fish and animal life; infecting other such life with poisons which are crippling or deadly to the ultimate human consumer and his future progeny; producing unpredictable mutations with unknown characteristics; and destroying the natural enemies of man's enemies. In some cases, these poisons actually provide survivors with an immunity enabling them to breed more prolifically than before. They infect such micro-organisms as plankton which are at the beginning of a food chain that links a whole series of species. Atomic radiation from nuclear testing is also producing many of the above highly unfavorable results. Some fertilizers have even altered the chemical composition of foods, including baby foods. Furthermore, there is danger to the environment in the shipping of lethal substances through populated areas and in governmental experimentation that endangers life in the areas surrounding the test sites.

Solid wastes are disposed of in ways that degrade the environment, poisoning the water, soil and atmosphere. Urgently needed are: adequate financing of a solid waste program for the burning, burying or reclaiming of it for reuse; the building of an adequate number of sewage plants; the institution of a marine research program to investigate water-borne diseases.

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, in Convention assembled in Miami Beach, Florida, in October 1969, urges that appropriate measures be taken on local, state and national governmental levels to remove the growing threats of environmental pollution and that private industry be urged to take a leading role in eliminating those practices which introduce harmful and toxic impurities into the environment and to employ effective anti-pollutant and anti-noise devices wherever necessary.

Furthermore, we urge our Sisterhoods, District Federations and members to become actively interested in this field by study and cooperation with interested communal agencies. We who inherit a tradition which is marked by a reverence for life must preserve the good earth and all its varied life for our own sakes and for generations yet unborn.

*For more information about WRJ and Social Justice, visit [www.wrj.org/social-justice-home](http://www.wrj.org/social-justice-home)*