

The Bicentennial of the United States of America - 1975

On the eve of the Bicentennial of the United States of America, we are reminded of the exalted words of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Although independence was secured by force of revolution, freedom was conceived in the minds and hearts of human beings through years of reasonable discourse, strong leadership, and idealism based on the Judeo-Christian heritage. The ringing phrases and sentences that gave birth in 1776 to the United States of America have remained through the ensuing centuries as a standard of human aspiration for many nations and diverse peoples. Thus, the celebration of the Bicentennial of the United States of America is meaningful not only to its own citizens, but also to youth, women and men throughout the world.

The union that became the United States was forged by differing individuals who, through both war and peace, learned to dedicate themselves to the common good. So shall we, in our generation, accept again our responsibility for a future consistent with our religious ideals and Judaic tradition which stress the worth and dignity of every individual. However, the integrity of our celebration leads us to recognize, with profound regret, the areas within the United States and other nations in which men and women have failed to achieve the liberty and justice for all people which is so often professed. We of the United States of America can best mark the Bicentennial of our country through rededication to our national as well as religious heritage, even as we ask our associated members in other countries to pledge themselves to strive, as must we, on behalf of a humankind that shall yet learn to live in harmony, responsive to the changing needs of society.

Within the United States, in special celebration of the Bicentennial Year, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods will undertake increased dialogue with non-Jewish women in the conference of Church and Synagogue Women in a nationwide program of conversations of mutual concerns, called "Frontiers of Understanding." Perhaps in other appropriate ways the Sisterhood women of our non-U.S. affiliates may wish to note the legacy of the Declaration of Independence.

Therefore, assembled in convention in Dallas, Texas in November, 1975, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, with its membership of more than 100,000 women in 15 countries, applauds the United States of America, the oldest continuous Federal Republic in the world. We celebrate two centuries during which ideals have been embodied in the law of the land and people have breathed the air of freedom. We hope and pray for a future consistent with our ideals. We pledge ourselves to continue to struggle for the translation of these ideals into the service of our respective countries and the family of nations. Ours is the task to seek and reaffirm freedom with justice in a diversified one world under God.