

Status of Women - 1975

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, long an outspoken exponent of full equality for women in religious and secular life, is cognizant of the progress made toward that goal slowly over the years and at a more accelerated pace in the last decade. Nevertheless, women in most countries of the world as well as in the United States have yet to achieve, in this year designated by the United Nations as International Women's Year, full equality in all aspects of the economic, social, educational, religious, and political arenas of their respective nations.

Therefore, in convention assembled in November 1975 in Dallas, Texas, while addressing ourselves to issues in the United States on behalf of our United States members, we urge our associated members in fourteen other countries of the United Nations to intensify their own study and action programs to improve the status of women.

In the United States we of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods especially deplore:

- the opposition of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution;
- the minor role assigned to women in political decision making;
- the various inequities in the present Social Security system that discriminates against women, especially working women who, for example, if married may receive less benefits on their husband's social security than they would have received for the years of their own coverage as a single woman;
- the unfair credit regulations that assign her husband's credit rating to a married or recently singled woman and those that prevent, in some states, married or single women from obtaining mortgages, loans, and other forms of credit;
- the low image some women, engaged full time in child rearing and other home-oriented work, hold of themselves;
- the attempts to negate service-oriented volunteerism as a valid option for today's woman;
- the lack of understanding by women as well as men of the goals of the women's movement;
- the paucity and stereotyped reporting of women's activities in the communications media.

At the same time, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods commends the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion for continually affirming the equality of women in Reform Judaism by:

- stimulating young women to pursue religious careers;
- continuing to educate, ordain, invest and place women rabbis and cantors;
- encouraging congregations to elect women officers and trustees;
- including more women in policy-making roles within the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, without implying in so doing that their or other women's involvement in the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods nationally, District-wise, or locally should be in any way lessened.

Further, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods:

- in reaffirming its support of the proposed 27th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, the Equal Rights Amendment, which makes gender-based discrimination unconstitutional, appeals to its District Federations, local affiliates and individual members to work vigorously for the ratification of this amendment in the legislatures of their individual states;
- urges its members to implement the resolution on Women in Decision Making passed by NFTS in Los

Angeles in November 1971, by increasing, on every level, their participation in the elective process.

Also, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods presses for reforms:

- of the present Social Security system that deprives the working woman of all the benefits she paid for and earned;
- of all credit and property laws that discriminate against women.

And, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods calls upon its affiliates to enlarge their advocacy role by continuing to:

- educate themselves, their members and the public about proposed legislation affecting women;
- to take public positions on such proposals;
- to make effective use of all forms of communication media;
- to use their platforms for programs concerned with the goals of women;
- to use their vote judiciously;
- endorses the concept that child-rearing and home centered work are proud and respected occupations for women;
- recognizes the contributions made to our society by service-oriented volunteers who choose to work without monetary compensation, and whose efforts and talents have established and continue to support our great religious institutions, health facilities and community welfare organizations.

Finally, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods restates the preamble of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women of November 7th, 1967:

...discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and the welfare of the family and of society, prevents their participation on equal terms with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and humanity.