

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE - 1967

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, heeding the biblical admonitions “Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me?” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” has long been active in the field of interfaith activity. Working both alone and in conjunction with congregational and communal women’s groups, NFTS and its affiliates have initiated and participated in interfaith programs on many levels.

Today, we are pleased to note a new spirit permeating the world which promises an unprecedented harvest for these efforts; a new interest on the part of our non-Jewish neighbors in the creation of a deeper mutual understanding and a more brotherly relation with us; a new determination on the part of the Christian clergy to correct historical distortions and theological libels, as evidenced in such authoritative statements as the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Jews, the Guidelines for Catholic Jewish Relations prepared by the Bishop’s Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Report of the Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People issued by the World Council of Churches, and in such projects as the joint examination of religious textbooks for the deletion of anti-Semitic references. The hand that once was extended to the Jew only to lead him to the baptismal font, is now outstretched in honest and undemanding friendship devoid of conversionary intent. It is a gesture that holds tremendous possibilities for interreligious education, understanding and harmony.

To ensure an informed responsiveness on our part, and a cooperative spirit consistent with the teachings of Judaism, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods urges that Sisterhood members reexamine their own attitudes and rid themselves of prejudices or resentments; that Sisterhoods organize continuing, ongoing interreligious adult education programs concerned with both Judaism and Christianity as well as other religions and designed as preparation for interreligious dialogue; that Sisterhoods, and their members individually, cooperate in communal projects, especially those involving social action; and that wherever possible, Sisterhoods broaden their bases of operation to include participation by as many persons as feasible.