

GATHER, GLORIFY GOD, AND GROW



2009 CENTRAL COUNCIL MEDITATIONS

*Commit everything you do to the Lord.
Trust Him to help you do it, and He will.*

Psalm 37:5

Opening Meditation, Central Council Saturday, August 29, 2009

Sing A New Song

What a wonderful time this is – to be here in this beautiful and serene place – Chautauqua! No wonder people come here to refresh and nourish their souls. We have gathered together to glorify God and to grow. May our souls be refreshed and nourished. Let us sing a new song!

We are here at Central Council – a new beginning for King’s Daughters and Sons. We meet to plan the future of our beloved organization. We treasure the wisdom of our founders and their vision. May we stay ever true to that vision but the future holds many challenges, both to us as individuals and to our organization.

Life gives many opportunities to begin anew. When I was teaching at each marking period I would remind my students that the grade book was clean, that they had the opportunity to make a fresh start. Now at this time we, too, can make a fresh start. Here at Central Council we will be discussing challenges facing our organization and making decisions regarding the future of King’s Daughters and Sons. Let us not be afraid of saying “YES” to these challenges. Saying “yes” may be risky but many of us have lived to realize that we’ve missed opportunities to serve, to make positive differences in other people’s lives because we were too cautious, too insecure, too concerned about all “the things that might go wrong”.

The good news is that history is full of examples of ordinary men and women, young and old, rich and poor, who have said “yes” to possibilities for making a positive difference in the world.

Think of the two midwives –Shiprah and Puah. We don’t know the personal history of each, but we do know they were courageous women who feared God more than any earthly king. Their allegiance to God gave them the courage to make a tough decision.

Whatever the role we play in life, we have to make decisions and sometimes these are tough decisions. Today, no matter how challenging our circumstances, with God’s help, we may seize the new possibilities that lie

before us. Now is the time to discover new songs of courage and commitment so that we as King's Daughters and Sons can better serve others In His Name.

Prayer

God of grace and love, you have graced each of us with the gift of life. You challenge us to live with a faith that gives us courage and guidance as we make decisions concerning our beloved organization. Grant us the wisdom to make decisions that will be pleasing to You. Lord, help us to sing a new song! AMEN

Nan Pointer
Vice-President/Spiritual Life Director

Sunday Chapel Meditation – August 30, 2009

The Parable of the Lobster

Long ago when the world was very new – there was a certain lobster who determined that the Creator had made a mistake. So he set up an appointment to discuss the matter. “With all due respect,” said the lobster, “I wish to complain about the way you designed my shell. You see, I just get used to one outer casing, when I’ve got to shed it for another, very inconvenient and rather a waste of time.” To which the Creator replied, “I see. But do you realize that it is the giving up of one shell that allows you to grow into another?”

“But I like myself just the way I am,” the lobster said. “Your mind’s made up?” the Creator said. “Indeed!” the lobster stated firmly.

“Very well,” smiled the Creator. “From now on your shell will not change and you may go about your business just as you are right now.” “That’s very kind of you.” Said the lobster and left.

At first, the lobster was very content with wearing the same old shell, But as time passed, he found that his once light and comfortable shell was becoming so cumbersome that the lobster couldn’t feel anything at all outside himself. As a result, he was always bumping into others. Finally, it got to the point where he could hardly even breathe. So with great effort, he went back to see the Creator.

“With all due respect,” the lobster sighed, “contrary to what you promised, my shell has not remained the same. It keeps shrinking.”

“Not at all,” smiled the Creator. “Your shell may have gotten a little thicker with age, but it has remained the same size. What’s happened is that you have changed inside, beneath your shell.”

The Creator continued” “You see, everything changes – continuously. No one remains the same. That’s the way I’ve designed things. And the wisest choice is to shed our old shell as you grow.” “I see,” said the lobster, “but you must admit it is occasionally inconvenient and a bit uncomfortable.”

“Yes,” said the Creator, “but remember, all growth carries with it both the possibility of discomfort and the potential for great joy as you discover new parts of yourself. After all, you can’t have one without the other.”

“That’s very sensible,” said the lobster. “If you’d,” offered the Creator, “I’ll tell you something more,” “Please do,” encouraged the lobster.

“When you let go of your shell and choose to grow,” said the Creator, “you will build new strength within yourself and in that strength you’ll find new capacity to love yourself – to love those around you – and to love life itself. That is my plan for each of you.”

Prayer – Gracious God, Creator of all things, giver of every good and perfect gift, hear us as we seek your blessing upon our discussions. Prepare our hearts and minds as we come together with major decisions concerning our beloved organization. Change can be very threatening and we seek your guidance. Give us open minds, O God, minds ready to receive and welcome new knowledge. Give us the courage to change our minds when it is needed. Grant us a vision for our organization. In our differences may we be kind, in our agreements humble, that Your will may be done in us and through us for our beloved organization. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN

Nan Pointer
Vice-President/Spiritual Life Director

Monday Chapel Meditation – August 29, 2009

Called to Evangelism, In His Name

When asked to prepare a devotion for today my thoughts turned to The King's Daughters and Sons and how God can use my membership in this wonderful organization as part of his plan and purpose for me. In other words, how do I use my time and efforts as a member of The King's Daughters and Sons to glorify God?

When we take the time to reflect we are amazed and humbled by our calling – that we are to live Spirit inspired lives so we can be part of God's work. Ephesians 1:11 says "In him we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory."

As we gather as The King's Daughters and Sons in this beautiful setting we are "for the praise of his glory" in prayer, praise and worship. Unfortunately, we often have a harder time remembering we were created "for the praise of his glory" in the day-day realities and challenges of our busy lives.

"All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And my glory is shown through them" says John 17:10. God is in the business of changing the face of the world. This change is his job, not ours. Our goal is to simply stand before God with a prepared and willing heart and then let God do his work. Our church recently had a little Bible study based on the book "Just walk Across the Room" by Bill Hybel. His book presents a new approach to evangelism, reminding us that God will inspire and empower us to do his work. He uses the expressions "just walk across the room" or "just show up" when we feel that God is leading us to care or respond to another person. If we are willing, God will work through us.

In his book, Hybel breaks evangelism down into simple steps. As we build relationships we become part of the story that will eventually lead another to Christ. Bill Hybel suggests this can be done by "Living in 3-D"... Develop, Discover, Discern. First develop friendships. Next discover stories, finally discern next steps. The Spirit can lead us to opportunities to develop a friendship, discover stories (taking the time to learn of someone else's

concerns or desire for faith) and discernment – spending time in prayer to discern God’s will for you in each situation. We will rarely have the opportunity to bring another to Christ in one encounter but we may be one step in God’s work along their way.

In the parable of the seed, we often emphasize the seed that does not fall on good soil to take root. But in Hybel’s book he wants us to concentrate on what happened to the seed that fell on good earth and produced a harvest beyond the farmer’s wildest dreams. We cannot forget the reality of this fourth soil. Jesus pledges to us that some of the seed we now sow will fall on good soil. Before the harvest there may be many workers and actions – the seed falls, it takes root, it germinates, it sprouts.

As Christians we try to discern his will for us in this process. Our membership in The King’s Daughters and Sons can by one way we reach out to serve and evangelize. As we gather with friends we encourage them and pray with them. People around the world may learn about Christian giving through our projects and sharing of resources, books, and heifers. We may spread the gospel through scholarships, Christian education and Bible translation.

Zechariah 4:10 says “Do not despise.....small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begun.”

Our service is part of something bigger. In unity, God can accomplish greater things. The Christian existence is not merely on an earthly plane. It receives its meaning and significance from heaven, where Christ is exalted at the right hand of God....Nevertheless, that life is lived on earth where the practical daily life of the believer continues to work out the purposes of God. (Intro to Ephesians, NIV)

I’ll close with a practical illustration of evangelizing and reflecting God’s glory with this story from the May/June issue of The Upper Room. James Playford writes, “My dad loved to plant and grow vegetables, particularly tomatoes. However, because he was in the military, we had to move every three or four years. Even if we knew we were about to be moved, Dad would plant and tend a garden anyway, and say with a smile, ‘I’m planting tomatoes for someone else to pick’.

Dad’s words come back to me at times when I feel my work for God is not showing any results. I have never helped someone to find God in a single

encounter, nor have I ever helped guide a straying Christian to return to God's path in a single conversation. Frankly, most of what I have done for God may not bear fruit in my life time.

Each act I do for God nudges someone closer to God's grace, but never the whole way. In the few cases that I've been present when someone does find God for the first time or is restored to spiritual health, it's always been the last of a long series of events in that person's path."

God calls us to work in the garden. We can plant or water, whether or not we get to enjoy the harvest."

Prayer – Lord, we stand before you with prepared and willing hearts. Help us to love and to witness, trusting the results to you. AMEN

Beth Fanta
President, West Virginia Branch

Tuesday Chapel Meditation – September 1, 2009

Psalm 37: 4-5 – “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the Desires of your heart.” “Commit your ways to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.”

Faith is Wanting More Out of Life.

Faith is a choice, not an argument.

It is a decision, not a debate.

It is a commitment, not a controversy.

Faith fulfills some need in your heart.

It can be defined as wanting more out of life.

Even the super affluent are attracted to faith; they soon realize that all of their wealth, social standing, and personal power leave a void in their lives.

When you have more money than you can enjoy, what is left?

Saint Augustine said: “Our souls are restless till they find rest in Thee.” We suspect that out there, somewhere, there is always something more. From where does this intuition for “something more” come? It is built into our nature. The human being has been called an incurably religious animal by instinct and nature.

Be careful what you want – you’ll get it! Wanting is believing, and believing produces results.

Strong faith is often the expression of deep desire. Likewise, doubt is the lack of desire. A host of conscious and subconscious forces can keep you from wanting to believe. Fears of what God might do to your life or in your life can keep you from wanting to believe. Internalized guilt can make the possibility of God a threatening concept. Deep-seated, negative emotions can kill the desire to believe leaving you with a negative inclination to doubt. Are you having trouble believing?

Our Bible verse contains God’s promise of blessing upon faith. God promises to bless the person who has strong desires. This is because in God’s eyes desire and faith are one and the same: “He shall give you the desires of your heart.”

Matthew 17:20 – “So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief, for Assuredly, I say to you, if you have the faith as a mustard

Seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to There,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible For you."

In 1971 I had the opportunity to get to know Ida Vanderbeck, the 10th International President who served from 1956 until 1962. One evening, after communion at the chapel, named in her honor, she asked me to walk her back to the Atheneum Hotel. She intentionally walked slowly so as to tell me about the early days of the Order and the faith that built it into an international success. She feared for the future of the Order because the older members were not being replaced with younger ones. She felt the future was in the hands of the Chautauqua Students. This was the same thought expressed at the 1928 International Convention in Ottawa, Canada by Miss Jennie Benedict when she tried to convince the Order to purchase a house for scholarship students.

Ida Vanderbeck's symbol of her presidency was the mustard seed. Faith was important to her. Her faith built a chapel. Her faith inspired many. I will never forget that night spent walking her home. Her thoughts and words will never be forgotten.

And so, we must look to the future but look to the future through the eyes of our students. We must wisely mentor so we might turnover the reigns of leadership to them someday. They are ready. Are we?

Prayer: "Lord, help us to realize we must never give in to negative thoughts. Help us to never give up. Help us to realize that we need not always think alike but that we must always think together. These were the words of Margaret Bottome so long ago. Bless us and keep us as we labor In Your Name. AMEN

Charles Thompson
Vice-President, Kentucky Branch

**Wednesday Chapel Meditation – Central Council
September 2, 2009**

Today and Every Day

The dictionary defines today as “during this day or during these times.”

Growing up, I heard my mother and my grandmother say many, many times, “today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday.” To a child, waiting for a special treat or occasion, today takes forever and a day to get here.

In every day living, today and everyday contains 24 hours or 1,440 minutes, or 86,400 seconds. This is the amount of time God promises you. How you chose to spend it is up to you.

In these 24 hours of today we have many other promises made to us. “use our diet meals for 30 days and we promise you’ll be 4 dresses smaller.” “Eat our yogurt for 2 weeks and you’ll be regular as clockwork.” “If we don’t have the check by Friday, I promise you a

Psalms 118:24 says, “This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.” God wants us to rejoice and enjoy – but He knows us and the schedules we keep: families to feed, houses cleaned, laundry to be done, jobs to be worked and bills to be paid or suffer the consequences.

Sitting in a darkened kitchen wearing dirty clothes, eating peanut and jelly sandwiches by candlelight does not conjure up a Norman Rockwell family photo. God wants us to rejoice and enjoy, but today and every day we should be ministers of God, doing His works as needed: as much as our abilities, talents and time allows.

Several years ago, my friend Cheryl introduced me to the craft: scrapbooking. I really got into it. Months later, I was showing my son Michael one of the pages I had done. It was quite elaborate and I was expecting, at the least, a “neat” or some such compliment. His “mom, you have way too much time on your hands” burst my balloon, but it got me involved in volunteering and after last Central Council, I was hooked on volunteering. Today and everyday do not neglect the gift that was given to you. Begin each day by offering and opening your heart and a willingness to

serve Him. 1 Peter:10 says, “as every man hath received the gift so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

Procrastination has stolen too many opportunities from us. Today and everyday we put off until it is too late things we should do now. The terminally ill friend in the hospital you kept meaning to visit, the apology you didn't give, thank-you notes not written, calls never returned, bedtime stories not read. Today! Take the time, today. Take the opportunity to tell someone you love them. Read that book you heard so much about. Whip up that recipe you've been meaning to try, walk barefoot, hug the person sitting next to you. Treat yourself to a deluxe box of Crayola Crayons with all the colors or a set of good colored pencils. Create a poster that reads: “If Not Today, Then When?” And hang it where you will see it every day. Do it today.

Today is given! Tomorrow is assumed. It please God when we give Him all that we are and have: giving and serving God toady and every day with our hearts wide open, our spirits full. He deserves nothing less. It is the least we can do in view of all that He has done for us.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for your kept promise of this beautiful day and all the many wonderful blessings you have given to these King's Daughters and Sons who are gathered here this morning. Let each one of us feel Your presence and know that we are truly doing what You would have us do to serve and honor You. In our busy lives, make us mindful that we are not to ignore the talents You have entrusted to us, and that today and every day we are to share with others all that You have given to us.

Thank You for the information we have received here. With the talents You have given us, Your Presence and our hard work, King's Daughters and Sons will endure to do Your good works.

Today, God, most of us will be returning home to family and friends. Thank You for Your presence here with us at Central Council. Please grant them all safe travel home. Be with them today and always. AMEN

Edith Dixon
President, South Carolina Branch

Meditation – Rededication Service – September 2, 2009

Have you heard about the animals in the jungle who got together one day and decided to play a football game? They chose sides, and one team learned pretty quickly that they had (if you pardon the pun) a big problem. The rhinoceros was on the other team, and they simply could not tackle him. They tried, but they just bounced off. Every time the rhinoceros got the ball he ran right down the middle of the field, and they couldn't stop him. In the first quarter the rhinoceros scored a touchdown. Then, in the second quarter he scored again, and then again in the third quarter. They tried to keep the ball away from him, but every time the rhinoceros touched the ball, he ran for a touchdown.

Finally, with just a few minutes left in the game, the rhinoceros caught the ball one more time and started up the field. Suddenly, out of nowhere, he was brought down with a magnificent tackle. When the animals unplied, it was discovered that the centipede had (for the first time) finally come into the game, and that it was, indeed, the centipede who had made the tackle. "That was fantastic!" shouted his teammates. "Great tackle! But look, it's the fourth quarter, and the game is almost over! Where on earth have you been all this time!" The centipede answered, "I was putting on my shoes!"

Many people are like that – and worse! They go through life just "putting on their shoes," "getting ready to do something" but never making a start; preparing, wanting to do something but somehow never getting around to doing it.

When Jesus says, "Follow me" he is telling us to "Put on our shoes! Get in the game! I've got a job for you! Now the word follow is a powerful word in the Scriptures. It carries with it a strong meaning. It means obedience. It means commitment. It means love. It means devotion, devotion to a great cause, as cause outside yourself and larger than yourself

Total commitment. Commitment without reservation - that is our calling as Christian people, That is the spirit in which we as King's Daughters and Sons are to live daily. Commitment to God means living daily in a spirit of gratitude that is not measured or calculated, gratitude with no string attached,

Commit every fiber of your being to God and His Kingdom. Unless we allow ourselves to be centered in Him, we will not be useful in the ways that we are called to serve. We must learn how to center on God – how to commit to God.

Commitment is the giving of ourselves in complete devotion to God. Are you committed like that? Is your commitment that deep? We all need to hear and respond in faith and obedience to our Lord's Word for us today. So, now let us rededicate ourselves .

Let us sing a new song of:

Unshakable commitment to Christ

Untiring commitment to others

Unwavering commitment to King's Daughters and Sons