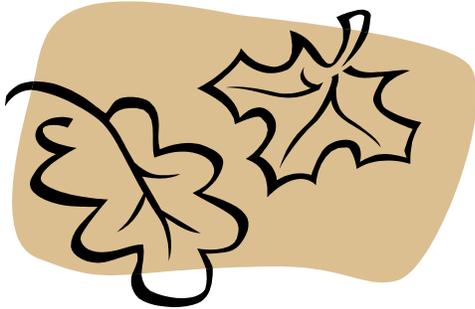


{ Pastor Beck warns you: " This makes for a long read, or perhaps a second mug of coffee. BUT it's full of Fall ideas..... }



Fresh off our wonderful District Retreat at the most luxurious Macleay Retreat, I woke before dawn today with a few reflections to share..... First off, looking at the schedule of Zone Rallies, I pray daily that God will richly bless each and every Zone Rally these coming days and fill them with Z.E.S.T.! {Those two that have taken place, I again am sorry I'm "tardy," and hope they were well-attended and rewarding in every way????}

WHY Z.E.S.T.y? Zone Events (that are) Simply Terrific! Well, because we use rallies as an early season kick-off, after a long, dry summer. And what have we to offer our YOUNG women the rest of our calendar year to attract the "young church of tomorrow?" Those who inherit our mission focus & zeal? Our missionary efforts, our community-based mission efforts, near and around the world?.....so they may wish to carry on the masterful projects and subgroup/small ministries?? As I pour over the recent Zone President questionnaires, the most resonant and frequent sum and substance answers seem to be: "But we don't have any young women coming to our monthly meetings." One of the best key words that came from those nine replies was, "Now we're making it project-based; nobody likes meetings any more and no young, working women have time any more!" The scream that echoes through our organization sends chills up my spine, and I am sad...because I believe strongly, more than ever before, that those same young women, young mothers, with families scattered all over our land because of the mobility of professions & opportunities these days....need a mother-figure and mentoring and modeling more than ever. If we are to put ZEST into our LWML, and lock in ZEAL behind it, perhaps we can sit down and fashion "program days" that tell our young women we love them dearly and want to invest in them and their futures. We know how to embrace them and pray for them and their families, and we simply must make it **personal AND "project-based."** *As Pastor Beck reminds us:* "The reason for the fellowship & recruiting of young woman to the foreground... IS reaching the lost for Jesus; we must NOT assume the good news... WE MUST SAY SO."

If you come away from your Fall Rally, where the tables are set fine, the food terrific, the giggles and gab uproarious, and you are in-filled with the Bible study & hopefully lots of singing, sit down with your respective Society officers, the 3-4 of you, and **start planning your next eight monthly "program days" around a ZEST "event"** that might appeal to your young women, wives & mothers, on the base-line of mentoring and modeling: change to a weekend day, time, 2-3 hours, { arrange babysitting if necessary, } and have a kitchen coffee event where you model everything from turkey-basting, exchange stuffing recipes, and serve fresh cranberry sauce over yogurt with a coffee bar and recipe exchange! Why? It's November, and some young mothers quiver and get really nervous as Thanksgiving arrives. We assume they are comfortable trying to entertain with dozens of questions about preparing a Thanksgiving meal! Could extend it to "each young woman please bring a friend!" Invest your ZEAL, make invites personal, phone reminders, and early enough so they may plan, and may the smell of that small turkey when they walk in reinforce the fact that.....cooking with a bunch can be a (butter)ball!

Come Christmas, advertise that Sunday after Thanksgiving & make your project-base December ZEST-FEST perhaps an in-gathering of supplies for a favorite ministry you have going, (yarn for your prayer shawls/ fabric for Grain-Train quilts/wee house plants for your Welcome Baskets? etc etc** over a Wassail Advent Brunch!!.....just sing, and gab, and play wonderful get-acquainted games, punctuated by the Christmas story right out of Luke,(good chance for the reader to dress as Mary)** i.e. What better way to simply share to our young women the depths and

simplicity of our community/world mission projects at the same time allowing them to participate? Where better, than over cookies, coffee, hot wassail, and a couple of Saturday-off hours with their loving, congregational "mentor mothers?" a story: We are blessed with society officers who have turned their responsibilities as Pres/VP/Secretary & Treasurer into monthly Board "suppers" the 4 together, wherein they take care of all the fluff & duff & stuff needed to keep us on task, so that when we meet, (and our numbers are small too!) on our **traditional third-Thursday of every month evenings**, we have much singing! An hour-long Bible Study, treats, perhaps, and the "business" is simply an 8-min. jog thru financials, correspondence often heartfelt thank you's from our recipients of grief shawls, scholarship monies, dialysis blankets, our Good Shepherd adoptee, the men's relief shelter.....Then we focus on intense, name specific prayers, and our time together is precious. Meetings don't have to be a dirty word, reflecting thoughts of a boring, mindless, dragged-out event on a precious evening. Go day-time! Go multi-generational, sprinkle generously with ZEST & ZEAL.

We need to add ZEST and perhaps create community-based event days, Saturdays, that attract and would interest our young women, IF for no other reason than to coffee, gab, laugh, and get acquainted and get to know them. Have a "Starbucks-Saturday" where each one brings (a friend, those non-churched) their favorite coffee mug and share the story behind that mug! Serve, or better yet, bake on site for the "smells...." and have just a 2-hr. morning out with the girls. (If you want to turn it into a pajama day, we won't tell.) In the questionnaire I got back: "We are planning on having a Spring Mother-Daughter Tea." Why, here's a great, no perfect, time to adopt a young woman whose mother is perhaps so far away. Keep it simple; perhaps have women bring a place setting or tea cup set of their own with heritage-based pieces or ones of sentimental value, and have circle (small tables of 4-6) sharing time....a great way to get-acquainted over a spot of tea. Or do around a "Bridal Fashion Show" and use your YWR/Teens as models!!! woo hoo....

Suddenly, in my mind, I feel I am charging you Society and Zone leaders to challenge your officers or Board to grab the brass ring of goings on, where thematic-events trigger the imagination and therefore the joy and anticipation of this hectic world we live in....in order to attract the young. Pick a monthly theme, change your day and dates to fit the schedule of the majority, and grab at the task of lifting them out of the tremendous stress and pressure that is driving their worlds. Give them a few, brief hours of zest with us, the 'oldie & goldies' passing the baton on... Have a "wear green March" mad-hatter get-together; dye the punch and tea green. Wear & share your favorite hats, some vintage! Every woman has a favorite hat with a fine story behind it, guarantee you.

In order to change our focus, we have to rework our skeleton, put more meat on the bones; we have to be working like beavers within our bowels to reach out to the young women in our very midst and build it around female friendships, adopted grandmas to their children, prayer-chain sisters, e-mail mentors.....think out of the box Ladies, & let's NOT be caught ZZzzzziiing.....sleeping. BUT RATHER, full of Z.E.S.T. and great Z.E.A.L.
{ Zones Encircling All (our) Ladies }

Yours in Christ, as we, "**Let the Redeemed of the Lord, SAY SO!!!!**" *Psalm 107, v. 2* And say it loud & clear, Amen.

Respectfully & prayerfully yours,
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