



BPW International

International Federation of Business & Professional Women

International President's Message

Candle Lighting Ceremony 2009

Building on a solid foundation for our future!

Dear BPW Presidents and Members worldwide,

It is indeed an honor as your 21st president, to share with you my first candle lighting message and representing the rich history of our organization which is in our 79th year!

In today's world, this is a very significant accomplishment, but we cannot rest and assume that it will automatically continue forever. With the current financial and moral situation in the world, major corporations, presidents, ceo's and companies are failing overnight ,which reinforces and raises a keen awareness of the importance of a good solid foundation with strong ethical principles and a long term vision. BPW international is the example of such vision since 1930, from our founder Dr Lena Madesin Phillips, which was to support, engage, advocate and educate. She connected women all over the world in our common goals on a unified international platform projecting our determination and strength. Over the years our presidents and members in all the professions and businesses have contributed to this achievement. However, now more than ever, to continue being a leader more work is needed as a critical component, not only to forge ahead, but to maintain what has been accomplished.

I therefore strongly urge all our members to become engaged in our valuable work on all levels by supporting, strengthening and helping us to grow in our endeavors and building on the foundation laid by all those before us. A monumental effort would be required today to start from the beginning, so let us never forget the work that brought us through the last 78 years to 2009. The urgent need and requirement to be visible and counted on, as the solid highly needed component of our society, on the economic, social and political levels is our most important responsibility as women, and members of our great organization. No longer can this be left to only a few. It is for the future of our daughters, sons and the world that we all make the commitment to be participants rather than observers.

These times call for action, not reaction but pro-action, in addressing the critical issues for and about women and creating innovative solutions. The reason you joined BPW was to become part of a powerful, international network. No matter what your level of expertise is, this is my urgent call for our members in all the languages and cultures to do whatever they can on the local, national and international levels of BPW. You are needed so that together we can and will achieve more. Time is at a premium for us all, especially in voluntary organization. With consistent, committed, and focused efforts from the many members, we can maximize on our advocacy and work that will provide the desired results which we can all be proud of. Each of us can and must take ownership of this great responsibility, as women and BPW members. In times past the question women have asked is "What does BPW bring to me?" The answer must be, "What do we need to invest in BPW in order for it to be the strongest network, leading and advocating for women in order to reach our goals of equal status on the decision making platforms, politically, socially and economically?" It is very clear that our investment of today will bring the continued success of tomorrow, and our dedicated commitment can and must continue!

May the lights from the candles in your Candle Lighting Ceremony unite us all in these challenging times bringing inspiration, wisdom and strength to keep building on our solid foundation for our future.

Elizabeth Benham, President BPW International.



CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY

We have come together to participate in a special tribute to one of the world's most influential organisations, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, which unites women around the world. Although its members speak in many languages and live in countries with differing traditions they share the same determination of purpose.

More than 78 years ago, BPW was founded by Dr Lena Madesin Phillips from the United States of America and a few years later she conceived the idea of the Candle Lighting Ceremony. As we perform this ceremony, we will evoke historical memories, the many accomplishments and celebrate today's achievements.

The members of the United States of America made good-will tours to Europe to share their interests and their beliefs with women of Europe. Through their efforts and influence, groups were organised in several countries. In 1930, women from sixteen countries met in Geneva where a long cherished dream – the forming of the International Federation – became a reality.

The candles symbolize the ambitions and endeavours of dedicated women in every country around the world.

Each WHITE candle represents a Federation. Each BLUE candle stands for a country where there is at least one Associated Club, and the PINK candles for Individual Members.

The candle in the middle represents the oldest group of BPW Affiliates of the United States of America (Light the USA candle).

The tallest candle represents the International Federation. (Light the tallest candle). In the warmth and glow of its tolerant light, Business and Professional Women in all parts of the world come together to share memories in friendship and reflect on the founding principles envisioned by Lena Madesin Phillips, that govern the International Federation which stands out as a beacon to women everywhere. Using our combined abilities and strength we renew our commitment for the attainment of the following objectives:

- To work for high standards of service in business and the professions.
- To encourage women and girls to acquire education, occupational training and advanced education, and to use their occupational capacities and intelligence for the advantage of others as well as themselves.
- To stimulate and encourage in women, awareness and acceptance of their responsibilities to the community, locally, nationally and internationally.
- To work for equal opportunities and status for women in the economic, civil and political life in all countries, and to work for the removal of all discrimination.
- To promote world-wide friendship, co-operation and understanding between business and professional women.

Let us now light the other candles and remember our members on every continent who will be celebrating in the same manner. As we light the candles for them, they will light the candle for our country.

First we light candles for each of the FOUNDING Federations of BPW International
(Light a WHITE candle as each country is named):

AUSTRIA, CANADA, FRANCE, ITALY, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Today, there are also Federations in (light the remaining WHITE candles as each country is named):

Argentina	Indonesia	Singapore
Australia	Ireland	Spain
Bangladesh	Japan	Sudan
Belgium	Jordan	Sweden
Brazil	Korea	Switzerland
Chile	Nepal	Thailand
Cyprus	Mexico	Taiwan
Ecuador	Netherlands	Uzbekistan
Egypt	New Zealand	USA/California
Estonia	Nigeria	USA/New York
Finland	Pakistan	USA/Pacific Rim
Germany	Poland	

We also honor our ASSOCIATED CLUBS in the following countries (light the BLUE candles; name each country slowly and clearly):

Bahrain	El Salvador	Russian Federation
Barbados	Haiti	Slovakia
Benin	Hungary	South Africa
Bermuda	Iceland	Sri Lanka
Bulgaria	India	St. Kitts
Burkina Faso	Israel	Turkey
Bolivia	Jamaica	Trinidad & Tobago
Cambodia	Latvia	United Arab Emirates
Cameroon	Moldova	Ukraine
Cayman Islands	Morocco	Uruguay
Chad	Netherlands Antilles	USA / Paso del Norte
Cook Islands	Palestine State	USA / LaGrange-Chicago
China (Hong Kong)	Panama	Yemen
Croatia	Papua New Guinea	
Czech Republic	Philippines	
Dem Rep of Congo	Romania	

We also honor our INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS in (light the PINK candles):

Cote D'Ivoire	Malaysia	Saudi Arabia	Togo
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BPW International is a dynamic and powerful organisation of world importance. Public opinion and legislation in many countries have been influenced by its work. It has broadened our horizons and skills. It has increased our rights and our opportunities, and it has expanded our service to one another and to the community. As our voice at the United Nations Organisation, it presents to that world body information and opinions obtained from our Affiliates worldwide. It enjoys Category 1, Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It also has Consultative Status with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the Board of the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Labour Office, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation and the World Health Organisation. It works closely with the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Council of Europe and other specialised agencies.

As we come to the end of another Candle Lighting Ceremony, let us light the last candle

– the candle of the FUTURE (light the last candle).

As we light this candle, let us reaffirm our aim to go forward with faith, with courage, and with enthusiasm, to take our place in economic, social and political fields of endeavour, helping us to bring into being a world of social justice for all, and the peace to which all humanity aspires.

Follow the ceremony with the INTERNATIONAL COLLECT

The International Collect

Keep us O Lord from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word and deed.

Let us be done with fault finding and leave off self seeking.

May we put away all pretence and meet each other face to face, without self pity and without prejudice.

Let us take time for all things: make us grow calm, serene and gentle.

Teach us to put into action our better impulses straightforward and unafraid.

Grant that we may realize that it is the little things that create differences; that in the big things of life we are one.

And may we strive to touch and know the great human heart common to us all, and O Lord God let us not forget to be kind.

La Prière Internationale

Gardez-nous, Seigneur, de toute mesquinerie; que nous soyons larges en pensée, en parole et en action.

Que nous ne trouvions pas à redire et abandonnons tout intérêt personnel. Que nous laissions de côté nos prétentions et que nous nous rencontrions face à face sans nous apitoyer sur nous-mêmes et sans préjugés.

Que nous ne fassions pas des jugements hâtifs et que nous soyons toujours généreuses dans nos jugements.

Laissez-nous prendre le temps pour toutes choses : faites que nous devenions calmes, sereines et douces.

Apprenez-nous à mettre en pratique nos meilleures initiatives, honnêtement et sans peur.

Faites que nous nous rendions compte que ce sont uniquement les petites choses de la vie qui provoquent les différences et que dans les grandes nous avançons à l'unisson.

Et puissions-nous déployer nos efforts pour toucher et connaître le grand cœur humain, commun à nous toutes ; et, Seigneur, faites que nous n'oublions pas d'être bonnes.

La Plegaria Internacional

Líbranos, Señor, de toda mezquindad, ayúdanos a ser magnánimas en pensamiento, palabra y acción.

Que no busquemos defectos en otros y que dejemos de ser egoístas.

Ayúdanos a desechar toda pretensión y a enfrentarnos cara a cara, sin ser auto compasivas y sin tener prejuicios.

A no juzgar apresuradamente y a ser siempre generosas.

Deja que nos demos tiempo para todo: haz que seamos tranquilas, serenas y amables.

Enséñanos a poner en práctica nuestras mejores iniciativas, honestamente y sin temor.

Ayúdanos a darnos cuenta de que son las pequeñas diferencias las que provocan desacuerdos; que en las grandes cosas de la vida estamos unidas.

Y esforcémonos para alcanzar y conocer el gran corazón humano común a todas; y, Señor, haz que no nos olvidemos de ser bondadosas.

La preghiera internazionale

Allontana da noi, o Signore, ogni meschinità, aiutaci ad essere magnanime nel pensare, parlare e agire.

Fa che superiamo gli interessi personali senza rilevare i difetti degli altri.

Fa che abbandoniamo le nostre pretese e ci incontriamo a viso aperto senza vittimismo e senza pregiudizi.

Fa che non giudichiamo astiosamente e siamo sempre comprensive.

Facci trovare il tempo per ogni cosa, e che possiamo essere calme, serene ed amabili.

Insegnaci a tradurre in azione i nostri propositi con lealtà e coraggio. Fa che ci rendiamo conto che sono le piccole cose a creare differenze fra noi, ma che nelle grandi cose della vita siamo unite.

E fa che possiamo arrivare a toccare e conoscere il grande cuore umano comune a tutti noi e, Signore, non farci dimenticare mai di essere generose.