

(soft organ music) (faint voice talking) (soft organ music)

- Beloved, let us now bow our heads, for our prayer of confession to Almighty God. Our Heavenly Father we are contrite in heart, as we pause now to make our confessions before thee. Thou knowest our hearts better than we know them, and yet, in spite of that we still need to express our sins in thy presence and with one another. To acknowledge that we have fallen far short, that we have not beaten our swords into plowshares nor our spears into pruning hooks. Nation still lifts up sword against nation, mankind still yearns to make war. We who call ourselves by thy name do not act as though we love our neighbors as ourselves, and we are more careful to protect our pride than we are to protect our character, and we admit this now in thy presence. We often expect of thee the impossible O' God. We have not been poor in spirit and yet we assume we shall enter the kingdom of heaven. We have not been very meek, and yet we act as though we expect to inherit the earth. We have not been merciful, but even now we are bold enough to ask for mercy. We have not been pure in heart and still we wonder why we do not see God, and we put the blame on thee O' Father, for being so hard to find, and sometimes say that thou hast died or are absent or have gone away. We often are unwilling to endure persecution for righteousness sake, and yet we claim the kingdom of heaven, but now our father in thy presence, we are aware of how wrong it all seems, how foolish and illogical, how we have estranged ourselves from thee, but we find grace in our hearts prompting us to repent and to seek thy forgiveness. Grant us more grace now that we may amend our ways, and live godly lives for thy name's honor and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. The scriptures comfort us with a question, who is like unto God, who forgives sin and pardons our inequity? The answer implied of course is that there is no one who is like God in this respect, for He alone it is, who is completely pure and sinless and totally love and therefore able to forgive. Our hope lies in the assurance that He is this and that He does that. So be it, and now let us hear the reading of the word of God from the Old Testament.

- The Old Testament scripture reading will be taken from Exodus 3:1-6. "Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb the mountain of God, and the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush and he looked and lo the bush was burning and yet it was not consumed, and Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses," and he said, "Here am I." Then God said, "Do not come near, put off your shoes from your feet for the place in which you are standing is holy ground." and he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." and Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God." (soft organ music)

- We are accustomed to substitution, when the football team is on the field and the game is being played, but occasionally is necessary to make substitutions on account of the team having been on the field when the team is going to give leadership in the service of worship in chapel. We're happy to have all of you here today for this service designed by and for primarily our football squad and Bob Morris our center was to

have read the New Testament lesson today, but he was clouded pretty firmly on the nose yesterday in practice and this morning sounds as though he has a very deep and heavy cold and for that reason is not reading our New Testament lesson which is Luke 13, beginning with the 22nd verse. "Jesus went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem, and someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are going to be saved be few?" He said to them, "Strive to enter by the narrow door, for many I tell you will seek to enter and will not be able, but once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying, "Lord, open to us." He will answer you, "I did not know where you come from." Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank and your presence and you taught in our streets." but he would say, "I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me all you workers of inequity." Then you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. Man we'll come from the east and from the west and from the north and the south and we'll sit at table in the kingdom of God, and behold some who are last, will be first. Some who are first, will be last." Amen. (soft organ music) It has been traditional in the September preseason football practice times to have at the second one of our two services, a brief presentation of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. This is as most of you know a national organization. The president of this national organization, this year now for the second year in a row has been Mr. William D. Murray, who lives in Durham, former head football coach at Duke University, and now executive secretary of the American Football Coaches Association. Many of America's greatest names in athletics, of all kinds of athletics, amateur and professional are among not only the members but the leaders of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. We have a group here at Duke. The president of it is Nader Beydoun and he will be the second one to give a brief report this morning. The one who will give the first report is another member of our FCA here at Duke, who along with Nader Beydoun attended one of the now numerous national conferences of the FCA which were held this past summer. About 11 years ago, the FCA began with one small national conference in the summer and it now has 13 large national conferences. One of which was attended by these two fine young members of our football team. Wes Chesson will make the first report, and this will be followed by a report from Nader Beydoun.

- As Chaplin Wilson said Nader and I were fortunate enough this summer to attend the Fellowship of Christian Athletes conference at Black Mountain, North Carolina. I had heard for many years about these conferences, but due to various things popping up during the summer, I was unfortunate enough not to be able to attend until this past summer. One of the main advantages of these conferences is the opportunity you have to meet athletes from all over the country. There were boys there for Florida, Alabama, Texas and many other parts of the United States. I was fortunate enough to become friends and get to know many of the football players from the University of North Carolina and the University of South Carolina, and I think one of the main advantages of getting to know these guys is being able to sit down at these conferences and just talk about religious aspects and everyday problems and you could relate to boys that you knew who had the same problems you did and the same interest and the same ideas, and these were very worthwhile and very meaningful. Another part of the conference was the athletic competition and due to number of athletes that were there from many schools, high schools and colleges throughout the nation, the competition was very keen and there was plenty of athletic work going on at the end of the day you knew you found some good competition. The most important beneficial aspect of the conference, was the religious experience that one had there. The leaders and the speakers who were at the conference, were just

tremendous as they spoke of Christ in their life, what He had meant in the course of events during their life and the experience they had, led one to look into his own life and find meaning and importance and just what Christ meant to him. When the conference was over, I looked back on it and I really hated to leave Black Mountain. It had been such a good week and I was looking forward to the opportunity of going again, and I think it's an experience which I shall never forget. and one I'm looking forward to again, perhaps this coming summer.

- The very first chance I had to attend a FCA conference was last January when I went out to Estes Park, Colorado. When I came back from that conference, I was pretty much inspired and I thought it was a very meaningful experience that I had no idea what a tremendous impact and experience like that could have on one's life so I attended another one, the one that Wes and I went to last June. It was one of a little greater capacity. I thought it was bigger and it was more well organized and all. There were about 500 or five to 600 athletes there from high school and college and they divided us up into about 28 huddle groups. Wes and I were the huddle leaders of our respective groups and these groups we would sit down and we would discuss, share each other's ideas and each other's thoughts about our spiritual life and you know, other phases of our life. These groups also serve like Wes said as our teams to create a kind of competition to take up our time during the day when we would have... And then later on at night we had the speakers and there were many famous celebrities there and professional athletes that spoke to us and this was very inspiring. I think they realized, the people who run the conference, I think they realized that there is a vacuum created in an athlete's life that only the competition could fill, whereas they made us realize I think that there is another vacuum that is created in a person's spiritual life, that as they put it running the great race of faith could fill. At the end of the conference, I think the most... The thing that stands out in my mind the most, was the very last meeting that we held, and the speaker at that meeting was a fellow by the name of Dr. Lauren Young. Many of you probably heard of him before because he is a Duke alumnus and ex track star here. We hope to have him speak at one of the FCA meetings sometime this fall. We hope as early as possible and I can't express how much I feel for this man, how much he has impressed me and the only thing I could do is just urge you, if at all possible to try and hear this man speak sometime. (soft organ music)

- The Lord be with you,

- And with your spirit.

- Let us pray.

- Almighty God, our heavenly father, we bless and justify thy holy name, for the gift of thy most dearly beloved son Jesus Christ our redeemer, and for all His apostles, prophets, martyrs, evangelists, teachers and pastors, whom He had sent below unto the world, for thy holy church universal, the ministry of the laity and the ministry of the ordained, we do give the hearty thanks, for the privilege which each one of us has, bearing witness to the saving grace of our Lord, we express our gratitude. We thank thee for life, for measure of health, for friends, for food, for clothing and for all the purposes of Christ which gives meaning to these earthly goods, we make our prayer of thanks in Jesus name, amen.

- God of our fathers, as we are acquire here in this place of worship, and in this time of worship, we ask for the fulfillment of our spiritual needs and of our physical needs. We have come to ask thee to be to us, what our fathers and grandfathers, and all of our forefathers, have testified that thou has been to them. For we too are a generation tossed about, by new storms, old uncertainties, great needs and challenges, frontiers, we need in our situation a basic security, which can come only from thee. In our day we long for justice, for order, for brotherhood and for peace. We need the strength to endure. We need strength to endure an athletic contest in trials of patients, in times of temptation and when leadership is demanded and is expected of us. Those who have gone before us as coaches and as teachers, as prophets, evangelists, scripture writers have said, that thou has been to them a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, That thou it's laid down actually. That thy word was a lamp under their feet and a light onto their path. O' God be that to us. We too are pilgrims and pioneers not able to predict even the end of this day, much less the end of our journey. Not knowing what we shall encounter along the way. O' God of the pilgrims and pioneers, lead us in paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake. Lead us in the paths of progress, of sane order and of peace and help us in our time and in our own place to see the burning bush and to know its meaning. Give us the grace to have the reverence which Moses had. Our fathers have said O' God that thou hast also been to them a friend. Their unseen companion in the journey. In whom they could confide and trust. Be that to us. Give us grace to make it possible for thee, to be that to us, for we to need friendship. While we bless thy name for earthly friends some of whom sit beside us here in chapel, others of whom roam with us, some are at home, all of whom by their care and beauty to our lives. Nevertheless we find a need to know a friendship beyond the earthly. To feel the everlasting arms beneath us and even to speak unto thee, as a man speaks with a friend. O' God as we think of our university this morning, of our city, our nation, of our whole world, we're driven to ask for the grace, which Christian faith offers. All of the graces which it offers. We need light. We have asked for and received thy forgiveness. We stand in need of love, of fairness, as we ponder the unrest in our own land and in the world, we pray for the forgiveness of those who incite trouble by their hot words. We pray for the forgiveness of those who incite trouble by their cold attitudes. Those who incite riots by in plain speech and those who incite riots by their greedy unconcern. Forgive give all of them O' God and forgive us, for our involvement. Help us to change what we can change in our time. What cannot be changed, help us to accept, and give us wisdom to know the difference. As we think of our sick, our confused, our poor, our lonely, our defeated, our orphans, we remember again, the testimony of our forefathers that thou has been to them, in those times, a savior, a great position, a healer, a heavenly father, a friend, be that now to us today, we ask in Christ's name, remembering thee words thee has taught us to use in prayer. Our father who art in heaven,

- Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.  
(soft organ music)

- Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, for Lord our strength and our redeemer, amen. It was last year when coach Hart asked if I would speak at our football Sunday service, in the chapel this September, and I agreed. It was 10 days ago when the chaplain asked me if I would speak this Sunday. I agreed on one condition. It would have to be an old sermon. This past week

was the week that was, he agreed. Now it is an old sermon, it has been preached at Duke on the 28th of September 1947, on the 26th of November 1950, on the 26th of April 1957, on the 1st of March 1964, and now on the 15th of September 1969, and I would be embarrassed to tell you, in her many other pulpits, in America and overseas, confession is good for the soul but it's bad for the reputation. (congregation laughing) And I want to tell you before I get to it why I choose this particular sermon. I call it the Jack Kuhn's sermon. Now that name may not mean much to the athletes who are here at Duke just now, but to you older people who've been connected Duke it's a name you will never forget. I think he was a native of Maine. He certainly behaved like a Maniac. He graduated from Colby College with Latin, Greek and Mathematics in his degree, not because he wanted it, but that's what a BA carried in those days. Latin, Greek and math. He graduated early in the century and a week later pitched his first game, for the Philadelphia athletics. On the 1st of September, 1906 he pitched and won a 24 in game against the Red Soxs. For one, you think they might've scored those three earlier for them, but they didn't. I think it's the longest game ever pitched by one person in the American league, the national league has equally it. In 1910, he pitched 13 shutouts and 12 one run games. In a world series he beat the Chicago Cubs three times in five days. I think he's the first man to have won three games in a world series. He came to Duke to coach in 1929 from Princeton and lived on the campus. The last entries you go toward the gymnasium, last entry on the right with his wife from everybody knew as Ms. Mary. She was Roman Catholic and he was a quacker. So he drove her down to mass and then sat outside the Catholic church and listened in on the Duke service, and he was a refashioned sermon christian, at least of my sermons I remember one Monday when I met him he said...

(Man grunting) and I said all right, what was wrong. He said, 'You won the game, but you didn't start hitting till there were two out in the eighth. You know one of those sermons where nothing happens for the last three minutes. I said to him, "Well, you're a lousy coach." He said "What do you mean?" I said, "I wasn't hitting. I was pitching." He believed that I preached only one good sermon, and this is it. It's a sermon on Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he pretended he couldn't remember their names and called it that Tom Dick and Harry sermon, and two weeks after he died, I preached it here. He died in the 15th of April, 1957 and the sermon Patty's inscription, now this sermon is dedicated to Jack coach Kuhns who died the 15th of April, 1957, age 74. I was coaching in those days, coaching the soccer team and we became good friends, We stayed great friends, and this is his sermon and I thought since it was athletic Sunday, I bring it to you once again. Now if any of you have heard it before and remember it, will you just tip toe out quietly or will you sleep quietly? Let the rest hear it. The sermon began when I was sitting back there during the summer, strange summer. I was here the whole time and I worshiped for 10 Sundays in succession in the Duke chapel and preached on but one of the Sundays, and so back there where the technician controls the voice, I sat for nine Sundays. I had a worm's eye view of the congregation instead of a bird's-eye view, and I was amazed at the attitude of some folk and surprised that the behavior of others, careless, slovenly, lackadaisical, casual. They were just not church broken and for some reason, certain words of scripture kept running through my mind. I'm the God of Abraham, God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. Now why should the persons beside me in the name of the Duke chapel and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and their God have joined hands in the stream of my consciousness? Why was there such an association of ideas? Well let's look at these three venerable patriarchs. See if they can supply a reason. They lived before the dawn of reputable history, these three ancestors of the Jews. They lived in the fertile crescent, that inhabit the protection of land that swings up the Tigris, Euphrates rivers, crossed the mountains of Armenia, down through Syria and Palestine, across the Sinai desert into Egypt. They are a father, a son, and a grandson. Three figures whom history may claim

as genuine but up whom legend has taken possession. They're pictured for us by storytellers, by poets and as a result they are as alive today as they were in their own time. Let me make the thumbnail sketches of them. Abraham was a pioneer, a man of itching feet. I don't mean by that athlete's foot, no, no. Just a man who broke trails for others to follow. He never hungered for a fight but he did do battle, and that right well on occasion. As it was said of one character in Homer's "Odyssey", when he greatly thought he nobly dared, that might be said of Abraham. He was a soul of generosity, a kind hearted man, nothing mean about him. Think of his treatment of his nephew Lot. He took possession of the land not by age, by position, Abraham had the right to the first choice, but he gave the first choice to Lot. I don't know what you would have done, but I know what I'd have done. I had done what the Lot did, choose the best land and Abraham let him have it. He's known in the Bible as the friend of God. Now wouldn't you think that would be a common phrase in the Bible? To my best knowledge it's used only of Abraham, the friend of God, and when Paul, Saint Paul tried to think of a man of faith, he chose Abraham. That's Abraham then, a pioneer, of a soul of generosity a devoutly religious man, God was at the center of his life. I am the God of Abraham. Isaac was the son of Abraham and a very different person. He was a stay at home. He had only two adventures in his life. One when he found his wife, one when he almost lost her, and that was enough for Abraham. He went home and stayed put. He had an infinite capacity for sitting still. He's the first pacifist in the Bible. Think of it in the incident of the wells. He dug a well for his tribesmen. Another tribe moved in and said this is our well and he said all right. He dug a second, other tribes moved in and claimed it, he said all right. He dug a third well and when nobody moved in, he called it Rehoboth, very well. He was dominated by everyone, his father overshadowed him, his wife hand picked him and his younger son cheated him, but it never upset Isaac. He had the mildest manners and the gentlest heart and as you might guess, he was a religious conservative. He did nothing exciting for God. He worshiped his father's God, he was brought up that way. That's Isaac then, a stay at home, a gentle soul, a religious conservative, I am the God of Isaac. Jacob was the son of Isaac and a very different person from his father. He was quite the political economist, called an entrepreneur, which is a highfalutin word for businessman. Jacob was the first trader of the old Testament, but the very helm of the Bible. He even tried to get God into a partnership by offering Him 10% of the gross receipts if God would do all the work. Now that's something. I always hope that isn't the basis of the tie. He was skimming, ambitious, self seeking, yet he was steady, consistent. He got what he wanted. He was also a rascal. Now this is a different point from businessman. He was a businessman and a rascal. He cheated this father, he defrauded his brother, he tricked his uncle. His motto might well have been, if the wattle will be gold, let it be gold and I'll help. If I had to meet Jacob, I'd leave my pocket book and my watch at home, because after I met him I wouldn't have them. I don't know how he'd get them, but he'd get them. That's a tribute from a Scott to a Jew. (congregation laughing) And he was a man of religious sensitivity. Two of the most beautiful stories in the Bible about the relationship between heaven and earth, are told of Jacob. Jacob's ladder at Bethel and that tremendous scene where he wrestles with the spirit of God and refuses to let go until God blesses him and God says, "If I bless you, I shall lame you.". He said, "Lame me but bless me." He walked lame the rest of his life but he walked with a new name. A name that has come down to the present, Israel. That's Jacob, a businessman and a rascal. A man religious sensitivity, I'm the God of Jacob. Three very different men. Pioneer, pacifist, a rascal. If you had to put football jerseys on them what colors would you use? Crimson for Abraham since red's in bad repute. Neutral gray, very neutral, for Isaac. He's far enough back you'd never see it. Jacob all black and white or turn that not like a soccer Jersey. Now we you notice this fact, it's the one fact I want you to carry away. These three different men had the same God, and the

same God had these three different men. They were all religious. Abraham devoutly so, Isaac conservatively so, Jacob sensitively so on occasion. I who I'm the God of Abraham, the adventurer, I'm also the God of Isaac that gentle man and believe it or not of Jacob, that lovable old rascal. Do you grasp now why that text kept hunting me, as I looked around at my fellow worshipers in the Duke chapel. Abraham sat over there. Isaac sat over here. Jacob sat all over the chapel. I wasn't thinking of three historic characters emboldened in the early pages of Genesis. I was thinking of men and women, yes women too, worshiping around me in the 20th century, a 20th century Abraham, male and female, a 20th century Isaac, male and female, a 20th century Jacob, male and female. I was thinking of you and your brother and his wife and all the cousins and the uncles and the aunts all worshiping the one God, I am still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There have always been Abraham's in the church. Thank God for them. They are the spiritual pioneers, men and women who run interference for God. Build roads between heaven and earth, challenge legislatures in the name of God, in perfect spiritual truth for men's welfare and the amazing thing is, the church has always found them. That's Paul cleaving through the narrowness of Judaistic Christianity and giving us a heritage of freedom. There's Luther loving the Roman Catholic church, but having to oppose it again for the sake of freedom. There's John Wesley, finding a middle way he possibly could between the stodgy Episcopalians and the arthritic Presbyterians, and didn't go right down and not all Abrahams are clergyman. They are layman, man and women. They want the church and the city and the country which has foundations whose builder and maker is God, and still the God of Abraham. They've always been Isaacs in the church but God fought it. They are good followers men and women who are not much use except in the ranks, but they are the ranks, but not well known individually because they're so numerous collectively. They sing in the choir, the person next to them has a good voice and can carry on They're better ushers than they are deacons. They wait tables, they carry chairs, they are never in the limelight. I can give you a unique example from my own church in Scotland. We had a choir that was utterly unique. It was so bad we came to hear it every Sunday wondering what can it do this Sunday? And it always did something. Every Sunday was a new high and low, and we just sat in thaw, in trans amused and then one day, a man who was over 18, I don't remember his name, we just called him old Archie, left his pew near the back and came down the aisle with his hymnbook, shaken as he walked and joined the choir to help. and so embarrassed the congregation, that we fired the organist, got hold of a new choir and three years from that date, won first place, for a choir in a church. with a membership under 1000 in the Glasgow Musical Festival. Isaac did it, not Abraham, not Jacob, Isaac over 18, God used him and there has always been Jacobs in the church, and I believe we can say thank God for that. Most folk are like him, spiritual mixtures. How can I be generous, rascally and religious, cheeking and kind. You think of Saint Augustine, the great father of the church and also father of an illegitimate child. Now he wasn't one because he was the other, but he was both, Jacob. John Newton so wild and dissolute as a youth that he left England for Africa because there was more room to sin. Became an officer in the slave ship, became a slave. Was converted, turned his life around and became the second founder of the Episcopal church, and we sing his hymns. Glorious things of the unspoken, Zion city of our God. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ears. Did you notice what Jesus said to the Jews in the New Testament lesson, that they'd be shut out of the kingdom, and what big watch was men and women coming from the north from the south from the east and the west, that is non Jews and sitting down in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So to be children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, isn't a matter of genealogical pedigree, it's a matter of the spirit. So make up your mind what you are. Are you an Abraham? Pioneer, God needs you to be up front for Him. Are you an Isaac? Quiet person, God needs you, why? To

consolidate the gains that Abraham makes. Are you a Jacob? God needs you, why? Because he needs heads, as well as hearts. When he'll ask you to put that head under the control of love because you see religion at its best is not a song sung in unison, it's a song sung in harmony, which is more difficult and much richer. It's the harmony of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob under the baton of the same God for He's still the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Let us pray. O' thou who art the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we blessed thy holy name in great thankfulness, that thou art still the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, amen. (soft organ music)