The American Association of Interchurch Families cordially invites you to register to attend their next Biennial Conference with them at The Holy Wisdom Monastery of the Benedictine Women of Madison, Wisconsin, located at Middleton, Wisconsin Friday July 9 through and including Sunday, July 11, 2010

Registration materials for this conference will be posted at www.aifusa.org and later in this newsletter.

Pages 2, 3 & 4: General Information about the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference

Pages 6-10: Registration forms for the 2010 AAIF Conference. Please fill in Pages 9 & 10, then mail them back with your check to AAIF’s treasurer.

Pages 11-13: 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, A Discussion of The Nature of Love for Interchurch Marriages

Pages 14-16: AAIF City Chapters to Begin “Listening Project” ~ Our Lives as Interchurch Families: Finding Balance in Our Lives as Interchurch Families

Pages 17-18: Interchurch Families in the world at large; Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice

Page 19: Benedictine Oblates Retreat: GROW and The Jesus Prayer, a book review

Pages 20-21: Meet AAIF’s New Board

Page 22: AAIF is officially affiliated with IFIN: Interchurch Families International Network ~ sharing the same mission & voice

Page 22: Acknowledgements to contributors
American Association of the Interchurch Families

AAIF Goes to Holy Wisdom Monastery
Benedictine Women of Madison

National Conference
Friday July 9 – Sunday July 11
2010
Middleton, Wisconsin
(just outside Madison, Wisconsin)

Gather with us

As we again share our stories of living out our faiths in family and church settings

and listen

to the experiences and wisdom of pastors and lay ministers working with interfaith families in the Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago areas.

Learn

of the remarkable journey of the Benedictine Women of Madison who have woven Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds together in bold strokes. They have developed a community of 110 oblates and built a ecumenical gathering space that has been certified as the “greenest building in the U.S.”

Sister Mary David Walgenbach
Sister Joanne Kollasch
Sister Lynne Smith
Father George Kilcourse

Continued on the next page
Pray with us
As we are invited to join the sisters in monastic morning and evening prayer
And also on Sunday morning for a larger community assembly.

Walk with us
Step out your door and walk the nature trails that surround Holy Wisdom Monastery. Walk the trails through the restored wildflower prairies, around Lost Lake, through the oak woods, and around the sisters’ vegetable garden and orchard.

Meditate with us
-on the beauty of God’s creation
- the taking care of that creation
- extending hospitality in the Benedictine tradition as we live out our mission as interchurch families

Continued on the next page
Continued from the previous page

Weaving prayer, hospitality and care of the earth into a shared way of life.

-Vision statement
Benedictine Women of Madison

Rooms with a double bed and a private bath are available at the monastery. Also a block of rooms will be reserved at a nearby motel in Middleton. (5 minutes away). Meals at the conference can be pre-ordered and special dietary needs can be accommodated. Those living in nearby areas are invited to attend any or all of the meetings and meals. Reservations for the meals are necessary and reservations for the meetings are greatly appreciated but not necessary.

The Milwaukee airport is a pleasant 1 ½ hour drive away. Before and after the conference there will be opportunities to explore this interesting Middleton/Madison area. We are hoping to offer a naturalist guided hike of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, a cruise on Lake Mendota and a tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed civic center and the Unitarian Church.

Continued on page 12, after the registration materials
HOLY WISDOM MONASTERY
4200 County Highway M
Madison Wisconsin 53705

Located on 35 acres of rolling prairies (restored by the Benedictine Community)

¼ mile from Lake Mendota and Governor Nelson State Park
(hiking, swimming, picnicking, fishing and boating)

1 mile from Middleton, Wisconsin
(2007 Best Place to Live in America)

10 minutes to downtown Madison
vibrant with art and culture.
Register Now!  Save money by registering early.

- Use these work sheets to figure out your fees, interests and room rates.
- Then complete, tear out and mail in the registration form at the end of the registration section of this newsletter. (Begin here, complete and mail in pages 10 and 11 with your signed check before May 1, 2010.)

REGISTRATION FEES: Number Total $
Family/Couple = $60 ($50 if paid by 5/01/10)________(Families/couples) $______________
Individual Attendeees = $35 ($30 if paid by 5/01/10) __________(persons) $______________
Total Registration Fee (Non-Refundable) $______________

AAIF DUES: BEFORE MAY 1, 2010 AFTER MAY 1, 2010
Family/Couple $25 $30
Individual $15 $20
Your AAIF Dues Total (based on the postmark of your dues envelope and your category from above) = $______________

- No limit to family size! All children are welcome! Child care/ Activities provided! Kid friendly food!
- A Formal Agenda will be placed on the AAIF website soon
- Please print a note indicating any transportation, dietary or other special needs on a separate page and mail then in with your registration forms and your registration check so that AAIF Conference Planners can arrange to accommodate your needs during the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference. We will do all that is possible to accommodate your needs.

MAKE YOUR PLANS TO ATTEND THE 2010 AAIF BIENNIAL CONFERENCE NOW! www.aifusa.org
Conference Meal/Food Order Worksheet for All 2010 AAIF Conference Attendees

Food: All meals will be catered and provided where we will be meeting. The meals to be provided will be: Friday - Supper; Saturday - Lunch & Supper; Sunday - Lunch. Continental Breakfast and snacks will be provided at various times throughout the conference. Please fill out Section A or B below:

SECTION A: The Total Meal Package will be $44 per person. (Children under 7 - free)
_______ # of Total Meal Packages X $44 = $___________ (Amount Due By May 1, 2010)

SECTION B: Should you not be able to attend the entire conference, or need to miss meals, do not purchase the Total Meal Package (above). Instead, select form the following individual meal pricing below (beverages provided with each meal):

Friday Supper - _________ # X $13 = $___________
Saturday Lunch - _________ # X $9 = $___________
Saturday Supper - _________ # X $13 = $___________
Sunday Lunch - _________ # X $9 = $___________

Food Amount total due on or before May 1, 2010 ~ Thanks!

Total Food Order Amount Summary from this page:
Section A_______ # of Total Meal Packages X $44 = $___________
Section B - Total $ amount for all individual meals ordered = $___________

Your total $ amount for food ordered = $___________

Meals begin at Friday July 9th Supper and end at Sunday July 11, 2010 lunch.
(Only select meal plan A or B per person, not both. Please enter this total on page 9.)

Be sure to let us know the ages of your children and any dietary restrictions you may have when you send in your registration forms. Thank you!
AAIF CONFERENCE AT
HOLY WISDOM MONASTERY
NEARBY ROOMS AND LODGING INFORMATION
ROOM BLOCKS FOR JULY 9 - 11, 2010

Arrangements have been made with the following hotels to offer a limited number of guest rooms at a reduced rate for July 8 through July 12, 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>These blocks of rooms available for reservations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country Inn and Suites 2 Queen</td>
<td>Middleton</td>
<td>608-831-6970</td>
<td>$82.00</td>
<td>until 6/08/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2212 Deming Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Inn 1 King</td>
<td>Middleton</td>
<td>608-831-1400</td>
<td>$89.00</td>
<td>until 6/08/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8812 Greenway Blvd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtyard by Marriot King and pullout</td>
<td>Middleton</td>
<td>608-203-0100</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>until 6/08/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2266 Deming Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES

• Contact each hotel directly at the telephone number above to make reservations. Ask for the “AAIF” block of rooms. You may want to compare these room rates with other internet or special offers to confirm the best available room rate.

• Only a limited number of rooms are available at each hotel for our group at these reduced rates. The hotel will release any remaining rooms in each of these blocks to the general public after the date noted above.

• Rates will apply for the day before or the day after the conference.

Please note: If you plan to come early or to stay late at Holy Wisdom Monastery either before or after the AAIF 2010 Biennial Conference, you will need to make those arrangements before arriving, please contact:

Debby Del Ciello, Director Guest Services, Holy Wisdom Monastery; 608-831-9303; ddelciello@benedictinewomen.org or

Gloria Krysiak, Guest Services Coordinator, Holy Wisdom Monastery; 608-836-1631, x 101; gkrysiak@benedictinewomen.org
Print up this page of the registration form. Fill in all the information below and mail this page along with page 10 and your check, made payable to AAIF. Send them to the AAIF Treasurer before May 1, 2010 to save money. Please let AAIF Conference Planners know if you have any special dietary needs or other needs. We will try to accommodate you.

The ARK, a Publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families

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**Group Trips:** Please make reservations for group trips in advance, but fees will be collected when you arrive at the Monastery. Check the box and indicate the number of individuals, and in which trips you are if you are interested:

- [ ] # Friday 11:30 - 1:00
  Naturalist-led easy hike into Pheasant Branch Conservancy to observe various ecosystems of the area (FREE - but reservations necessary).

- [ ] # Sunday Afternoon 12:00 - 4:00
  Tour of Frank Lloyd Wright designed buildings ($10.00 per person).

- [ ] # Sunday Afternoon 1:00 - 4:00
  Transportation to Art Fair on Madison Square (FREE - but reservations helpful).

- [ ] # Sunday Evening 6:00 - 9:00
  Buffet Dinner and chartered boat tour of Lake Mendota. $39 Adults and $25 children. Must have 20 to reserve boat.

**Lodging at Monastery**

Payment due upon arrival at the Monastery. A limited number of rooms are available at the Holy Wisdom Monastery. (Double and Single with private bath.) First come, first serve. The motels listed are about 5 minutes away. Shuttle service will be provided. All meals will be served at the Monastery.

- [ ] # I prefer a room at the Monastery.
- [ ] # Single ($50.00 a person)
- [ ] # Double ($62 per couple)

- [ ] # I would like to add a night at the Monastery Thursday prior to the conference.
  I will be arriving at _____ Thursday.

- [ ] # I would like to stay an extra night at the Monastery Sunday night.
  I will be leaving at _____ Monday.

- For those staying an extra day arrangements for food will be worked out with the Sisters.
- When all the rooms at the Monastery have been reserved there will be a notice on the website: www.aifusa.org. There will still be plenty of rooms available at the area hotels.
- To assist the Sisters in their planning at the Monastery, the food must be reserved by May 1st, 2010. Questions – e-mail Elizabeth Montgomery at eksm317@gmail.com or call 502-886-8896.
- Friday evening talks are open and free to the public, but registration is needed (eksm317@gmail.com). All other events require conference registration fee.
- Wisconsin wine and cheese reception to follow Friday evening's talk.

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- Housing/Lodging Fees at the Monastery and any costs for Group Trips from this page that you may sign up for will be collected when you arrive at the Monastery.
Print up this page of the registration form. Fill in all the information below and mail this page along with page 9 and your check, made payable to AAIF. Send them to the AAIF Treasurer before May 1, 2010 to save money. Please let AAIF Conference Planners know if you have any special dietary needs or other needs. We will try to accommodate you.

The ARK, a Publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families

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**Summary & Payment Page**

Please send this page in with your payment.

**NAME (1)**
**NAME (2)**
**NAME & AGES OF CHILDREN**

---

**ADDRESS**
**CITY/STATE/ZIP**
**PH**
**E-MAIL**

---

Please add pages if necessary with your minor children’s names and ages. Adult children (especially who are independent and married) should register separately as adults. We would like to encourage adult children raised in interchurch families to participate actively in our discussions.

- **Final page of the registration form.** This page and page 9 needs to be filled in and mailed to the AAIF Treasurer with your signed check. To save money, be sure to postmark your envelope before May 1, 2010.

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**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES**

- **Postmarked before May 1, 2010**
  - Family/Couple $50
  - Individual $30

- **Postmarked after May 1, 2010**
  - Family/Couple $60
  - Individual $35

**AAIF DUES**

- **Before May 1, 2010**
  - Family/Couple $25
  - Individual $15

- **After May 1, 2010**
  - Family/Couple $30
  - Individual $20

**FOOD:**

Please enter your food
Totals from the food section + 

Add the lines you have filled in above together to find your total = 

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECKS PAYABLE TO AAIF AND MAIL THEM TO:**
Elaine Hall, AAIF Treasurer
Georgetown University, P.O. Box 571250, Washington, D.C. 20057

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- **Housing/Lodging Fees at the Monastery and any costs for Group Trips that you may sign up for will be collected when you arrive at the Monastery.**

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February 2010 10  Volume: 21; Edition 1

International Standard Serial Number: ISSN 1943-6467 (print)
The Nature of Love for Interchurch Marriages

Based on 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13

Many of us had 1 Corinthians 13:4-13 read at our own interchurch weddings or we have heard it read at other weddings. Often we hear these verses read at interchurch weddings simply because interchurch weddings compose between 40 and 60 percent of all weddings in the United States. The law of averages indicates that we will be attending interchurch weddings. We hear these words repeated many times.

At a recent interchurch wedding, I was impressed with the homily that followed these verses, which I have copied here to remind us what the Bible verses actually say. But what do they mean for us in our married lives?

Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, (love) is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never fails.
If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing.
For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child;
when I became a man, I put aside childish things.
At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face.

Continued on the next page

Faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.
At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.
So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The following wedding homily is adapted from a sermon by Rev. Walter J. Burghardt, S.J.; “Two Become One in Christ...,” in “Connections,” page 6.

... but the greatest of these is love.

You chose for your wedding liturgy the apostle Paul’s famous meditation on love, from his first letter to the Corinthians. It’s a beautiful, poetic reflection on the nature of love, especially between a husband and wife. Paul’s picture of love is a wonderful ideal.

But if Paul were with us today, how might he make his homily a little less ideal and a little more real? What is love meant to be in today’s turbulent, demanding complex world of today--so far removed from the Corinth of antiquity?

Paul might say to married couples today:

"Love is patient despite the small things that get on your nerves--socks on the floor, grinding teeth, being kept waiting for dinner or use of the bathroom, for the symphony or a kickoff."

"Love is kind in the midst of disappointment and hurt. Love comforts when he is down, supports when she is overwhelmed."

"Love is not jealous or pompous--especially when you are right and the other is most definitely wrong. Love is not green-eyed, love does not hold grudges. Love does not smother, is not possessive, refuses to manipulate."

"Love remains humble and is grounded in gratitude for one another. Love manages to survive despite how selfish and boorish lovers can be at times."

Continued on the next page
Faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

“Love neither insists on ‘my way’ nor cops out with ‘you knew this about me before you married me.’ Love is not thin skinned nor does it go for the jugular. Love never takes the other for granted. Love finds its happiness in the joy of the other, its fulfillment in the dreams of the other. Love sees the world as ‘us’ and ‘our,’ not ‘me’ and ‘mine.’ Love lets go, encourages, comforts and consoles.”

“Love forgives. Love does not tolerate estrangement or division. You will fight, you will argue--but love will always compel you to take the first step toward healing and reconciliation.”

“Love does not rejoice in being right or smarter or more powerful. Love doesn’t care who brings home the bigger paycheck or who cooked dinner. Love only cares about the home you build together, and the blessings on your table.”

“Love always waits for the return of the other, no matter how long.”

“The bond of love will become stronger as age takes its toll on you both, as you worry about your security, as you fear for one another’s safety.”

“Such love never fails.”

God has given you the great gift of His love. It is a gift that is priceless, but a gift that demands a great deal from you if its value is to be realized in your new life together. May God be the Ever-present Guest at the wedding of your hearts. With God’s grace and wisdom embracing your spirits, may you live together in God’s love--especially when times are difficult. When today, your wedding day, is but a distant memory, when life becomes unbearably hard, when you hold each other for the last times, may love never fail you.”

Although a variation of this sermon was used at an interchurch wedding recently, I thought that all married couples or soon-to-be married couples, whether they are interchurch or not, would enjoy reading this message. Everyone who had attended the wedding felt inspired by it--enough to comment on what a great sermon it had been.

May love never fail you. May you seek out love and the path of love above all other paths as you go through your day. If anything the world needs more of, it is more love and this is where AAIF comes in. Let’s examine how this kind of love leads to hospitality and charity not only in our daily lives, but in the world beyond our homes.

~ Mary Jane Glauber
Finding Balance As Interchurch Families:
by Mary Jane Glauber

Dr. Dale V. Atkins recommends “10 Elements of Balance to incorporate into your everyday life to help you achieve and maintain a more even keel.” (“Finding Balance in Everyday Life,” June 2005). I would like to apply these values to our lived experience as interchurch families.

Connection with Others: “Put the effort into making all of your relationships healthy and satisfying. She encouraged us to create a loving family environment and to nurture rewarding friendships. Dr. Dale V. Atkins believes that “balance is the key to life.” Without this balance, she points out that life can become a challenge, and simple pleasures may fail to satisfy us. Without balance in our lives, we tend to have less energy, minor problems tend to weigh us down, and we may become less productive”.

“Without this balance,” Dr. Atkins notes, “Even our health can suffer if our normal sleeping and eating patterns change; we will also tire more easily.”

Restorative Sleep: Dr. Atkins suggests that we “Try to establish good sleeping patterns by going to bed and waking up the same time each day.” She suggests that we “try to relax before bedtime.” For the interchurch family with young children, finding ecumenically based books to read to our children at bedtime may be helpful for creating a quiet time for the family to be together.

Fulfilling and Meaningful Work: Dr. Atkins notes that “we all need a purpose in life, and she sees this as being “one of the most important things we can do,” whether it is our paid job or a volunteer job of serving others.” In Christian terminology, this fits in quite well with looking out for the needs of others as we serve our community’s needs.

Play and Laugh: Dr. Atkins notes that “Everyone needs to have some fun!” I have observed that there may be more than two obvious reasons for this. Play helps the family build bonds that may reach out into the community. It is from play that creativity is born so that new solutions can be found for age-old problems. In a happy frame of mind, people tend to be more open.

A Healthy Diet: Dr. Atkins points out that “Eating well is a lifestyle decision.” She notes that we should “Make healthy choices daily so you can avoid the dieting yo-yo track and get the full benefit from your food.” This may not come naturally to Americans, who are bombarded by television commercials and the availability of food that is anything but a healthy choice.

Exercise and Body Awareness: Dr. Atkins suggests that as Americans we should “Be active and find enjoyable ways to stay fit.” The key is that the activity should be enjoyable and consistent. This is done in balance with a healthy diet.

Communing with Nature: Dr. Atkins suggests that we “Get outdoors, breathe fresh air and enjoy the simple pleasures.” To get started, she suggests that “A day at the beach, gardening, or a walk in the park are easy ways to include nature in your life.” I would like to add that nature is God’s creation and that creation should be viewed with awe and wonder.

Continued on the next page
Intellectual Stimulation: Dr. Atkins suggests that we “Find people who are interesting to be with, take a class or read about topics that fascinate you.” I would add to this to consider attending the up-coming Biennial AAIF Conference. Check out the AAIF website at HYPERLINK “http://www.aifusa.org” www.aifusa.org for the dates, the location and for registration materials for this AAIF Conference. Speaking from personal experience, our family has found these conferences to be most inspirational and informative.

A Need for Unity and a Sense of Community: Dr. Atkins notes that “We all are part of a whole.” She suggests that we “Find ways to contribute toward the greater good. Volunteer for a worthy cause or charity.” I would suggest considering joining AAIF and becoming actively involved. Bring your special gifts and talents; AAIF appreciates and needs them. You are most welcome here.

Spirituality/Prayer/Meditation: Dr. Atkins encourages us to “Find inner quiet and peace through daily reflection. Develop your own spiritual relationship in a manner that is comfortable for you.” This is in keeping with AAIF thinking. We support interchurch families as they choose to live their interchurch marriage. We help them find resources. We recognize our inherent spiritual characteristics as human beings.

Dr. Dale V. Atkins adds, "REMEMBER to spend time with people who care about you and whom you care about; NOT with those who do not respect your values. DO NOT accept other people’s opinions of who you should be.” This issue comes up frequently for interchurch couples who many times are forging a different path from the path others may have wished for them. Christ Himself wished for Christian Unity; that is the path we should follow. It makes things straightforward, clear and simple for all Christians.

How the need for the “Listening Project” became apparent? Remote marriage preparation for the role that interchurch couples can and should be playing in Christian Unity has yet to be fully understood by the general public. Your shared interchurch family stories can help other interchurch couples in the future.

Continued on the next page

Make plans to join AAIF July 9 - July 11, 2010 in Madison, Wisconsin. Get out and enjoy nature with your family and AAIF! Go to www.aifusa.org for registration information. Please register early using the enclosed forms.
Interchurch Couples are by definition those couples who remain active in their respective church denominations after they are married. The spirituality they grew up with is maintained and nurtured within their interchurch marriage. During the time that my husband and I served as the National AAIF Co-Chairs, I received frequent requests from interchurch couples from across the United States for clear and correct information. These interchurch couples wanted to hear what had worked elsewhere as they sought solutions for their unique situations. AAIF does not and cannot offer blueprints that will work for every interchurch marriage everywhere; each marriage is unique. However, we can share our lived experiences. We can share accurate information. From this information, couples can make well-informed decisions and be nurtured.

I have noticed that, for the most part, it was the wife or the bride-to-be who reached out first; although the husband and groom-to-be also eagerly wanted this same information. Perhaps men reach out in different ways. These women often expressed a desire to meet face-to-face with other interchurch couples in their area who may have experienced similar things, but who may be a bit further along on their interchurch journey. After reading Dr. Atkins’ article on “Finding Balance in Everyday Life,” I recognized that there was even a greater need for interchurch couples/families to feel validated.

**Listening Sessions:** AAIF has established City Chapters for the purpose of allowing couples to gather so that they can share correct information informally. The ARK, the publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families, will be sponsoring “listening sessions” in our AAIF City Chapters between March 2010 and June 2012. If you are interested in creating a City Chapter in your area, please join AAIF. Membership Forms can be found at the AAIF website www.aifusa.org. If you would like to help to organize your local AAIF City Chapter, please contact Laura and Franz Green at aaif.co.chair@gmail.com If you would like discussion group guidelines for the ARK-sponsored “AAIF Listening Project,” please contact mglauber@gmail.com attention: ARK Listening Project

Dale V. Atkins, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist who has more than twenty-five years of experience as a relationship expert, focusing on families, couples, parenting, aging well, managing stress and maintaining balance in one’s life. An author of several books, articles and journals for popular and professional audiences, Dr. Atkins is a much sought after lecturer and keynote speaker as well as a recurrent guest expert in the media. She frequently appears on NBC-TV’s “Today Show.” Dr. Atkins has a private practice in New York City. For a copy of her complete article, “Finding Balance in Everyday Life,” June 2005, please see: http://www.drdaleatkins.com/archives/sanitysavers/05-sanity06.php http://www.drdaleatkins.com/archives/sanitysavers/05-sanity06.php
Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice
A Place to Call Home, Immigrants, Refugees and Displaced Peoples
March 19-22, 2010
Washington, DC

Sponsored by National Council of Churches and Church World Service

Register on line at  "http://www.advocacydays.org"

Experts will train participants on policy issues and advocacy, culminating on Monday with Lobby visits on Capitol Hill. Friday’s opening session will begin at 6:30 P.M. Saturday and Sunday: Plenary sessions and workshops issue briefings and advocacy training; Workshops focusing on Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Middle East, the U.S., Eco-Justice, Global Economic Justice and Peace & Global Security; Common Time for ecumenical worship and denominational fellowship; Lobby Day preparation.

Conference registration fees before February 19th are $160 per person. Student scholarships are available at scholarships @ advocacydays.org. Consider making a donation so that students can attend. After February 19th, registration fees will be $175, please register early. Registration includes two lunches and a Sunday reception. Housing rates per room at the Double Tree in Crystal City, VA will $125 per night plus tax.

Make reservations for the hotel rooms separately on your own mentioning “Ecumenical Advocacy Days.” The Double Tree Hotel is located at 300 Army Navy Drive; Arlington, VA 22202. The hotel provides free shuttle to and from Reagan National Airport, Pentagon City and King Street Metro Stations. Buses will transport participants to Capitol Hill for Lobby Day. Make Checks payable to “Church World Service” with Ecumenical Advocacy Days written in the memo line.

For more information contact coordinator@advocacydays.org  202-481-6942

Continued on the next page
“Speak up
for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
Proverbs 31:8-9 NIV

“God has given us a mission to care for our neighbors and all of creation. To do so, we must put aside our narrow self-interest to heal the hurting, fill the hungry, set the captives free, and bind up the wounds of creation. I invite you to join in that mission as we advocate for government policies that serve justice, peace and the dignity of all”

~ Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori
The Episcopal Church of the United States

Episcopal Public Policy Network

“Why are you an important part of the EPPN? The EPPN is a net work. While the church office has a professional policy staff representing the Church, Members of Congress want to hear from you, their constituents. That is why EPPN is such an important part of the Church’s work for justice... You can take action at whatever level is comfortable to you... You can make a difference for your church, your community, and the entire nation and world around you.”

“How does the EPPN choose its positions? It doesn’t! Any Episcopal church, person or group may submit a resolution to a Diocesan convention for referral or to a a deputy or bishop for submission to General Convention. Once it is approved by both houses at General Convention, it becomes Church policy”...

Making a difference with EPPN: Members have an opportunity to take action on a wide variety of issues, including support for the Millennium Development Goals; reducing poverty and hunger at home and abroad; international peace and justice; protecting our environment; advancing civil rights and anti-racism; pushing for immigration reform and advocating for women and children.”

"http://www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn" 800-228-0515

Commentary for Interchurch Families: I received this letter in the mail, most likely for the ARK. For me I can see ways that the above issues intersect the lives of interchurch families at various levels if for no other reason than that we live in the same world with those who are suffering whether they are interchurch families or not. Given the large numbers of interchurch marriages in the United States each year though, it would be safe to assume that these issues are affecting interchurch families. How many times have we seen that by working together on a project, toward a common good, binds us together, as brothers and sisters! This kind of service project may help to create the foundation for the bonds of unity across denominational lines for which we have been searching. Volunteerism should not be competitive.

~ Mary Jane Glauber
Oblates of Holy Wisdom Monastery Learn About Eucharistic Ecology

“Over 50 Oblates and Oblate candidates met in July with retreat leader Jody Crowley Beers for a weekend retreat focused on the emerging concept of Eucharistic Ecology. Jody guided the Oblates through an exploration of two diverse points of view of who we are and who God is, and the connectedness of all on earth and in the cosmos. One viewpoint is from contemporary science, which is radically revising our understanding about the universe. This viewpoint emphasizes dominance. The other viewpoint is a theological one that begins with Jesus’ life. Jesus prayed that we all may be one, unified with all people and all of creation. Eucharistic Ecology is grounded in the belief that God is immanent in all creation. The life of all of creation is made whole when all aspects of creation give freely of themselves to each other . . . when we are in communion with each other.

For those interested in additional reading on the topic of Eucharistic Ecology, the following two books may be of interest: Awe-Filled Wonder: The Interface of Science and Spirituality by Barbara Fiand and The Holy Thursday Revolution by Beatrice Bruteau.

For additional information about the Oblates of Holy Wisdom Monastery, contact Everett at: 608-836-1631, ext. 163, erice@benedictinewomen.org or visit www.benedictinewomen.org/grow/grow_oblate.html.”

–Everett Rice, director of oblates

A Book Review: “The Jesus Prayer” resulted from a quest for prayer without ceasing

In the earliest centuries of faith, Christians in the deserts of Palestine and Africa sought a short prayer that could be easily repeated, in order to acquire the habit of “prayer without ceasing.” The result was The Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”

This jewel of Eastern Christianity aims at enabling a person to be in God’s presence, rather than to focus on feelings or thoughts about God. Note the shift in emphasis from what we may be familiar with in Western Christianity, and a slightly different way of looking at prayer. This is the kind of book that may help to open up further possibilities in our daily lives.


Review: The first section of The Jesus Prayer offers a concise overview of the history, theology, and spirituality of Orthodoxy, so that the Prayer can be understood in its native context. Following, is a conversational question-and-answer format that takes the reader through practical steps for adopting this profound practice in everyday life.

I was reluctant to include this book review since I have not yet read this book, but the description of the contents of the book seems to address our lived experience as interchurch families. Here is the review for "The Jesus Prayer - The Ancient Desert Prayer that Tunes the Heart to God." What a lovely title! ~ M.J. Glauber
AAIF Welcomes and Introduces Our 2009 – 2011 Newly Elected Officers

Greens
(AAIF National Co-Chair Elect ~ with the possibility for re-election):

1. What are the denominations of each spouse?
   Laura - Anglican, Franz - Roman Catholic.

2. What is your history of involvement with the AAIF, i.e., offices held, services performed, when you joined the AAIF, other involvement, etc.?
   Second Vice Co-Chair, Recording Secretary, Coordinated Conference VA Beach 2006.
   Members since 1996.

3. What issues do you feel should be pursued with priority over the next two years?
   Building membership by defining our purpose of existence.

Natellas
(AAIF Vice Co-Chair Elect - with the possibility for re-election):

1. What are the denominations of each spouse?
   Dave - Roman Catholic, Carol - Baptist

2. What is your history of involvement with the AAIF, i.e., offices held, services performed, when you joined the AAIF, other involvement, etc.?
   Began work on AAIF Web site and on The ARK in 2006; became Second Vice Co-chairs in 2007.

3. What issues do you feel should be pursued with priority over the next two years?
   Expanding membership and making interchurch family information more readily available for use by existing members. The ARK and the AAIF Web site should be updated/produced on a more regular schedule. Interaction among AAIF members and with others interested in our message should be supported; this should include literature, Web, and social networking outreach and facilitation of local meetings.

Burtons
(AAIF Secretary Elect ~Two Year Term with the possibility for re-election):

1. What are the denominations of each spouse?
   Diane - Roman Catholic, Lamar - Christian Church, Disciples of Christ
2. What is your history of involvement with the AAIF, i.e., offices held, services performed, when you joined the AAIF, other involvement, etc.?

Became Second Vice Co-Chair when AAIF was established in Virginia Beach, in 1996, and Treasurer in 2004 (through 2009).

3. What issues do you feel should be pursued with priority over the next two years?

Increasing membership, having a more active, current and interactive Web site, placing The ARK on the Web site and creating new, and updating old, AAIF literature.

Halls
(AAIF Treasurer Elect ~ Two Year Term with the possibility for re-election):

1. What are the denominations of each spouse?

Clint: Roman Catholic, Elaine: United Methodist

2. What is your history of involvement with the AAIF, i.e., offices held, services performed, when you joined the AAIF, other involvement, etc.?

We first connected with AAIF through the AIFW listserv in October 2006. We attended our first conference in the summer of 2007. Elaine spoke on a clergy panel at that conference.

3. What issues do you feel should be pursued with priority over the next two years?

We would like to see us focus on spiritual life and how we can develop it within ourselves and our families. I would also like to see us focus on how we as interchurch families can reach out with the love of Jesus to folks who need to know that love.

Farewell and Many Thanks from Mary Jane & Peter Glauber
We thoroughly enjoyed serving as the National Co-Chairs of the American Association of Interchurch Families. May the organization continue to grow and to serve interchurch families and the world by sharing the stories of our love across boundaries as examples for others. Interchurch Families live ecumenism and Christian Unity.

AAIF has been blessed with these willing and able new leaders. It was God’s will for us to be interchurch families, and then for us to share our lived experiences so that others may know how Christ works in our lives.

Pete and I will continue to be involved with AAIF, but we will also now be involved with new grandchildren and other pursuits that may have fallen a bit by the wayside of late. We look forward to seeing all of you this coming summer at the next Biennial AAIF Conference in Madison, Wisconsin. If you have never been to one of the AAIF Biennial Conferences yet, make this one a first.

Thanks again for your love and support during our term as the AAIF National Co-Chairs.

Peace and Christ’s Blessings, Mary Jane & Peter Glauber
Our Mission:
The American Association of Interchurch Families in conjunction with the IFIN provides:

A support network and information service for

• Interchurch families (where the partners belong to different denominations - often Roman Catholic or Orthodox and another Christian communion) for partners and parents, growing children and young adults
• Clergy, ministers, relatives and all others concerned in the welfare of interchurch families (AAIF is linked with groups of interchurch families in many parts of the world)

A Voice in the churches
• By keeping the pastoral needs of interchurch families before church leaders and communities, at local, regional, national and international levels.
• By affirming the gifts of interchurch families and their potential as a catalyst for wider church unity.

~ All these activities are rooted in prayer and worship.

Many thanks to Carol and Dave Natella for their tireless and diligent support in the editing of the ARK, and for their greatly appreciated technological expertise. I would also like to thank Father George Kilcourse and Father Ernest Falardeau for their on-going support of interchurch families. Many thanks to Libbye Montgomery for her cheerful efforts and hard work in making the arrangements to put together the next AAIF Conference ~ Mary Jane Glauber Please send articles for publication in future issues of the ARK to mjglauber@gmail.com attention: For the ARK

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American Native prairie grasses and flowers in bloom beneath a blue sky with fluffy white clouds in summer

Plan to join AAIF for the 2010 Biennial Conference in Madison, Wisconsin from July 9 through July 11 at Holy Wisdom Monastery. See www.aifusa.org for further information and to get registration materials.

“The divine is present in all creation. Care for the earth comes out of our spirituality.”
~The Benedictine Women of Madison, Holy Wisdom Monastery