

ARK

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The

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Interchurch Families: Christian Unity Made Visible in our Households

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

New Year's Resolutions

"When making New Year's resolutions, sacrifice the sacrifice"

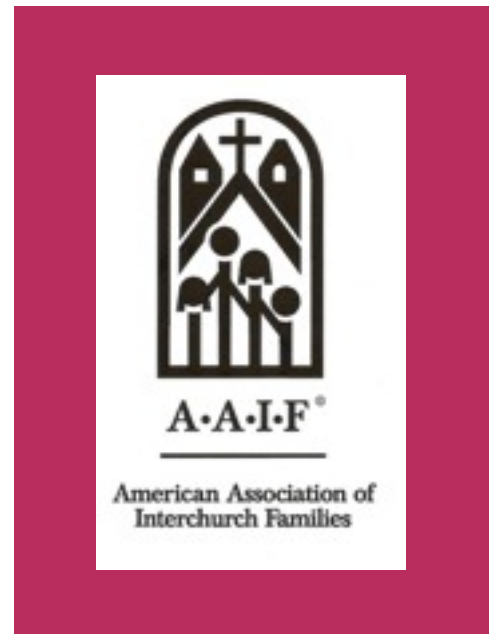
- Summer Auerbach, Louisville, KY

In general, New Year's Resolutions tend to be broad and grand changes that we may wish to make, while they may have merit, the broad scope of their focus may make them seem impossible. On the other hand, taking time to recognize what we would like to change and realizing that change for the good is possible should be be

affirmed. Due to the grand scale and major size of many resolutions, many are often given up within days. Instead, wake up each morning, and say, *"This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."* (Psalm 118: 24) Then make the best use out of each day as if it was the only day that you had left. Say what needs to be said. Do what needs to be done that day. Then when tomorrow comes do it again.

Just a thought for today.

~ M.J. Glauber



With the New Year, there comes new hope. Just as with Christ's birth we were given new possibilities and great hope for a new future.



2011

**Make plans now to attend the next
AAIF Biennial Conference
to be held in 2012**

Please see www.aifusa.org for on-going updates

Joint Message for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2011

Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

Two thousand years ago, the first Christians gathered in Jerusalem experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and were joined together in unity as the body of Christ. In that event, Christians of every time and place see their origin as a community of the faithful, called together to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Although that earliest Jerusalem Church experienced difficulties, both externally and internally, its members persevered in faithfulness and fellowship, in breaking bread and prayers.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity invites the whole Christian community throughout the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" (John 17:21). The theme for the 2011 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is *One in the Apostles' Teaching, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread and Prayer*. It comes from **Acts Chapter 2 verse 42**. For 2011, the churches in Jerusalem were the initial consultants to the Joint Working Group for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Christians of Jerusalem call upon their brothers and sisters to make this week of prayer an occasion of renewed commitment to work for genuine ecumenism grounded in the experience of the early Church. Once again may we pray and work together for the unity of all,

joining our prayer to that of the Lord Jesus Christ, "that all may be one" (John 17:21).

Rev. Geoffrey A. Black
General Minister and President
of the United Church of Christ

Bishop Larry M. Goodpaster
President-designate of the
Council of Bishops
United Methodist Church

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America

The Most Rev Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop
Episcopal Church Center

Rev. Dr. A Roy Medley
General Secretary
American Baptist Churches

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory
Archbishop of Atlanta
Chair - USCCB Committee
for Ecumenical and
Interreligious Affairs



"To pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" - A Message for Interchurch Families:

As interchurch couples, we always pray with someone from another Christian denomination, you might be thinking to yourself at this moment. Why would one week in January, set aside as a "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity from January 18-25, 2011 be anything so different for us since in our

"Little Church of the Home"/"Our Domestic Church" we always pray together?

We routinely have those conversations that others aren't privileged to have in their homes since we are married across denominational lines as Christians. The one thing we don't have and that we wish for is inter-communion or rather shared Holy Eucharist in all of our churches. The closest we come to any kind of a shared holy communion are our own home cooked meals eaten around our dinner tables after prayers and blessings are said. Our lives are sacred, and we have realized this.

For us, in many cases, we have been at this dialogue for such a long time that we may feel that being able to share the Eucharist in any recognized way has become a futile request. We are further along on this journey than much of the general population, and feeling perhaps a bit frustrated that things seem to be moving so slowly.

Let's help to facilitate the kinds of dialogues and Bible studies that may lay the foundations for a far broader understanding across denominational lines that you no doubt already have in your homes. This is your Interchurch Families opportunity to give some vitality to these programs outlined on the links beginning on the next page. Be the change you wish to see. Open the way for that change to happen. ~M.J. Glauber

WEEK OF PRAYER for Christian Unity continued on the next page

Planning A Week of Prayer For Christian Unity 2011

Daily Scripture and Prayer Guide — Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2011

Day 1, They devoted themselves...

Scripture

Joel 2:21-22, 28-29, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Psalms 46, God is in the midst of the city.

Acts 2:1-12, When the day of Pentecost had come.

John 14:15-21, This is the spirit of truth.

Meditation

The journey of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers." The "they" is the earliest Church born on the day of the Pentecost. All who live in continuity with the day of Pentecost live in continuity with the earliest Church of Jerusalem with its leader St. James. This church provides the image or icon of the Christian unity for which we pray this week.

According to an ancient eastern tradition, the succession of the church comes through continuity with

the first Christian community of Jerusalem. It is linked with the heavenly Church of Jerusalem, which in turn becomes the icon of all Christian churches. The sign of continuity for all the churches is maintaining the "marks" of the first Christian community through our devotion to the "apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers."

The present Church of Jerusalem lives in continuity with the apostolic Church of Jerusalem. Its witness to the gospel and its struggles against inequality and injustice remind us that prayer for Christian unity is inseparable from prayer for peace and justice.

Prayer

Almighty and Merciful God, with great power you gathered together the first Christians in the city of Jerusalem. Grant that, like this first church in Jerusalem, we may come together to be bold in preaching and living the good news of reconciliation and peace wherever there is inequality and injustice. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who liberates us from the bondage of sin and death. Amen.

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_daily_scripture_and_prayer_guide.htm

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_introduction_to_the_me.htm

"That they may be one"

John 17:21

The 2011 theme is : *One in the Apostles' Teaching, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread and Prayer*

Acts 2:42

Some important links to help you organize a "Week of Prayer" for Christian Unity in your area if one has not yet been planned

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_commentary_on_art.htm

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_ecumenical_celebration.htm

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_bulletin_and_pulpit_announcements.htm

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_poster.htm

http://www.geii.org/wpcu_thematic_music.htm

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources.html>

<http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/xi-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-resources/resources.html>

Many thanks to the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute and the World Council of Churches for gathering, and organizing this information. Please see their websites for further ideas.

Addicted to Oil and The Love of Life

Sacred Elements

Homily

Church Divinity School
of the Pacific

—Epiphany West 2010,
January 27

Reprinted in the ARK with
permission from Michael Schut

written by **Michael Schut:**
**Economic and
Environmental Affairs
Officer
The Episcopal Church**

Scriptures references:

Gen 1:1-2:4

Ps 148

Romans 8:18-25

Mark 4:35-41

Addicted to Oil:

Hi, my name is Mike and I'm addicted to oil. I live in Seattle and in 2009 I flew to New York four times; to Alabama; to North Carolina; to Hong Kong; to Fiji; to California; to Washington DC; to Ohio; to Connecticut; and to Florida...all of those trips were for my work with The Episcopal Church which is dedicated to economic and environmental justice and which includes an emphasis on decreasing the greenhouse gas emissions of The Episcopal Church.

Hi, my name is Mike, and I'm addicted to oil. I have a car, but drive it less than half the average American. I bike around town a fair amount.

Hi, my name is Mike and I'm addicted to oil. Certainly a good amount of my food comes from 1500 miles away -- the average distance an American's piece of food travels -- an alarming fact made possible only by cheap oil.

And...I love to garden. I grow some of my own food. All my food waste is composted in my backyard and eventually turns into beautiful rich soil. I eat low on the food chain. I throw very little away (as if there is any "away").

Hi, my name is Mike and I'm addicted to oil. I do eat low on the food chain but every once in a while still order chicken sometimes when I go out, chicken most likely raised in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations which treat these animals as if they are only one part of a machine turning fossil fuel calories into food calories. They are packed six to a small cage, have their talons and beaks removed, are pumped with anti-biotics to hold disease at bay, fed an unnatural diet, and quickly slaughtered, clean, diced and sliced, packaged, and transported.

Love of Creation: Hi, my name is Mike and I love the beauty of creation. About 10 years ago

now I walked into New York's American Museum of Natural History. The museum was featuring a relatively new display, The Hall of Biodiversity. On the wall to my right, stretching around 35 feet high and 120 feet long was a mind-boggling display of the complexity and diversity of species with whom we share God's creation: there were videos, paintings, re-creations, explanations, descriptions of the fecundity of our earth home.

Through the middle of that vast hall stretched a fairly realistic model of a Central African tropical rainforest -- the ecosystems which harbor the greatest biodiversity on Earth.

Stretching along the left side of that hall were videos, maps, explanations detailing the causes of the mind-boggling rate of species extinctions today: habitat distraction, invasive species, population growth; in other words these extinctions are caused by all of us.

I walked out of the Hall, crossed Central Park West and sat down on a mound of granite next to a small lake and wept. Not since disappearance of dinosaurs have we seen such a rate of extinction. Let this sink in a moment: in the history of time there have been six great extinction events. The fifth and last one was the disappearance of the dinosaurs.

Continued on the next page "addicted to oil"

Flower of an eggplant growing in the monastery's garden. - in July in Wisconsin at the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference

How do we carry the Benedictine concept of hospitality out into the world as interchurch families?



Continued from the previous page "addicted to oil"

The sixth great extinction event isn't over yet -- we are living in it. In the distant future our ancestors will look back and talk about how that sixth great extinction event was different than the others -- in that their human ancestors caused it.

Contradictions: Hi, my name is Mike.

First anniversary of the writing of this article, Oil Spilling in the Gulf, huge natural disaster, polar caps thawing, message even more applicable now... Love and save all of God's creation.

I'm addicted to oil. My name is Mike and my heart breaks as species disappear. My life has been transformed and my heart opened through experiences of intense relationship with formerly

homeless men with whom I lived in Washington DC. My heart has exploded with gratitude and awe through a heart-breakingly beautiful experience with aspen trees in the Yosemite backcountry, and

been broken again when some time ago now I read about the state of Alaska killing wolves from airplanes in order to increase the size of the caribou herd to attract more hunters and their money.

So that's a little bit about me. I relate these snippets to reflect and confess the contradictions in my own life. I do not do so to create a list of do's and don'ts...or to self-flagellate. Since when has guilt or adhering to a list of do's and don'ts nurtured a place from which we can sustain loving action?

I personally run from such lists because I know of their life and spirit draining tendencies. For a while, for example, my faith became reduced to a list of do's and don'ts and if I was doing the do's and not doing the don'ts -- well, I must have been okay with God. I also was exhausted and my spirit spent.

Dominion and De-Creation: At my first initial, rather quick reading of today's texts a couple things did jump out at me:



AAIF City Chapters: Listening Project

Are you interested in meeting and talking to other interchurch families in your city between AAIF Biennial Conferences?



- PLEASE SEE WWW.AIFUSA.ORG FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- PLEASE CONTACT: AAIF.co.chair@gmail.com or Laura & Franz Green at fandlgreen@cox.net

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO FORM A CITY CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA OR HOW TO FIND THE AAIF CITY CHAPTER CLOSEST TO YOU.

- PLEASE CONTACT: MJGLAUBER@GMAIL.COM FOR THE ARK - AAIF LISTENING PROJECT MATERIALS TO BE USED BY YOUR AAIF CITY CHAPTERS.

Continued on the next page "addicted to oil"

- In Genesis 1, dominion was given to us before the fall. Now, the very idea of exercising dominion over the rest of creation would have been absurd to those originally reading Genesis 1. They knew very well they did not have such dominion.

- God had dominion. Psalm 148 speaks of the "stormy winds" that do God's bidding and Mark writes about Jesus waking up from his slumber in the boat and calming the wind and the waves.

- But when we read these texts today I think it's fair to ask whether or not the stormy winds in Psalm 148 and the wind and the waves in Mark 4 still do God's bidding.

More and more of the evidence says that the wind and the waves now respond to our bidding, our power, and our carbon emissions -- suggests that we have achieved dominion. What does it mean when we have become so powerful that very climate systems shift in response to our way of living; when the chorus of praise emanating from God's creation, as depicted in Psalm 148, loses one of its voices, an entire

species, once again in response to our way of living. As author Bill McKibben asks, what does it mean when we now have the power to "de- create"?

It's a difficult, and in a way



Photo of Holy Wisdom Monastery, an award winning eco-friendly built LEED building in Wisconsin, location of the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference (above)

rhetorical, question. But to me it certainly means we must change. But how do we do so in the face of the scale of the need and in light of the fact of our culpability in hastening "de- creation?" And in light of the fact that I for one do not think we can hammer away at what is wrong forever, but rather need to offer an invitation to ways of living and being that are more meaningful, beautiful and fun than the ways we live now.

I often come back to stories -- like the one I told of my experience at the Hall of Biodiversity or mentioned relating my experiences with homeless men, with wolves and

aspen trees. These are all experiences of relationship with parts of God's creation that might on the surface seem very different, "other" -- but with whom we are all more intimately connected than we know.

So recall those stories in your own life. What do they teach you? How do they call you to respond? For me, what have the aspen trees, homeless men, wolves, and the loss of biodiversity taught me? How do they call me to respond?

Personally, I've mentioned some of the ways I have felt called to respond. Called to this work -- in spite of the irony and tension that all of its travel engenders; seeking to live lightly on

the planet; eating lower on the food chain, nurturing a vegetable garden; biking around town some... and adding my voice to the political process knowing that we must have strong policy if we are to, for example, decrease worldwide carbon emissions and habitat destruction and support the millions of low income people around the world needing to adapt to the impacts of climate change. And opening myself to be in relationship with those that might on the surface be deemed "other."

Biophilia: The great ecologist E.O. Wilson believes we are all lovers of life; we are hard-

wired, he says, to love life, what he calls biophilia. At the same time, many say that our separation from the natural world is unprecedented. And that healing that separation will be the difference between extinction and survival.

In my own stories I can see both the separation and the biophilia. And I'm sure you see and experience both in your life too.

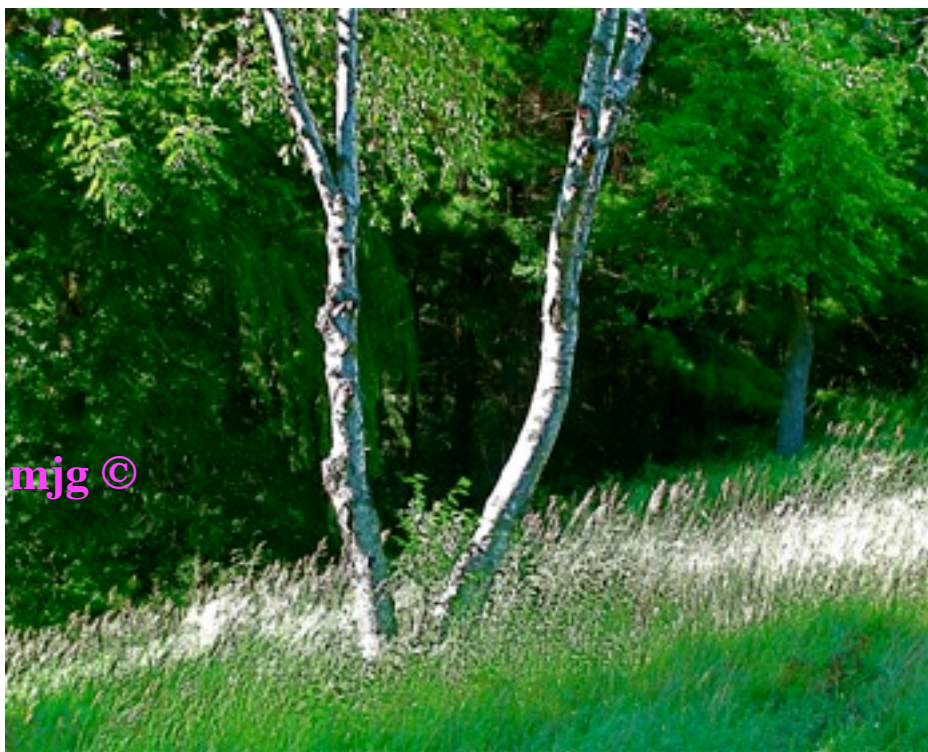
If both are true -- biophilia of and unprecedented separation from the rest of creation -- then you and I and all of us live with a profound sense of dislocation, unease and grief.

Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, recently told an audience at Southwark Cathedral that people had allowed themselves to become: "Addicted to fantasies about prosperity and growth, dreams of wealth without risk and profit without cost".

The consequences of such a lifestyle meant the human soul was "one of the foremost casualties of environmental degradation. Many of the things which have moved us

towards ecological disaster have been distortions of who and what we are and their overall effect has been to isolate us from the reality we're part of. Our response to this crisis needs to be, in the most basic sense, a reality check."

Healing: So perhaps part of the really good news of the changes asked of us is that they will heal us. They will correct the distortions of who and what we are and serve as a reality check, as the Archbishop of Canterbury says; they will reunite us with that internal love of life, that



Grounds of Holy Wisdom Monastery, location of the 2010 Biennial AAIF Conference

biophilia, that EO Wilson and many others believe is hardwired within us. They will literally re-place us within the web of creation so no longer will we quiet the song of another species or alter the winds or raise up the sea.

May it be so. I believe it is not some sort of utopia but rather something Jesus believed in so much that he was willing to die for it—for such will the Kingdom of God be like. Amen.

Michael Schut serves as the Economic and Environmental Affairs Officer of The Episcopal Church, following 11 years on the staff of Earth Ministry. His recent book is *Money and Faith: The Search for Enough*. Michael also edited and co-wrote *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*, which

won the second best book of 2000 award by the Catholic Press Association, and the anthology and study guide *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread*. He speaks and leads workshops/retreats around the country, connecting faith, justice, sustainable economics and

care for all God's creation. He has worked with homeless men, served as a Park Ranger and led wilderness trips. Michael received his M.S. in Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon in 1993 and his B.S. in Biology in 1987

from Wheaton College in Illinois. He likes to backpack, climb, sing, read, and spend time with his nephew, Carter. He lives in Seattle.



I want to thank Michael for a beautifully crafted article that encourages us to act with wisdom in God's creation. Pointing out to us that, "Many of the things which have moved us towards ecological disaster have been distortions of who and what we are and their overall effect has been to isolate us from the reality we're part of." is a very powerful observation of our current world situation.

As interchurch families, I believe that we have been given a gift of insight and of access to at least two denominations, or double the exposure, and the ability or possibility to help to influence our community to work to heal the environment. There is so much hope and potential in interchurch families to be able to do so much that is good on so many levels, but we must begin now.

In our time, we are called to think and to act in ways that might heal the environment; we are called to promote

sustainability by the way that we live our lives. Michael Schut offers us the concept and insight that we will be healed in the process of healing the environment; there is a depth of vision in this statement. I would like to suggest that as interchurch families that in your lives you may want to address



Photo of grounds of Holy Wisdom Monastery in July, location of the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference in Wisconsin. ↑

both dimensions.

Offer to heal the environment and our divided world at the same time so that you and your children may be healed as you seek to offer healing solutions to others. Our examples of lives of love lived across traditional barriers are only a first step.

- Mary Jane Glauber



God is present in the ordinariness of our lives

Father James Martin, a Jesuit priest, and the culture editor of the weekly "Catholic" magazine, says that six ordinary experiences could be God speaking to you. To assess your spirituality for everyday revelations of God, look at moments when you've felt:

"Incomplete" In 1980 Sonny Bono sang, "I still haven't found what I'm looking for." Our wish "for something more" may be a sign of our desire for God's fulfilling presence.

"Wistful" That pensiveness or sense of longing or yearning for something with which we might feel connected is being wistful. Have you ever looked at a beautiful sunset or something in nature and felt a "connection" with something beyond yourself? Experiences like this can reveal our natural desire for God according to Father Martin. This is one way that God attracts us.

God is present in the ordinariness of our lives continued from the previous page

“Grateful” Feeling grateful for something simple, like a conversation with a friend? Awareness of simple gifts can point us to our underlying awareness of God’s goodness according to Father Martin.

“Holiness” When you read about holy men and women, (like Mother Teresa, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Dalai Lama, Thomas Merton, Ghandi, Lucretia Mott, Martin Luther) do you wish you were more like them (or someone similar, but of your own choice)? Father Martin points out that this is God calling to the holiness within us.

“Clarity” Father Martin notes that even fleeting feelings that we are right where we should be in our lives, or that life makes sense, can be a sign of God’s encouragement.

“Vulnerable” Father Martin says that when we are sick or struggling that we might feel a greater need for God. He points out that God isn’t any closer; it is just that we are more open in vulnerable times.

In relationship to what Father Martin has just said, as Interchurch Families, we bring a unique experience of the lived experience of Christian Unity as an example for the world. It is through our very ordinary lived experiences of daily life that God works miracles that others may doubt as even being possible, and yet we have succeeded. Interchurch couples stay active in their own church and participate in their spouse’s church in ways that are possible



Holy Wisdom Monastery of the Benedictine Women of Madison, Wisconsin - award winning LEED structure

and to the extent that is workable. What are the components that make interchurch marriages work? In what ways would we, as interchurch families, like to see our church communities grow so that they could be more supportive in the future for those who are about to become married and who have the potential to become truly interchurch rather than church drop outs? Please, think on these things. If you have some stories to share, some good news about your lived experience as Interchurch families based on one or more of the themes that Father Martin mentions, please send them to us at the ARK.

~ Mary Jane Glauber

Bible Study Questions

Here are some “Bible Study Questions” to be used in a group that encourages all to participate equally.

Rotate systematically who begins answering each question so that each one has a chance to be the starter.

Each person should be given an opportunity to answer each question.

Some people may realize that they agree with what has been said already; they can then say that they agree with what has already been said and they have nothing new to add.

Some people may simply decide to pass when it is their turn, but all should be encouraged to add their ideas or reflections. There are no right or wrong answers. All members of the group are encouraged to participate. This

Bible Study Questions continued on the next page



Lunch together before the start of the 2010 AAIF Biennial Conference in Madison Wisconsin . . . discussing the many meanings for communion, perhaps?

format of Bible Study works well for people who come from diverse backgrounds as it encourages input and reflection.

In using this format, I have found that the gathered group was able to bring great insight and such a broad perspective that I believe it is imperative to draw out the ideas of everyone since the fragment of one idea will open up the full image for someone else as if they had been waiting to get that part of the puzzle. Bible Books are read from the beginning to the end, but in short segments, stopping at natural breaking points.

I have relied on using the internet so that I could compare various editions of the Bible verses as they have been interpreted or translated as I have read. Although no outside preparation is necessary or required. The group brings their own Bibles and from that we had a wide variety of Bible translations to compare in order to search for the underlying meaning. We have only focused on a very short amount of reading each time so that we could dedicate more time to the search for meaning and to listening to each other's ideas. The format naturally tends to allow us to affirm each other for the input each brings. The art of listening is cultivated by using this format of Bible study. It requires each person to be fully engaged in the study.

I really liked this format so I am sharing this simple format with you. It is very ecumenical. Simply copy the following five

questions to be shared with your Bible Reading Group. You will answer the same questions for each set of Bible verses that you read at each group meeting. We read on the average about 6 to 7 lines of Bible verses, at other times, we have read entire Chapters in Acts. In general, we tend to stop at natural breaking points so sometimes, we may read much more than that. The group has never had any difficulty deciding on how many verses to read. Quiet time is allowed at the beginning of each gathering for reading. Here are the five questions:

What is the author's main point in this passage? (MAIN POINT?)

What new light do I find in this particular reading of this passage of the text? (NEW LIGHT?)

Is this passage true to my experience? (TRUTH)

What are the implications of this passage for my/our life? (IMPLICATIONS)

What problems do I have with this passage? (PROBLEMS)

[I interpreted this word "problems" as "What questions did this passage raise for me living in this time and place in history?]

Each person in the Bible Study Group was given a chance to



Biblical images of hospitality depicted and displayed on the walls of Holy Wisdom Monastery in Wisconsin ↑

answer in turn, and we answered the questions in this order as given above. I hope that you enjoy using this format for your Bible Study. I have found that everyone is included in the discussions, and that everyone has something valuable to offer; this is important since it may carryover as a model for how we live our lives. (God willing!)

Since first writing this, I have been told that this format is called "*Friendly Bible Study*" and that it was originally created by Joanne and Larry Spears. Further information about this Bible Study program and how to implement its format can be found at this link:

<http://www.read-the-bible.org/FriendlyBibleStudy.htm>

~ report compiled by
Mary Jane Glauber

If you know other interchurch families or anyone who gives pastoral care to interchurch families or the extended families of interchurch families who are looking for ways to be supportive, please share “The ARK” with them by forwarding a copy to them. We would like to invite them/you to join AAIF members at the up-coming Biennial Conference in 2012. Up-dates about the up-coming AAIF Biennial Conference to be posted at www.aifusa.org

Our Christmas Gifts

Sometimes our gifts of talent or our continued and on-going presence is far more valuable than a purchased gift

In 1958, The words and music to the Christmas song 'Little Drummer Boy' was composed by Katherine K. Davis, Henry Onorati and Harry Simeone

Little Drummer Boy:

Lyrics

Come they told me, pa rum pum pum
pum

A new born King to see, pa rum pum
pum pum

Our finest gifts we bring, pa rum pum
pum pum

To lay before the King, pa rum pum
pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum
pum,

So to honor Him, pa rum pum pum
pum,
When we come.

Little Baby, pa rum pum pum pum
I am a poor boy too, pa rum pum pum
pum

I have no gift to bring, pa rum pum
pum pum

That's fit to give the King, pa rum pum
pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum
pum,

Shall I play for you, pa rum pum pum
pum,
On my drum?

Mary nodded, pa rum pum pum pum
The ox and lamb kept time, pa rum
pum pum pum

I played my drum for Him, pa rum
pum pum pum

I played my best for Him, pa rum pum
pum pum,
rum pum pum pum, rum pum pum
pum,

Then He smiled at me, pa rum pum
pum pum
Me and my drum.

I have often thought how talented those composers were to be able to create such a beautiful Christmas Carol. The carol highlights the gift of talent and music from a humble youth. Having worked with youth for many years, I know how well they respond to hearing what they are good at doing. However, many times they have no idea what they have a gift for doing well until they are encouraged.

The next big surprise came when I found out that adults also like to hear what they are good at doing well. I don't know why this should have surprised me since I knew it was true for youths. It then seems logical that adults would also like to hear this too. However, I have also found that many people have difficulty assessing their own gifts and talents accurately, if at all, so that a lot of very good human talent is never tapped into or used well.

Be generous with well warranted compliments. Who knows what kinds of creative solutions may result?
~M. J. Glauber

Short Bible verses to reflect on as we begin the new year: **Practicing Lectio Divina**

John 14:17

He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. But you recognize him, because he lives with you and will be in you.



If you find that using Lectio Divina works using these Bible verses, please use that method

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."



“Interchurch Families can be compared to bridges that connect one side to the other.”

~ Daniel J. Olsen, Ph.D.



Theologian

First, please notice that these photos were taken from the passenger’s seat. Then, observe the number of support

allowing barges to pass under it through an opening in the water for river commerce.

Using bridges as a comparison to interchurch families is a good analogy. We are links, bridges, between two denominations. Please also notice the web of interconnectedness and strength that is required and given so that wonderful results can be obtained through this interchurch family link. We may take these structures, bridges, for granted since they are there all the time for us, but someone planned them and put great thought into them for our safety. This is what community is all about.

~ M.J. Glauber

beams and the number of criss-crossed lines needed and made to inter-connect the supporting structure so that the bridge to get from Indiana over into Kentucky across the Ohio River is stable, while

Looking forward to the 2012 AAIF Biennial Conference
-Details to follow at www.aifusa.org

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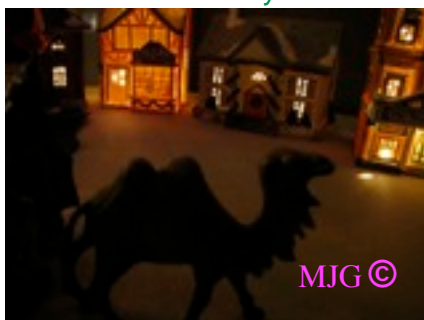
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We are all on spiritual journeys or quests. It is just that some are far more aware of the nature of their journey. We can all learn from each other. Our lives are inter-related. Please share your success stories.

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