Please Mark Your Calendars

The next Biennial A.A.I. F. Conference will take place in 2010. This will be here before you know it. Please plan to join us.

New Voting Procedures:

Please see www.aifusa.org for dues renewal information and forms.

In 2008 at the last Biennial A.A. I. F. General Meeting for Business in Louisville it was passed that both the husband and wife will have a separate vote on the mail in ballot. This is a change from the past where only one ballot was sent to a member couple. Now each spouse will have their own vote just as they do when we meet in person.

It is Time for A.A. I. F. Elections

Have you paid your 2008-2009 A.A.I.F. Dues yet?

Full Members, that is paid Full Members, are eligible to vote in A.A. I. F. elections and to run for elected office. Please serve. Please make a difference as an ecumenist in the United States and internationally.

The A.A.I.F is the official contact in the United States for the IFIN, Interchurch Families International Network. Those people who are willing to serve will find the excellent support of our pastoral advisers, and they should expect clear information from the out-going officers so that the in-coming officers can be well equipped from day one.

by Mary Jane Glauber
A.A. I. F Co-Chair through June 2009
Pastoral Care of Interchurch Families

Bonnie Mack, who with her husband are A.A.I.F. members, works for the Family Life Office in Cincinnati. She submitted the following report based on her research and presentation to the USCCB in Boston.

Update for Interchurch Families:

As many of you know, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has been working on an initiative for marriage since 2005. The centerpiece, a pastoral letter on marriage, due out in November, 2009, will launch the final phase - the development of pastoral resources (2011). The Mission of the National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage in part reads, “Bringing Catholic belief into dialogue with contemporary needs, the bishops urge the Catholic Church to become a community of hope for marriages and to join others in building a culture of marriage.”

There have been a multitude of gatherings in conjunction with this effort including but not limited to theologians, social scientists, pastoral ministers and liturgists, weaving together the Catholic faith tradition and its pastoral practice, the data of social science, and the lived experience of married couples. Various stages of marriage -- remote, proximate, immediate and aftercare are covered. In addition, various kinds of marriages—African-American, Asian, Hispanic, interchurch and interfaith, and remarriage have been studied. One such gathering I was asked to be a part of was held at Boston College in September 2007. I presented a paper and spoke from the practical perspective of ministering to interchurch couples/families and living as an interchurch couple. Some, but not all of the ways I challenged the Bishops are addressed below:

• To be bridge builders rather than gate keepers, striking a balance between protecting the faith and being welcoming/hospitable to those of a different faith tradition
• To recognize interchurch couples and families as gifts rather than challenges to the Church and their local communities, and to utilize them in whatever ways bless both.
• To check their own internal attitudes about interfaith/interchurch marriages – diluting or enriching the faith.

The Pastoral is still in the draft process, but the most recent feedback is a bit discouraging, because the scuttlebutt is that the bulk of the letter might be more single focused on Pope John Paul II’s Theology of the Body writings than anything else. As a marriage pastoral minister and interchurch family member, I was hoping for a more comprehensive document.

By Bonnie Mack
Cincinnati, Ohio
**WHO WE ARE?**
We are a lay ministry support group of interchurch married couples. The group was formed in January, 1988. We meet to share what has worked in our interchurch marriages, learn from each other, and for fellowship with other interchurch couples. Our top priorities are to strengthen our relationships with God, each other, and to help others do the same.

**WHO WE ARE NOT**
We emphasize the couple and family relationships, not doctrine.

We strive not to be judgmental, or to argue.

We do not solve marriage problems.

We do not try to convert.

We do not set out to provide answers.

We do believe that with God’s guidance and our sharing we can learn from each other and grow stronger in our marriage and family life.

**OUR GOALS**
To strengthen our relationship with the Lord, personally as a couple and as a family.

To realize that we are not alone in our interchurch marriage, and to meet other ecumenical couples.

To realize the giftedness of an ecumenical marriage.

To obtain information and support we may not be able to receive elsewhere.

To improve our marriage by learning and sharing as a couple.

To know our faith and our spouse’s faith.

To encourage communication.

To avoid religious indifference.

To encourage prayer in the home as a couple and as a family.

To be a support for engaged interchurch couples and to help them prepare for their life together.

To provide good resources to strengthen family life.

To further ecumenism at the grass roots level

To promote fellowship and fun.
From The City Chapter of Omaha AAIF Brochure

KINDS OF ISSUES DISCUSSED:
- Passing your faith to your children
- Worshipping together
- Similarities of Faith
- Overcoming difficulties in an Interchurch Marriage

JOHN 17:21
That all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; I pray that they may be (one) in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.

RUTH 1:16-17
...for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

MATTHEW 19:26
For you it is impossible but for God all things are possible

MATTHEW 18:20
Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PERSONS FROM TWO DENOMINATIONS MARRY?
1. A few keep strong in their two religions.
2. A fair number join a common religion.
3. The largest number seem to slide away from their church with one or both not participating in their religion.

Many interchurch couples have discovered that differences need not mean division. They have their own ecumenical vocation as an interchurch couple.

NOTE: The AAIF Omaha City Chapter flourished for many years with a steady new supply of interchurch couples being referred to them by the Archdiocese of Omaha. Then beginning perhaps about 4-5 years ago, the Archdiocese stopped referring new interchurch couples to the AAIF Omaha City Chapter. Since that time, the Omaha Archdiocese has revamped all of its marriage preparation programs for all couples. They've gone to mentor couples who visit one-to-one with like couples (at least that was the plan). Although the AAIF Omaha City Chapter Coordinator's were on that committee that helped to re-organize the marriage preparation program for the Omaha Archdiocese, they haven't talked to anyone at the Family Life Office so they really don't know how well the program works for interchurch couples. Inadvertently, this change brought an end of the referrals for the AAIF City Chapter. At the end of May 2009, after school is out for the summer, the AAIF Omaha City Chapter would like to renew its work with interchurch couples so that this wonderful work can continue. The groundwork has all been laid out, and they have years of valuable experience. The AAIF Omaha City Chapter formerly met at St. John Vianney Church in Omaha; this may still be a possibility. However, other church denominations may want to become involved at this time since at its foundation this is an ecumenical dialog and interchurch families are “laboratories for unity”. The AAIF City Chapter Coordinator’s would need the interchurch couples' names from the Omaha area who are interested in meeting so they can contact them. It is well known that the Roman Catholic Church is dedicated to ecumenism. Will other churches in the Omaha area come to their assistance at this time perhaps in a joint effort? I have received personal requests from at least two separate interchurch couples in the Omaha area during the past year who are looking to speak face to face with other couples. Other couples who are interested in joining this chapter and any churches in the Omaha area that can sponsor a meeting place for the AAIF City Chapter so that we do not lose the valuable ground work that has been laid there already, please contact AAIF.co.chair@gmail.com at this time.

Thank you!

Mary Jane Glauber

Where do you see your marriage in 1, 2 or 3 years? We invite you to come to be a part of our InterChurch Marriage Support Group.
Prayer is a Place

“Prayer is a psychological place, a spiritual place, a place where we go to get out of ourselves, a place created and inhabited by God. Whatever disciplines can help us to get to where reality can get at us (the Real in its ultimate sense being God) I would call prayer. That opens up many possibilities and styles.”

“Prayer is whatever calls us to detach from our own self, from our own compulsions and addictions, from our own ego, from our own ‘place.’ We are all too trapped in our own places by virtue of egocentricity of the human person. In prayer the Spirit entices us outside of our narrow comfort zone. No wonder we avoid prayer. We have to change places.”


Rejoice in God, all the earth Serve the Lord with Gladness

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

In trust, during spring, we bring before God our hopes and fears, our wonder and confusion, our joys and sorrows, asking God’s blessing on our interchurch lives and the life of the world...Let us pray. Kyrie, Kyrie Eleison.

We pray for our nation, and for our ecclesiastical and church neighbors. Endow us with your grace, and bring us to a more perfect union, so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters, one and equal in dignity...Let us pray. Kyrie, Kyrie Eleison.

We pray for those whose lives have been torn apart on the battlefields of Iraq, after six years of war, and for Afghanistan,...for wisdom and courage to create peace. Let us pray. Kyrie, Kyrie Eleison.

We pray for a deeper appreciation among civic leaders and political parties, and religions, and among all people on a spiritual journey...for an end to divisions and diminishments.. and for a spirit of forgiveness and collaboration...Let us pray. Kyrie, Kyrie Eleison.

We pray that our hearts, minds, and actions may embrace those who are hungry, lonely, tired or in pain, especially those who are caring for a family member or others with any kind of serious disability, for hope in the midst of pain, Let us pray. Kyrie, Kyrie Eleison.

We pray in thanksgiving for this moment, this beautiful, and pregnant spring moment of renewal and hope...Let us pray. Kyrie, Kyrie Eleison. Adapted from the Taize ecumenical service leaflet of the Church of the Advent, 901 Baxter Avenue, Louisville, KY
Spring and Easter Flowers: The world experiences a new birth after a long dark, cold winter. How is this mirrored in our lived interchurch experiences?

Christ is Risen, Alleluia, Alleluia!! The Lord is Risen indeed, Alleluia Alleluia!!

Please send stories of your lived interchurch experiences to mjglauber@gmail.com

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