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Christian Family Movement

CFM: A Worldwide Movement

by Kay and Gary Aitchison

North American Continental Representatives to the ICCFM

Members often think of Christian Family Movement in terms of their own small action group. However, membership in CFM connects us to a worldwide network using the Observe-Judge-Act methodology of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn and striving to build Christ-like families, neighborhoods and communities.

The Christian Family Movement was spawned in a unique time in history. The same spirit that brought CFM to life in the U.S. was moving in many other parts of the world at the same time. After World War II, lay people had begun gathering in small groups to explore their faith, first as separate men's and women's groups and later as couples' groups. In 1966, such groups from various countries connected and formed the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements.

ICCFM's mission is three-fold: first, to promote and establish communication among CFM groups around the globe, second, to keep the confederation service-oriented and third, to support the ecumenical character of the confederation.

Now, nearly 40 years later, CFM is active in some 50 countries with a membership of close to 100,000 families. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the greatest CFM growth has been in Eastern European countries .

ICCFM is governed by a Secretariat made up of a set of officers and representatives from



Gary and Kay Aitchison with guest Melissa Plante of Quebec.

each of the five continents where ICCFM is active. **Nop and Elma Muangkroot of Bangkok, Thailand** are ICCFM presidents and **Father Charles Vella of Milan, Italy** serves as international chaplain.

We have been fortunate to meet and enjoy the hospitality of CFMers in many parts of the world. Despite different circumstances, CFMers throughout the world are much like their American counterparts.

—continued on page 5



Presidents' Perspective

by Peter and Jane Buchbauer

Mothers' Day

Not only are mothers complex individuals; motherhood itself is becoming increasingly complex.

Jane and I have different experiences of motherhood in our families. My mother was raised by her grandparents in Nazi Germany after her parents separated and divorced in New York. She was five or six when she and her sister took the trip across the ocean to a place where people wore yellow stars and blue armbands and bombs twice destroyed their home. At 20, she returned to the United States hoping to patch up her parents' marriage, only to find that her father had remarried a woman who knew nothing of his children. Though my mother lived with her mother for the last 15 years of my grandmother's life, there never seemed to be any emotional closeness between them.

It was when my mother married that she was embraced by a mother who loved her and showed her the joy of family and motherhood. My paternal grandmother, Rosina, was a short stocky German woman who loved people, cooking, and playing bingo. When Rosina died, my mom grieved as for a mother.

Jane comes from an extended family that has only recently seen its first divorce. While my mother took a well-organized approach to life and children, Jane lets housework go undone in order to play with or read to the children, or toting them to some activity. In her I have seen a genuine joy in mother-

hood; a joy in sharing God's creative power by nurturing blessings through infancy to childhood, childhood to adolescence, and for two of our children, adolescence to adulthood.

Katie, my secretary, the daughter of longtime friends from Church and CFM, is expecting her first child this June and I'm often reminded of those days when Jane and I were expecting the birth of our children. Every week Kate charts weight gain and the baby's size, speculates on its gender and ponders choice of names.

Sherry, a friend of mine, is a wife, a mother, a nurse, and an ardent volunteer. Her volunteer service frequently involves her husband and children as well. She is "mother" to the teens she leads in CYO; "mother" to the people she helps through the Parish Nursing program and mother in her home.

Lisa adopted two Asian daughters before she married. It is a delight to hear her children reciting responses and singing with great enthusiasm at Mass. Though their appearance might suggest that the children are not hers by birth, affectionate interaction and caring guidance make it clear that these children are definitely her girls.

Valerie is a teacher and the mother of three teenagers. Divorced for many years, she juggles the responsibilities of mother and father, homemaker and breadwinner, mentor and disciplinarian. She juggles well and surrounds herself

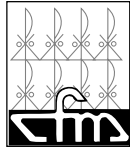
with families who share her desires for their children. With God's help, she perseveres and lovingly guides her children to adulthood.

A person who provides stability and loving attention, a person who always looks for the good and still has the wonder and surprise of every step one takes; a person who is active in living and teaching, by word and example: a mother.

Mothers are complicated beings. They share in the creative power of God; they nurture their children; they shape our lives for good or ill. Motherhood is a demanding profession. In today's world where many mothers go it alone without the assistance of a spouse, where many mothers need to work outside the home to meet the physical needs of their children, motherhood sometimes goes unnoticed or underappreciated. This month share in the joy of an anticipated birth; help ease the weight of the days for a couple waiting for an adoptive placement; help a mom with her many obligations; thank a mom for all she is doing for you and/or her children; find a way to move motherhood from the ordinary to the divine because without Mom and God, none of us would be here.

To all of the mothers, birth or adopted, from all of your husbands and children, may God bless you this month and always.

Peter and Jane Buchbauer, CFM Presidents, live in Winchester Virginia. Their children are Joseph, Peter, Michael and Maria.



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Want to touch base with CFMers around the country? Join CFM's e-mail exchange by contacting cfm-exchange@cfm.org

CFM's Mission

- ◆ to promote Christ-centered marriage and family life;
- ◆ to help individuals and their families to live the Christian faith in everyday life; and
- ◆ to improve society through actions of love, service, education and example.

Parent to Parent

by Mary Lou Gorman

Thoughtfulness



There is no doubt that everyone is pleased when someone replies to an invitation or sends a thank-you note for a gift. But lately these common courtesies seem to have fallen by the wayside. Our children watch what we do: Do they think these responses are not necessary? As parents we need to teach our children to be thoughtful. Think of the time and work it takes to purchase and wrap a gift. Think of the time and work a person devotes to planning a party or other special occasion. I was shocked when I spoke to a caterer the other day and he told me he advised clients to expect only a 70 per cent response to invitations. What has happened to people's sense of propriety if they can't respond to an invitation? Perhaps over the past 20 years or so parents have neglected to teach and remind their children that it's gracious to answer an R.S.V.P., or that it's necessary to send a thank you note. If we love and respect our friends we owe them this courtesy.

When another parent takes

your child on an excursion to a museum or a movie, it seems thoughtful to give them a quick phone call to say thanks. Carpooling is another opportunity where parents help one another. This takes time and energy and gas money, so it deserves some kind of extra "thank you." Many children are comfortable with the computer: Teach them to send e-mail to friends they need to thank. Teach them to write notes to coaches, teachers, pastors, etc. who help them. They need reminding, as we all do, to bring a little happiness into the lives of people who do us favors.

It is certainly a sign of caring when we extend courtesy to others. Our children will keep more friends and enjoy one another more if we teach them to be thoughtful. Actions speak louder than words:

Mary Lou and Phil Gorman have four daughters and fourteen grandchildren. They have been members of CFM since 1953.

On-Line Shopping Can Benefit CFM

There's a new way to support CFM. It's called "BuyForCharity" and it works when you shop on line.

When you buy online through BuyForCharity you pay the same amount as you normally would, and earn a commission for CFM. Just register with BuyForCharity (there's a link on the CFM web page) and specify Christian Family Movement (listed with religious organizations) as your charity of choice. Then start your shopping

from the BuyForCharity webpage and shop as you normally would.

Over 350 stores participate, including Barnes & Noble, Gap, Office Max, 1-800-Flowers, Martha Stewart, and Orbitz. Typical commissions are between 3.7 and 7.5 percent.

So when you plan to buy online, whether you are looking for airline tickets, flowers, clothes, music, or anything else, please consider using BuyForCharity to benefit CFM.

CFMers everywhere are concerned about the welfare of their families and the families in their communities. They are involved in many of the same kinds of actions as groups in the U.S. A recent survey found that CFM actions around the world include: marriage preparation, marriage enrichment, marriage/family counseling, Natural Family Planning and responsible parenthood, religious formation, programs for youth, apostolate for couples in irregular situations, retreats and seminars, advocacy for the disadvantaged and the unborn, political action and practicing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Throughout the world, CFM conducts small group meetings based on Observe-Judge-Act. Although most countries write and develop their own programming, it is not uncommon for groups in one country to use or adapt material from another country. For instance, Canadian CFM groups often use U.S. programming.

Each of the countries and continents where CFM is active has a structure that allows for the coordination of groups. Most of these schedule a variety of meetings and conferences. In July, the European CFMers will be holding a meeting in **Zagreb, Croatia**. A delegation from the U. S. will include: **Father Bill Young, Cleveland Ohio; Peter and Carolyn Broeren, Pittsburgh, Pa., Kathleen Young, Alexandria Va.; Wayne and Sue Hamilton, Ann Arbor, Mich., and Gary and Kay Aitchison, Ames Iowa.**

Here in the U.S., CFM has a unique composition. While most countries have a common CFM language and corresponding materials, more than half of the 4,000 CFM families in the United



The St Thomas More CFM group, **Glendale, Ariz.** held its third annual CFM Hike and Breakfast at the Cave Creek Recreation Area February 23. The group met at the Recreation Center and formed groups for three different hikes, one a little over a mile, one about 2.5 miles and a third over four miles. After completing the hikes, we all returned to the pavilion for omelets cooked to order, fruit, muffins and juice. The event is a great opportunity for members of the four CFM meeting groups to get together and socialize. We have a Social Committee and hold five social events each year.

Over 96 CFM members participated, including the 84-year-old grandmother of one member who hiked almost three miles up and around the mountain trail! Member **Cheryl Stuck** adds, "The day was beautiful, the trails were great, and there is nothing like camp-stove cooked food out in God's awesome country shared in love and fellowship with friends and family."

—by Gayle Wall

States are Spanish-speaking. These Spanish-speaking CFMers (*Movimiento Familiar Cristiano* in Spanish) have two separate divisions. They are MFC-USA and MFC-LA. The English speaking CFM and the two MFC groups each have a separate structure and leadership and follow different programs.

In an effort to support and connect CFM groups from around the world, the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements sponsors a World Assembly every three years. This assembly is open to any CFMer in the world. The Tenth World

Assembly is in the planning stages and will be held in July, 2004 in **San Jose, Calif.** The assembly has been held only once before in the U.S. (Chicago, 1986). The proposed theme for the assembly is: **Family: Artisans of an Evolving Society.** Participants will have the opportunity to be housed in MFC and CFM homes or at the conference site. This will be a unique opportunity for U.S. CFMers to meet and interact with their CFM brothers and sisters from around the world.

To learn more about ICCFM contact Gary and Kay Aitchison (e-mail ICCFMrep@cfm.org) or go to www.cfm.org.

The National Association for Catholic Family Life Ministers offers several ideas to parishes for supporting deployed military personnel and their families, including:

- Conduct a weekly prayer service to pray for peace and to pray for deployed members of the parish.
- Maintain a book of special intentions for military personnel and their families. Include their names in the General Intercessions at daily and Sunday Mass.
- Designate a person to drop regular notes of support from the parish to the person who is away and to maintain regular contact with the family.
- Send letters, care packages, and rosaries to soldiers overseas.
- Form support groups for family members of military personnel with the assistance of parishioners who have been in similar situations (Desert Storm, Viet Nam).
- Organize potluck gatherings of families so that they can spend time together getting to know one another.
- Allow children to discuss their concerns and worries for the deployed parent.
- Put together a "Crisis team" of individuals to visit families if a family member is reported as missing-in-action, wounded or killed.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has prepared a web site resource called "The Way to Peace," which includes suggestions for families. The direct link to the family materials is <http://www.usccb.org/publishing/peace/families.htm>.

From the National Chaplain

by Father Don Conroy

Grandparents



At 9:40 AM on Sunday, March 2, 2003, a cell phone rang at the CFM National Board Meeting. **Paul Leingang** hurriedly left the room and **Jane** quickly followed.

In a couple of minutes, both Leingangs returned to exclaim, "We are grandparents!"

Such joy is repeated across the country and around the world, and grandparenting deserves attention from all who seek to build up the quality and value of family life within the Church community and the nation.

Dr. Carolyn Gutowski, Research Director at the National Institute for the Family, has issued a report on Grandparenting in the United States: It states:

- There are 70 million grandparents, one third of the adult population and 79% of all Americans over 55 years of age.
- People from the Baby-Boom Generation (born between 1946 to 1964) have been becoming grandparents in increasingly large numbers during the past decade.
- Life expectancy and quality of life are now much greater than in the past so grandparents and great-grandparents can enjoy more years of grandparenting.

- And (to my surprise) the average age of first time grandparents is 48.

These facts all point to an important pastoral and spiritual resource we have often overlooked. Grandparents and the inter-generational family can be a tremendous positive source for renewing family values and Christian living in our time!

In talking with Dr. Gutowski, who is the author of the very informative book *Grandparents Are Forever*, I asked her about what can be done to foster the mission and ministry of grandparents.

She pointed to two things:
First, involve the grandparents by affirming their mission and ministry to help the new grandchildren and their parents beginning at the time of Baptism.

Second, realize that contemporary grandparents are young, dynamic, and very interested in the total development (body, mind, and spirit) of their grandchildren.

My question to you as CFMers is: What can we as the Christian Family Movement do to promote grandparenting and how can this contribute to furthering our CFM mission?

To share your insights, comments, and grandparenting stories, contact me by e-mail at chaplain@cfm.org



Taking the Time to Make a Difference

by Paul R. Leingang

Lord, have mercy

"Lord, ham mercy." That's what she printed on the poster. "Lord, ham mercy."

My class of elementary school kids were working on a religious education project at the time. It was quickly obvious to me that this phrase—one that meant something to me—meant nothing to them. The words seemed to sound the same, but they had no meaning, not to the child making the poster.

Some years later, some friends and I were discussing the notion of "mercy" as a Christian value. They didn't like the word, as I recall, because it seemed to put one person in a superior position. As far as they were concerned, only a person with power could show mercy to another person who was somehow beneath them beneath them in social status, economic condition or intellectual ability.

I think my friends had the same problems as my elementary school kids. They heard the sounds, but they too did not know the meaning of the words.

Of course, I may also be wrong, but "mercy" to me has come to mean a way of describing the relationship we have with each other. Not superior to inferior, but equal to equal.

I base my conclusion on the old traditional list of the "Corporal Works of Mercy" and the "Spiritual Works of Mercy." If you've never heard of them or it's been so long that you have forgotten most of them, here is the list.

The "Corporal Works of Mercy" are usually listed this way:

- Feed the hungry.*
- Give drink to the thirsty.*
- Clothe the naked.*
- Welcome the stranger.*
- Visit the sick.*
- Visit the imprisoned.*
- Bury the dead.*

Mercy is not "letting people get away with wrongdoing."

The "Spiritual Works of Mercy" are listed, as I recall (and an Internet site bolsters my memory), in this way:

- Admonish the sinner.*
- Instruct the ignorant.*
- Counsel the doubtful.*
- Comfort the sorrowful.*
- Bear wrongs patiently.*
- Forgive all injuries.*
- Pray for the living and the dead.*

At presstime, hostilities have just commenced between the U.S. and Iraq. Mercy is not seen as a military virtue, but I say that it must be ours as Christians.

Mercy is not what we show to our inferiors. Mercy is not "letting people get away with wrongdoing." Mercy is not allowing injustice.

Mercy is an expansion of the Golden Rule, if you will. If I want

others to care for me when I am hungry and thirsty, then I know how I should respond to their needs.

Perhaps more difficult is this idea—that I have an obligation to admonish the sinner, and at the same time, to accept admonishment when I am the sinner.



"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." That's what we read in the fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

I know I should feed the hungry and comfort the sorrowful, and so on. It is harder for me to accept the possibility—really, the fact—that I too am hungry and imprisoned and ignorant and sinful.

Such are my thoughts in these days of war.



Take the time today to see who are the hungry and thirsty in the world in which you live. See to it that another receives what is needed—a child in your house who is hungry, a homeless person on the street, and even the wrong-doer who has justly been imprisoned for a crime.

When have you wronged another? When have you been wronged? Take the time to seek reconciliation.

Pray for a just peace.

Paul is director of communications for the Diocese of Evansville, Ind.; and editor of the Message, the diocesan newspaper. His weekly column Taking the Time to Make a Difference is syndicated in a number of diocesan newspapers. Paul and Jane Leingang are executive directors of CFM.

Your Marriage: The Great Adventure

by Lauri Przybysz

Prayer Resources for Couples



Though you got married on a particular date and in a particular location, you and your beloved are still becoming married. Your sacrament is unfolding as time goes on, becoming a sign of God's faithful love in all life's ups and downs. A time of change and transition is a teachable moment. It may be a happy change, like the coming of a new child or grandchild or starting a new job; or a crisis, like the onset of illness or a tragic loss. Married couples can look back on another time of transition—their wedding day—for wisdom that faith has to offer.

No matter how long you have been married, you may find blessing in reflecting on the prayers and readings of a wedding liturgy. You may recall exactly the chapters and verses of your own wedding Bible readings, or those details may be

lost in the mists of time. If you were wed after the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, you were invited to choose scripture readings that fit your situations and future hopes from a group of suggested scripture selections. Couples that have been married more than 30 years or so probably share exactly the same readings. A list of selected wedding scripture citations is provided here. Reading a few together could be a fruitful and loving prayer exercise.

While there are many readings to choose from now, they have common themes. The Old Testament readings teach that human beings have a noble purpose in life. While a few readings suggested for weddings reflect patriarchal attitudes of other cultures, taken together the texts show the equal dignity of the sexes. Many of the current choices reflect the mutual-

ity, friendship and partnership the Church encourages today. The New Testament texts address the couple as individual disciples as well as spouses. In these readings, married love is a prophetic sign of the kingdom of God, depicted as a joyous wedding feast.

Beautiful and encouraging prayers were offered for you on your wedding day. If you would like to look at the prayers again, see *Together for Life* by Father Joseph Champlin from Ave Maria Press. This popular resource booklet, containing all of the possible prayer and Scripture alternatives and excellent commentaries, may be available from your parish office or from the publisher. In the Wedding Prayers, the couple meets the Creator of the Universe, who invites them to be God's ambassadors, "a holy mystery, a symbol of Christ's love for his Church." The prayers enlist the couple in a vocation of service to the community. By welcoming children, creating a home, forgiving hurts, and honoring one another, the couple will mirror God's faithful love.

Scripture and the liturgy of the Church remind us of the importance of marriage throughout salvation history, the beauty of marital passion, and the value of family connections. Marriage challenges couples, and those who pray with them, to reflect the potent life and love of the One in whose image they are made.

Lauri and John Przybysz live in Severna Park, Md., and are the parents of six children. Lauri is coordinator of marriage preparation and enrichment for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Selected Wedding Scriptures

- Genesis 2:18-24*
- Tobit 8:4-9*
- Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a*
- Sirach 26: 1-4, 16-21*
- Romans 8:31-35, 37-39*
- 1 Corinthians 12: 31-13:8*
- Ephesians 5:2a-21-33*
- Colossians 3:12-17*
- 1 John: 4:7-12*
- Matthew 5: 13-16*
- Matthew 22: 35-40*
- Mark 10: 6-9*
- John 2: 1-11*
- John 15: 12-18*

From the Blessing of the Bride and Groom

*Lord,
 may they both praise you
 when they are happy
 And turn to you in their sorrows.
 May they be glad
 that you help them in their work,
 And know that you are with them
 in their need.
 May they reach old age
 in the company of their friends,
 And come at last
 to the kingdom of heaven.
 We ask this
 through Christ our Lord,
 Amen.*

Cut and fold to make a bookmark.

SPOTLIGHT

Colleen Kiesel reports that their CFM group at St. Peter and Paul, **Haubstadt, Ind.**, joined with the Health Care Committee at nearby St. James to host a volleyball tournament for charity. Fourteen teams registered. The event was the brainchild of CFMer **Michelle Elpers**, who enlisted the assistance of the youth group to referee, keep score and provide child care. The event raised \$600 through team fees, concessions and raffles. In addition, several participants inquired about joining CFM.

Terri Cameron of Assumption Parish in **Woodridge, N.J.**, says, "We held a progressive dinner in December as a Christmas celebration, but it would make a great end of the year event also. Different families hosted the appetizer, main course and dessert portions of

the dinner. Those families not hosting at their homes assisted the host families in the preparation of the food. Everyone had a great time. The kids particularly enjoyed moving from home to home for the next course of the meal. I would recommend this event to other groups."

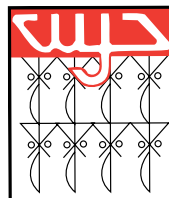
Over 50 CFM members from Our Lady of Guadalupe, **Hermosa Beach, Calif.**, rented seven cabins in Big Bear as part of their yearly snow trip. Many snowboarders and skiers hit the slopes Friday and Saturday, while Sunday was spent admiring the beauty of God's creation and packing to come home. One CFM family witnessed the true meaning of Christian family when their van went up in flames on the journey home. They were able to transfer all their luggage and gear into the other cars and get home safely.

Tom and Laura Toussaint, assistant leaders at Holy Family parish in **Inverness, Ill.**, report their group has developed community spirit through having special men's and women's events in addition to their regular meetings. They also had two meetings this year that included children. Tom wrote a meeting on prayer that is posted on the CFM website and also adapted the meeting on prejudice in *Evidence of Faith* to include children.

John Zatko, leader of the St. Boniface/Our Lady of Lourdes group in **Elmore, Ohio**, reports that their group enjoys going out together for dinner and fellowship. They also planned a meeting to include children that featured discussion time and games as well as a potluck. They plan to start a new group in the fall.

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