

# The ARK

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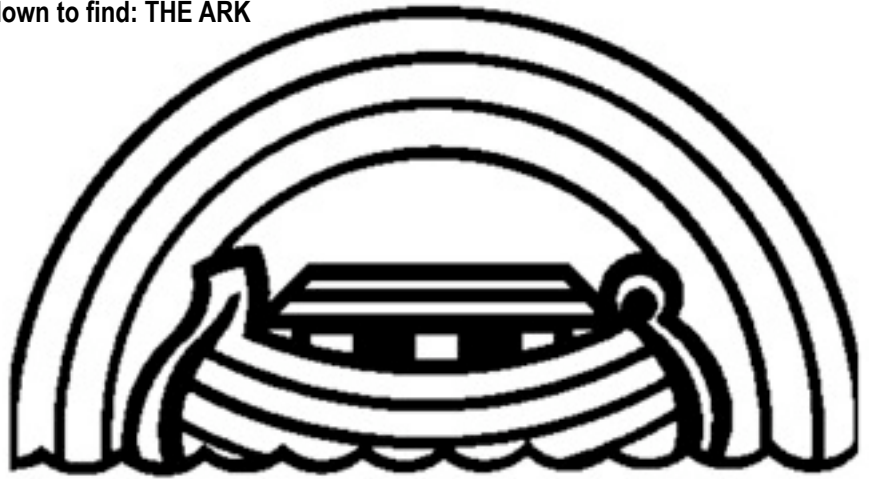
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**Interchurch Families: Christian Unity  
Made Visible in our Households**



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

**Christmas  
greetings ~  
Hope came to  
us in the form  
of a child**

“Sometimes God has a kid’s  
face” by Sister Mary Rose  
McGeady; Covenant House,  
2010

“Outliers, the story of  
Success” by Malcom Gladwell;  
Back Bay Books - Little Brown  
and Company; New York,  
Boston, and London; 2008

**Love is an  
action  
verb:** Compassion



*1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another,  
for love is from God, and whoever loves has  
been born of God and knows God.*



**2011**

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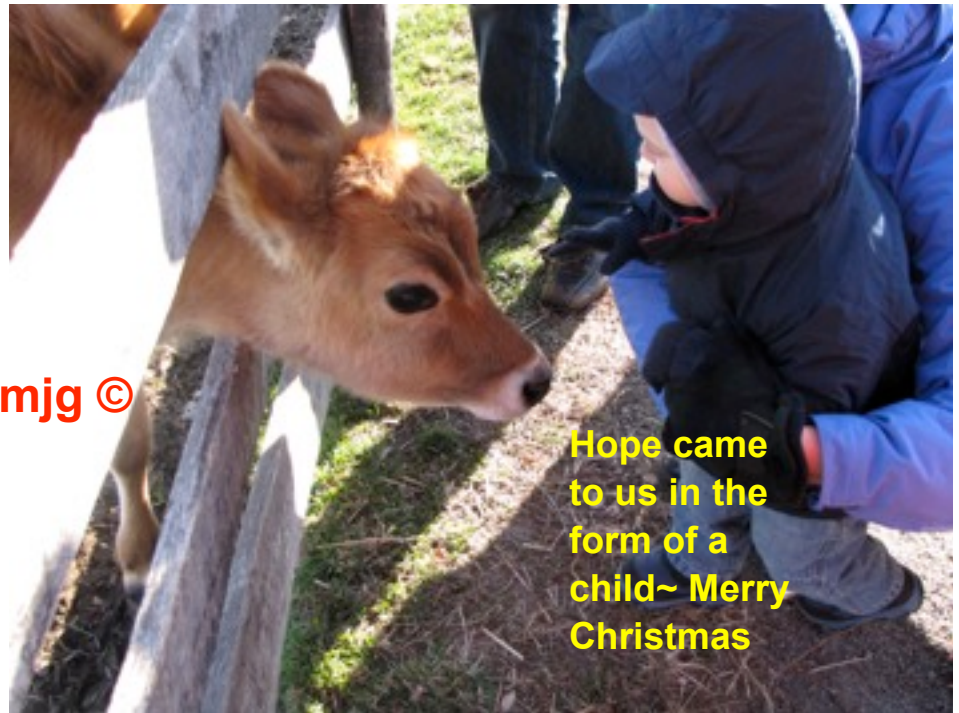
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The fiscal year runs from  
June 30 - July 1



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Hope came  
to us in the  
form of a  
child~ Merry  
Christmas

## Christmas Gift Giving = Love in action

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**"Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do... but how much love we put in that action"**

~ Mother Teresa

**"The love of God is creative to infinity."**

- St. Vincent de Paul

**"I bound myself by oath, I made a covenant with you... and you became mine."** Ezekiel 16:8

**"The only way love can last a lifetime is if it's unconditional. The truth is this: love is not determined by the one being loved but rather by the one choosing to love."** - Stephen Kendrick, *The Love Dare*

*"This is the secret of life: the self lives only by dying, finds its identity (and its happiness) only by self-forgetfulness, self-giving, self-sacrifice, and agape love."* - Peter Kreeft, *Jesus-Shock*

**"Spread the love of God through your life but only use words when necessary."** ~ Mother Teresa



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## Hope in the face of adversity; effort is needed: Malcolm Gladwell gives some insight

As Interchurch Families and as ecumenists in search for Christian Unity, it may be well worth our time to consider the ways that the family and community may help to foster success or accidentally prevent success.

In his book, *The Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell describes the success, and often times great success of some people, by delving into their culture and family. The ways that families encourage success may be far more by their own lived circumstances and how they “made do” over the years that contributes to the outstanding achievement and success of certain individuals. Malcolm Caldwell believes that outstanding examples of success relies on circumstances within the community, the family and, of course, a certain amount of sheer luck or happenstance.

Malcolm Gladwell, in his book, [Outliers: the Story of Success](#), (Back Bay Books, Little Brown and Company, New York, Boston and London, 2008) delves into the factors that help to promote and to discourage success of which we may not consciously be aware. Gladwell’s book “illuminates



secret patterns behind everyday phenomena..... Gladwell tears down the myth of individual merit to explore how culture, circumstances, timing, birth and luck account for great success.” John Raskin in the San Francisco Chronicle explained that he had found Gladwell’s book to be “Unabashedly inspiring...A provocative and practical book about the landscape of success.”

The Economist points out that the book, [Outliers: the Story of Success](#), is a “compelling read with an important message: by understanding better what makes people successful we should be able to produce more successful (and happy) people.”

Gladwell talks about longevity, highly successful hockey players, students who excel in

math, and asks what factors contributed to longevity in one community and the top ranking hockey players in another community. Gladwell digs deeper and goes beyond a cursory glance to see the factors that contribute to success (and failure.)

“Malcolm Gladwell is an outlier - someone whose achievements fall outside the boundaries of the norm...He is an extraordinarily successful author and public speaker who has made a name for himself by making people think about the world a little differently with Gladwell’s insights, unconventional, counterintuitive takes on research in the social sciences.”

Reading his ideas, considering his insights, observing his counterintuitive thoughts about



Hope came to us in the form of a child ~ Merry Christmas

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years. How many teenagers in the world had the kind of experience Gates had?" So our early experiences matter.

Malcolm Gladwell has been criticized for perhaps being too simplistic or crude in the way that he approaches the topic of Success in North America. In an interview, Malcolm Gladwell explains, "What I came to realize in writing *Outliers*, though, is that we've been far too focused on the individual —on describing the

what brings about success in general may help all readers to consider how they/we go about viewing the world around us. Being exposed to ways that are unconventional and counterintuitive, but which bring about success may help to allow us to consider other options for finding solutions to problematic situations.

I am recommending Malcolm Gladwell's book: *The Outliers* to interchurch families and to ecumenists because he shows us examples of how people have achieved success from a different perspective.

Gladwell's section on the causes of plane crashes, of course, exposes us to some difficult and sad experiences; however, he leaves us with a

sense of hope in the face of adversity.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* brings to our attention, The Beatles success as it was explained in "Outliers," by Malcolm Gladwell: "And what was so special about Hamburg? It wasn't that it paid well. It didn't. Or that the acoustics were fantastic. They weren't. Or that the audiences were savvy and appreciative. They were anything but. It was the sheer amount of time the band was forced to play."

On Bill Gates: The *Winnipeg Free Press* notes that Gladwell had observed, "By the time Gates dropped out of Harvard after his sophomore year to try his hand at his own software company, he'd been programming practically non-stop for seven consecutive

characteristics and habits and personality traits of those who get furthest ahead in the world. And that's the problem, because in order to understand "the outlier" I think you have to look around them—at their culture and community and family and generation. We've been looking at tall trees, and I think we should have been looking at the forest," Gladwell explained. A lot of the book is an attempt to describe the lives of successful people, but to tell their stories in a different way than we're used to perceiving the factors that bring about solutions and contribute to success.

Christmas is a time of great hope; this season gives us a chance for renewal. Reading Gladwell's book: [The Outliers. A Story of Success](#) was a pleasant experience; I found

great hope for the world through his observations and insight.



**Faith into action: The purpose of the Covenant House Faith Community**

# “To Leave Our Kids’ World, and All of Our Worlds, A Better Place Than We Found It”

In her book, “Sometimes God has a kid’s face,” Sister Mary Rose McGeady notes that “literally a million innocent, homeless American kids are lost and alone and sometimes dying on America’s streets.” Kevin Ryan says that “For thirteen years, while much of America was either unaware or unconcerned that homeless children were dying on our streets, Sister Mary Rose worked diligently at a crisis center for homeless and runaway kids.” They came to her shelter “in droves,” Ryan noted.

Kevin Ryan reminds us of Jesus’ directive to us: “What you do to the least of My children, you do to Me.”

You may be asking yourselves if this pertains to American Interchurch Families exclusively. The answer is definitively, “NO!” American Interchurch Families stay connected to their denominational faith based communities and are nurtured by that connectedness. We are further nurtured by our membership in the American Association of Interchurch Families.

On the other hand, as Interchurch Families, we live in a greater community that is suffering. We also note that for whatever reasons church membership and attendance have decreased in our greater culture according to Pew research and studies. As interchurch families, we note that one option some potential

interchurch families face is to become non-church members, removed from any and all denominations. Among ourselves, we may ask for the many causal factors for this drop in church membership and for the observable break down in the American family.

This is not a time to say that one religion is better than another because this kind of thinking doesn’t promote seeking the necessary solutions that are needed.



Hope came to us at Christmas in the form of a child ~ Merry Christmas

Finger pointing and pushing blame around wastes precious human energy and time without being able to study the situation in an unbiased way to be able to find a way to resolve problems. This kind of behavior, finger pointing, pushing blame around, or a form of triumphalism keeps people stuck in a non-problem solving mode.

There is great potential within the painfulness of this situation for the creation of unity, if we are able to work together toward finding solutions for America's real social problems as a united effort and a united community of Christians.

Sister Mary Rose included a **“Family Survival Guide; Reflections on Raising Kids Today - And we must each of us do what we can to repair it. Now! The question is how?”**

Sister Mary Rose McGeady begins by discussing “Values - Teaching Them in Today's World” where she indicates that “Communicating your values has never been more important than it is today.” She notes that “the good news is, that it all begins and ends with you...Parents have far more influence over instilling values

in their kids than any other factor.”

Then she asks, “How can each of us make a difference in repairing the American family?”

... “The time for rescuing endangered families and rescuing their children is not after they have fallen apart!” Sister Mary Rose clarifies.

**Sister Mary Rose lists “some simple, and very important, things we should all remember about values, and passing them along:”**

\* **“Kids get their sense of what's right and wrong from people they love and respect.** No one has more influence over teaching values than you do. Your input can make all the difference!”

\* **“Actions always speak louder than words when it comes to teaching values.** Kids today have a “show me” mentality. They need to see the values lived out by you. Respect for life, respect for other people, honesty, integrity... Kids get those from watching you. The old saw has never been more true: children do learn what they live!”

\* **“Families are still the best vehicle for raising children.** A loving, nurturing family unit, of whatever form, creates the kind of environment kids need to learn what's right and wrong... and how to love themselves too. Values are

best inculcated in an environment of love and acceptance.”

\* **“Always take time to sit (listen) and talk to your kids.** Don't be afraid to say what you feel ( but don't ever be too closed to listen to what your kids think.)”

\* **“Always strive to teach your kids to love and respect themselves as children of God.**

A healthy love and respect for themselves is incredibly important for any kid. It's also the first essential step in helping a kid also learn a love and respect for those around him/her, and God.”

“Nobody has said it better than Jesus.

Those three words, **“Love Thy Neighbor....”** which is an important message for every kid!”

As Christian Communities, how do we seek to nurture this kind of support for family units? Sister Mary Rose's journal is filled with practical advice for anyone who is raising a teenager or who will be.

\* Sister Mary Rose encourages us to **“Tolerate differences.”** She adds that we must, “View our/your teenager as an individual distinct from you.” Then she adds that “This doesn't mean you can't state your opinion if you disagree.”

\* **“Respect your teenager’s privacy,”** Sister Mary Rose notes and then adds, “If a behavior is worrying you, speak up.”

\* Sister Mary Rose adds, **“Let your teens sort things out themselves.** Never say you know how your teen feels. They believe their feelings, so new and so personal, are unique. They’ll learn otherwise without our help. And never imply that their feelings don’t matter or will change. Because **teens live in the present,** it doesn’t matter that they’ll soon feel differently.”

\* Sister Mary Rose explains, **“Don’t Judge. State facts instead of opinions when you praise or criticize.** Stating facts like, ‘Your poem made me smile,’ or “This report card is all C’s and D’s leaves it up to your teen to draw the appropriate conclusions.” Sister Mary Rose

adds that “teens are sensitive about being judged, positively as well as negatively.”

\* Sister Mary Rose suggests that in dealing with teenagers, **“Be generous with praise. Praise your child’s efforts, not just accomplishments.”** She clarifies by stating, “And don’t comment on the person when we give praise. ‘You’re a great artist is hard to live up to. ‘I loved that drawing’ is a fact and it comes from the heart.

\* Sister Mary Rose advises us to **“Set reasonable limits. Teens need them. Your rules should be consistently applied, and rooted in your deepest beliefs and values.”** This may require us to reflect seriously on our values and what we are modeling for future generations.

\* Then she adds, **“Teach your teen to make sensible decisions and choices by encouraging independence and letting your teenager make mistakes. Don’t step in unless you have to.”**

This reminds me a lot of how God’s allows us to make choices; not all of them are wise choices, but God also allows us to correct our mistakes and to learn from them. As a community and a family we are simply putting God’s love into action, following God’s example.

Following the examples that God provided us, may we find the courage and strength to seek Christian Unity among our diversity.

Sister Mary Rose invites us to **“Think solution, not victory.”** She advises, **“Don’t try to win arguments.”**



She is talking about how we should approach our own teenage children, but the basic concept of “Think solution, not victory” would dramatically improve life in our country at this time. Any time, we may have encountered someone who simply wants to argue, and this happens for some reason at the present time. Perhaps we have watched far too many TV talk shows or far too

Hope came to us at Christmas in the form of a child ~ Merry Christmas

much “reality TV” recently so that we have forgotten that arguments tend not to be resolved by shouting matches. This is all we seem to see on television unless we consciously tune in to view something else, and make an effort to seek alternatives.

None the less, we will still be faced with TV programming that sensationalizes life and events in many formats since it has a shock value that amounts to that old saying, “If it bleeds, it leads” in our media so that they can sell their product.

Sister Mary Rose cautions us to **“Stick to the present incident. Fighting old battles will only aggravate a situation.”** That does make sense for dealing with a teenage child. We are living now and can only act in the present.

Perhaps we should also apply it to those dialogues in which we seek to lay the ground work for Christian Unity. If we cite an incident from history as a criticism of the other side in a dialogue, the dialogue is over. That person lives in this time and place, and is as much subject to historical events as the next person. However, one person’s past history may have put their antecedents on the side where benefits were gained and the other person in the potential dialogue may have had ancestors who suffered as a result of the same

historical event. “Stick to the present incident,” advice from Sister Mary Rose will work in any dialogue we are about to engage in. If we begin to try to fight old battles, that prevents us from seeking common ground for the current situation. We can’t change historical events, but we can work on what happens now. We must live and act in this time period.

I am not saying that history shouldn’t be studied. Quite the contrary, we should be studying historical events presented from many diverse viewpoints. Then we can begin our real dialogue from a perspective that is genuinely educated.

I have heard parents complain that “World Religions” were being studied at their child’s Christian based school. They only wanted their child to be exposed to their own faith tradition. I believe that this was based on a fear that their child might see a religion out there that they liked better. Fear can be counterproductive if it isn’t fully recognized as such and examined.

The USCCB has developed strategies for *“Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity;”* please go to the following link for further information <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/welcome.shtml>

Encouraging our society to have a heightened “Fear of the stranger” is a mistake for the

real task that we have before us, as parents, as Interchurch Families, or citizens in general to create Christian Unity. This fear of the stranger, xenophobia, prevents us from meeting the individual person who may be before us. This prevents us from looking for that of God in everyone we meet which is our major task in life.

Our teenage children may seem like total strangers to us at times too. We must reach out to them in love. However, we are called to reach out to the global community with Christ’s love as our inspiration and guiding principles as examples for them of the “Golden Rule.”

We have examples in the Bible of how Christ interacted at the well with a stranger, a woman from Samaria. Acting contrary to accepted practices, Christ drinks from the same vessel of water from which the Samaritan woman has drunk. Christ’s lived example of greeting the stranger and of welcoming the stranger as he would one of his own people is given to us as an example for how we should act in John 4.

In Matthew 25:35 it states:

***“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,”***

**That stranger was Jesus; welcoming the**

stranger has the potential to allow us to see that of God in others and to find that of God when we least expect it.

Whereas in our ordinary existence and daily life, we may find it difficult to encounter “others” who we may perceive as strangers among us. Whether it is caused by fear or a lack of opportunity due to our personal experiences or life style that prevents us from encountering the strangers or others from whom we have the potential to gain great insights, we must seek out such opportunities so we can grow. Make good use of any advantage coming your way that may allow you the opportunity to reach out to the stranger.

***In Luke 10:27 , we are told that it is right to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ “***

However, in Luke 10:29 we read the question **“And who is my neighbor?”** If we read all of Luke 10, we find the parable of the man who was



robbed on his way to Jericho. In Luke 10:36-37 we read, **“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”** 37 The expert in the law replied, **“The one who had mercy on him.”** Jesus told him, **“Go and do likewise.”**

Repeatedly, in the Bible we find “Do not be afraid.” John 6:20; Proverbs 3:25-26; Proverbs 3:27- 28; Proverbs 3:29-31; Proverbs 3:31; Proverbs 3:13-24; Matthew 17:7; Acts 18:10; Isaiah 41:10; Psalms 23; Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:9; 1 Chronicles 22:13; 1 Peter 3:14; Mark 6:51; Ezekiah 22:14; Proverbs 18:10; Psalm 18:32-26;

We are never alone, God is with us, but we must be open

to finding God in our ordinary daily lived experiences. Be hopeful as you follow Christ’s example.

#### **Summary Commentary:**

Two Books, one by Malcolm Gladwell: [The Outliers, A Story of Success](#) and the other: [“Sometimes God has a kid’s face,”](#) by Sister Mary Rose McGeady and Kevin Ryan.

Gladwell points out that our misconception may be that “We sometimes think of being good in mathematics as an innate ability. You either have “it” or you don’t. Schoenfeld discovered that “It’s not so much ability as attitude. You master mathematics if you are willing to try.”...”Success is the function of persistence and

doggedness and the willingness to work at something long after the average person would have given up.”

Gladwell draws a correlation between meaningful work and a cultural bias toward the relationship of hard work and success. Gladwell is asking us as readers to look a little differently at what creates success and our role in being able to accomplish that.

In the book, “Sometimes God Has a Kid’s Face,” we are being asked to look for solutions to an American problem. Will we be able able to look at this problem in a way that produces real solutions? Will we be able to find new approaches to problems so that they can be remedied and the quality of life improved for all of us? “We are asked to think solution, not victory.” We are cautioned, “Don’t try to win arguments.”

**As a Christian community, we may also be called upon to give insight for what we understand to be true.**

**Our friends may ask for help in finding clearness in their life choices. This concept has great potential within it for us to work across traditional denominational lines in our efforts to find solutions, real solutions, on our path toward Christian Unity, Peace and Prosperity for all.**



# THE ANGELS AMONG US

Think about looking for that of God in the face of the people you may meet on any given day during the up-coming year.  
Have a very healthy and happy new year!!!

How do we put our Love into action in the world around us so that we can make a difference and do something that is good in the sight of God, our creator?

*"Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me; O LORD, be my help. You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give you thanks forever."*  
Psalm 30:10-12

*Book Reviews and an application for Interchurch Families and Ecumenists - by M.J. Glauber*

**Family Relationships, as shown to us in Wendell Berry’s book, “Hannah Coulter, a novel”**

*...”while the rest of us women began to clear the table and wash the dishes and set things back to rights. For me this was maybe the best part of all. We had the quiet then of women working together, making order again after the commotion and hurry of the meal. I have always loved the easy conversation of*

*such times. That day everybody had something to remember, something that others also remembered, about other Christmases and they told it to enjoy it again and to enjoy it together."*

~ voice of Hannah Coulter  
from page 39

**Hannah Coulter, a novel** by  
Wendell Berry  
Shoemaker & Hoard  
A Division of Avalon Publishing  
Group, Inc. 2004  
ISBN 1-59376-036-1

The description of women cleaning up after a large Christmas dinner is true to my experience of having grown up before electric dishwashers became so common place. Besides, our house would have been the last one to get a dishwasher; in fact my mother never did buy one so we always had to work together doing dishes.

Even as a young girl, I was expected to be with the women in the kitchen at my great aunt's home along with my grandmother, and my mother to observe and to help in all the ways that I could. It was there that gentle conversations were shared and great wisdom was imparted from generation to the next. This is where and how I believe that we find God present in the ordinary activities of our lives. Wendell Berry does such an excellent job of highlighting what went on in that time and place. This book of fiction, **Hannah Coulter, A Novel** is filled with

so many rich examples from start to finish that it is almost next to impossible to select one to highlight as being the one that shows God's presence in our ordinary interactions. This one pertains to Christmas. The greatest joy this young adult woman got at Christmas was the "easy conversation" with other women in her family who were "remembering something so they could all enjoy it over again together." This is a real gift that lasts.

Once again, I highly recommend this book of fiction about family relationships. All families are holy. The family is the foundation of all of society. We refer to our homes as "Domestic Churches" or "The Little Churches of the Home." The role that the home plays in creating a sense of belonging and being able to relate to the greater community is very important.

As interchurch families, we believe that we have and will continue to develop unique and special gifts that will be beneficial for our communities for the continuance and further development of Christian Unity if we are nurtured properly.

Book review and application for interchurch families

by Mary Jane Glauber



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**~ Merry  
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## Everyone, Everywhere: Jesus is found in mission, not outreach

By Lynette Wilson,  
October 17, 2011



[Episcopal News Service]

In late 2007 the Rev. Zach Drennen, at the time working as a teacher and chaplain at a school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, decided to take a three-month, self-funded sabbatical.

But rather than hike the Appalachian Trail or climb Mount Kilimanjaro, Drennen, who was ordained an Episcopal priest in 2002, decided to spend some time with long-time missionaries William "Gerry" and Nancy Hardison in Maseno, Kenya, where they run the Maseno Mission Hospital and St. Philip's Theological Seminary.

He volunteered at the hospital and taught at the seminary, where he met Anglican Bishop Zakayo Iteba Epusi of the Diocese of Katakwa. It was through that relationship that one year later, in the fall of 2008, Drennen, by now an Episcopal Church-appointed missionary, found himself in Amagoro, a town in western Kenya near the border with Uganda, running the Elewana Education Project, a non-

government organization rooted in the diocese that provides education scholarships to students and builds modern computer labs in schools throughout western Kenya. The project also connects Kenyan and American schools through interactive partnerships similar to parish-to-parish companion relationships, including organized mission trips.

"It's going on four years now ... I've never held a job as long as this one. It seems to fit me like an old shoe," he said. "I feel very, very called to this."

Drennen was one of more than 300 people from 63 dioceses and a dozen countries gathered at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado, Oct. 13-16 for Everyone, Everywhere 2011, a conference of domestic and international missionaries and partners from across the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Throughout the conference a theme developed around approaching mission from a different angle; not as "givers" to "receivers," but **as seeking to build relationships and connections with others -- connections that lead to a better understanding of one's self in relationship to God.**

"[Mission] is about building relationships ... **through relationships, each of us is able to become more of what God created us to be.** Mission is an empowering ministry ... you hear it all the time; 'let your light shine

bright.' Together our lights shine brighter," Drennen said.

"It's really energizing and affirming to be around people who are energized by mission; mission is such a small part of the church that it can be isolating," he said, adding that the conference provided a great place to network. **"Mission survives on getting people to come and visit."**

In addition to fellowship and networking opportunities, the four-day conference offered opportunities to learn about topics ranging from agricultural development to fundraising for mission; and plenary speakers offered their take on mission and its changing role in the life of the church. **"Mission is who we are and what we are as Christians,"** said Monica Vega in a plenary session Oct. 15.

**"Mission is what defines the church ... not the church that defines the mission ... [We] tend to build relationships around sparkling moments, but we really need the other not in the light, but in the shadow -- it is in the shadow where we recognize each other."**

Vega is an Argentina-born church-appointed missionary serving the Isibindi Project, which assists orphaned children living in households affected by HIV/AIDS by training child and youth care workers to care for the children in their homes, in the Diocese of Grahamstown in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

She shared the story of an affluent lawyer she called "Tom," **who had to allow himself to become**

**vulnerable enough to see himself in another.**

While on a mission trip, Tom -- completely out of his element, feeling inadequate, and relying on an interpreter to communicate -- visited a home where a couple was caring for their grandson, whose mother, their daughter, had died when the boy was young. When Tom arrived, the grandmother took out a memory box and began sharing mementos of her daughter's life.

Meanwhile, the boy went outside to sit under a nearby tree. It turned out that Tom also had lost his mother when he was a boy, and it was in the eyes of the boy sitting under the tree -- eyes in which Tom could see the child's mourning for his mother -- that he also saw himself.

So often, Vega said, people embark upon mission trips with grand plans for building or remodeling something and they arrive with their hands full of things to give away and ready to get to work, but it is in the plans and the busyness of getting to work that the true purpose of mission is lost.

**"Mission is not something you plan, it is about movement to go and see .... Leave your comfort zone and security and leave behind the idea of what you think mission is all about," Vega said. "The hands are for healing ... go with hands open to receive. If you are holding things, you're not able to touch the other.**

During an Oct. 14 reception sponsored by Episcopal Relief & Development, Bishop Stacy Sauls, the church's chief operating officer,

talked about **the difference between outreach and mission, sharing a personal story about "finding God in the other"** from a time when he was a parish priest at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The church, he said, had a reputation for outreach and social justice, but Sundays, he said, were reserved for worship.

Then one Sunday after a service, a homeless man showed up at the door asking an usher if he could see the "pastor." The usher relayed the request to Sauls, who -- mind already made up, regardless of the man's request, that he would say, "no" -- busied himself for as long as possible before approaching the homeless man.

When he finally asked, "How can I help you?" the man simply said: **"Pray for Hobie."**

To which Sauls followed, **"Who is Hobie?"**

"As he patted his chest, mine was broken open," said Sauls, adding that they the prayed together for a while, until he was called away to deal with another "important" parish matter.

When he returned, Hobie was gone, as if he'd never been there at all, driving home the lesson: **"People are more important than policy and mission more important than outreach.** You can do a lot of outreach, but **mission is about meeting Jesus,"** Sauls said. **Through outreach -- soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, mission trips -- the church provides its members with**

**the opportunity to meet Jesus,** he added.

During the closing Eucharist Oct. 16, Sauls preached a sermon, "Meeting Jesus in Mission."

The conference, which ended with an upbeat Eucharist -- including a prelude and postlude by the Kutandara Marimba Experience, a Boulder, Colorado-based band that fuses African music traditions with Latin, jazz, gospel, classical, and world folk influences -- sent out many of those in attendance with renewed energy.

"It is so encouraging and life-giving to be around people who are excited about mission," said Robin Denney, who served two and a half years as an appointed missionary in South Sudan, where she taught theology courses and trained clergy and others in agricultural development.

Upon returning to the United States, Denney returned to the Diocese of El Camino Real, her home diocese, where she is working to build an "emerging," bilingual church in Gonzales, California. (During the conference, she conducted an hour-long workshop based on a curriculum she wrote.)

Going forward, she said, she sees **"mission moving toward health relationships and being a kingdom, rather than the older, paternalistic approach to mission."**

My hope, she said, "is that we go out and shake things up."  
**-- Lynette Wilson is an editor/reporter for Episcopal News Service.**

Many thanks are extended to all those people who made this edition of the ARK possible

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Especially, I would like to thank my husband, Peter, and our family for their on going encouragement.



Hope came to us in the world in the form of child

On behalf of AAIF and the ARK, a publication of the American Association of Interchurch Families, We would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas

Make plans now to attend the next  
AAIF Biennial Conference

to be held in 2012 - July 13-15 in Collegeville, MN  
Please see [www.aifusa.org](http://www.aifusa.org) for on-going updates

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