

Mission Moments -- January 12, 2007
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From the Center for U.S. Missions
Following Jesus into the U.S. Mission Field
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Jumping into Mission
by Mike Ruhl

He brought tears of happiness to hundreds upon hundreds of pairs of human eyes. He brought hope to many passive pessimists. He brought inspiration to thousands of lonely, isolated people who are convinced that no one really cares any more.

A New Yorker dubbed *Subway Superman* received the city's highest civic award recently after pinning down a stricken stranger on subway tracks just enough to allow an oncoming train to run harmlessly over the top of them. Fifty-year-old Wesley Autrey jumped onto the subway tracks at a station in Manhattan's Harlem neighborhood to help Cameron Hollopeter, who had fallen onto the subway tracks after suffering a seizure. Audrey held down Hollopeter's convulsing body in the track bed as the train *passed over* the two of them, just centimeters above them.

I hereby confess that I was one of those "hundreds upon hundreds" who wiped away some tears as that news swept over them. I even wondered if I would have had the courage to make that same kind of leap, or if I would have simply stood there and stared, with a horrified look on my face.

What an incredible *jump into mission!* What an inspiring example of *taking action* for the sake of one who is in harm's way. What an inspiring illustration of reckless abandonment to provide covering for one in desperate need.

And what a metaphor of mission!

After Adam and Eve fell into sin, God provided a *covering* for their nakedness (a symbol of their sin and estrangement from the Lord) with animal skins. Innocent blood had to be shed in order for that covering to be provided. And the very heart of the pre-Exodus *Passover* was the smearing of innocent lamb (or goat) blood on the lintels and doorposts of homes, and the *passing over* of those homes by the angel of death. And through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, by grace and through faith, God provided a *covering of* blood and delivered us from the thundering train of sin, death and eternal damnation.

The message of that *pasach*, that *Pass-over*, that *covering* of the shed blood of Christ, has been entrusted to all the saints, people and pastors of the church. We are speaking of your church and my church--you and me. We are the *sent ones*; we are the ambassadors for Christ and missionaries one and all.

We encourage you, then, to *take action* and to be engaged in mission. In fact, **jump** into mission. Leap onto the subway tracks of your vocational context and community and provide *covering* for those who are not yet connected to Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit draws the unsaved into the arms of Jesus through your witness of the Word.

Pray that we do not simply stand passively in the gathered crowd and watch in horror at the impending eternal disaster. Surely the Holy Spirit will give us the faith and courage to jump onto the subway tracks!

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg awarded Wesley Autrey a Bronze Medallion, the city's highest civic award, for saving the life of a stranger by providing a covering. And even real-estate mogul Donald Trump gave Autrey a \$10,000 check.

We do know that *jumping into mission* is not a "good work" by which we earn God's favor. It is a *fruit of faith*, a result of His Love ~ and Our Response. But let us not overlook that *jumping into mission* is recognized, commended and appreciated by Our Lord Himself, for Scripture declares:

"Those that are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3)

Joyful Jumping in Jesus' Name!

Links

'Subway Superman' Honored for Bravery
By Mark Martin, CBN News; January 4, 2007
<http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/82328.aspx>

Read and view a brief report about the Wesley Autrey and his jump into action.

Poll: Nearly Half of Americans Uncertain God Exists
October 31, 2006
<http://www.breitbart.com/news/2006/10/31/061031235233.s014o4wy.html>

The title of this brief article points to the desperate need for the church to be in mission. Also of interest in this article is the following quote, "Among the various religious groups, 76 percent of Protestants, 64 percent of Catholics and 30 percent of Jews said they are "absolutely certain" there is a God while 93 percent of Christians who describe themselves as "Born Again" feel certain God exists." What implications do these numbers have?

Research

"In 1990, ninety percent of the adult population identified with one or another religion group. In 2001, such identification has dropped to eighty-one percent."

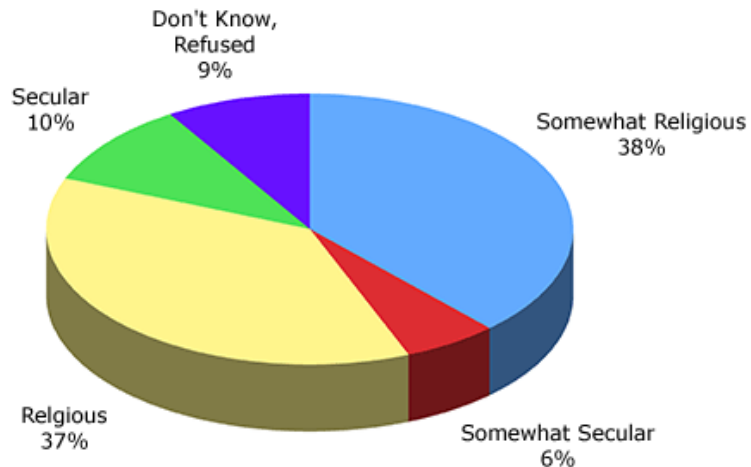
“The greatest increase in absolute as well as in percentage terms has been among those adults who do not subscribe to any religious identification; their number has more than doubled from 14.3 million in 1990 to 29.4 million in 2001; their proportion has grown from just eight percent of the total in 1990 to over fourteen percent in 2001;”

American Religious Identification Survey 2001

Barry A. Kosmin, Egon Mayer & Ariela Keysar
p. 10-11. Download the PDF at
http://www.gc.cuny.edu/faculty/research_studies/aris.pdf

Outlook of Adult Population: Religious or Secular

"When it comes to your outlook, do you regard yourself as..."



Source: American Religious Identification Survey 2001, p. 10

Survey

Tell us what you think, and find out what other readers think. Take the survey online at <http://www.zoomerang.com/survey.zgi?p=WEB2262C333UQT>. You'll see the results when you've finished.

From the Center

- **BMPT Deadline Extended to Today** -- Scholarships are still available for the Winter 2007 Basic Mission Planters Training. Late fees apply after today. Contact the Center for information.
- **Upcoming Seminars.** Contact the Center for more information.
 - Basic Mission Planters Training, Mon-Fri Feb. 5-9, 2007, New Braunfels, Texas
 - Daughter Church Planting, Fri-Sat March -10, 2007, Boston, MA
 - Missional Worship in an Urban Context, Fri-Sun March 16-18, 2007, Great Lakes region
 - Sharing Christ in the City, Fri-Sat April 13-14, 2007, Gary, IN
- **About the Daughter Church Planting Seminar** -- Jerry Kosberg of the Pacific Southwest District, commented recently on the District's experiences with the

- Center's DCP Seminar. Read his remarks at
<http://centerforusmissions.com/index.php?page=dcp-endorsement>.
- **A New Missional Bible Study** by Ken Behnken, "John 4: Sharing the Gospel Across Cultures" is now available for free download at www.centerforusmissions.com – Resources – Bible studies.

Mission Moments, a biweekly electronic newsletter from the Center for U.S. Missions, brings information and encouragement to all who desire to share the God's great love in Jesus Christ with others. The Center for U.S. Missions provides research and training for mission work among unevangelized people in the United States. A partnership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod World Missions, Concordia University in Irvine, California, and the North America Mission Executives of the LCMS, the Center serves all Christian denominations.

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