

Mission Moments – May 4, 2007
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From the Center for U.S. Missions
Following Jesus into the U.S. Mission Field
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The Sandwich is for the Road by Mike Ruhl

The people of God are a pilgrim people. They are intended by God to be people on a journey.

The classic hymn *I'm But a Stranger Here, Heaven Is My Home* is a reminder that a safe, sedentary life is not the ultimate outcome of our redemption in Christ Jesus. The people of God are a people of movement rather than establishment. As pilgrims, aliens and sojourners in this world, they know that they are on a deliberate journey, moving through this life in the world to their final and ultimate destination in heaven. And until that heavenward journey is complete, the people of God seek to bring as many people with them as they can, reaching out in global marketplaces to those who are *harassed and helpless, like sheep without a Shepherd* (Matt. 9:36)

In the Old Testament, God's House was a tabernacle, a tent, as the people of God journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land. A tent is a 'portable dwelling,' assembled for and used by people in motion. Some would say that when the church started constructing permanent church buildings, something was lost. It evolved into something more sedentary, more organizational and established, and less missional.

Sri Lankan missiologist Daniel T. Niles declared the mission of the church to be the people of God on a journey--a 'pilgrim people' as opposed to those who are 'settled down.' Using the analogy of eating at a picnic to describe the church's spiritual disciplines for the journey of life, Niles challenges the church to 'take to the road:'

The sacraments of the church, the worship of the congregation, the study of God's Word, the practices of religion in the home and in one's personal life--all of these are **food for the journey**. So many neglect them because they do not need them. Theirs is a sedentary life, and all this food is unnecessary. And even what food they do take, they do not relish . . . **The sandwiches are for the road**. Get up and go out. Go north!*

Next to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the care of the souls of the people of God, the consummate task of spiritual leadership in the church is to stimulate the congregation to *continue the missionary journey* of reaching out to the unsaved with the Gospel of the Kingdom, and to avoid the dangerous default into sedentary life.

Grab a sandwich for the road. Go north!

He who has ears to hear, let him/her hear.

*Daniel T. Niles, *Upon the Earth* (New York, 1962), P. 77.

Moment Extras

Links

The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come by John Bunyan (web page)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pilgrim's_Progress

This is the Wikipedia article about John Bunyan's classic novel that tells allegorically the story of a Christian's spiritual journey. The book is available at amazon.com.

The Christian Pilgrim or *The True Christian's Life a Journey Toward Heaven* sermon by Jonathan Edwards. <http://www.jdwetterling.com/ChristianPilgrim.htm>

A sermon by Jonathan Edwards highlighting the fact that Christians are pilgrims in this world on a journey to their home which is heaven.

Video:

1. *Being Salt & Light in Culture* by Tim Keller. Keller talks about the opportunity and need for Christians to be salt and light in the world today.

2. *Relating To Sinners* by Mark Driscoll. Driscoll addresses the need for Christians to be where sinners are and learn from them if we as Christians are going to make a difference in their lives through the sharing of the gospel.

Both these videos are at www.desiringgod.org > Events > National Conferences > Past Conferences > 2006: Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World > Speaker interview videos.

News from the Center

1. Missional Bible Studies are growing! Our missional Bible studies available for free download on our website (www.centerforusmissions.org > Resources > Bible Studies). now total 11 titles and 20 studies. Two new studies were recently posted: "Witnessing Without Words" by Joel Lehenbauer looks at 1 Peter. "Missional Churches Value Authentic Relationships" by Kevin Wilson is the 2nd in a planned series of 5 studies on the characteristics of missional churches. We're interested in your feedback on these studies. Email office@centerforusmissions.org.

2. Mission Coaching is a new training offered by the Center at the July 23-27 [On The Edge: Training for Missional Leaders](#). Thorough, and containing ongoing training and support, it gives skills for competency in coming alongside missionary pastors, planters and workers for empowerment, encouragement, vision achievement and accountability. Simply put, quality coaching helps others do their best in their tasks. See <http://www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/index.html> for more info.

On the Edge: Training for Missional Leaders is an exciting week (July 23-27) with five trainings offered on the campus of Concordia University, Irvine, California. See <http://www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/index.html> for details on each of the trainings:

- Basic Mission Planters Training--the Center's long-standing, highly-regarded seminar
- Advanced Mission Planters Training--newly-added for planters in years 2-10 of their plant
- Facilitating Church Planting Movements--Dr. Ed Stetzer leads two days of training in how to facilitate church planting movements in your sphere of influence.
- Mission Coach Certification Training--comprehensive training to be a coach who empowers people for mission
- Behavioral Interviewing Training--practical skills for anyone who selects people for positions

Coming up soon!

- LINC Summit on urban ministry networks, Wed-Fri May 16-18, 2007, Houston, Texas

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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