

The Sandwich is for the Road
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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.*

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.